

emily saunders

cotton skies

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Live

The Vortex, London August 1st 2011



Delivered with a sensuality that would give our most favourite Brazilian chanteuses a run for their money, **Emily Saunders** wraps light breathy vocals around Brazilian rhythms whilst evoking the brilliance of the jazz greats.

Cotton Skies is Saunders astonishingly assured and accomplished debut. Reflecting her passion for Brazilian rhythms and some of the great composers that have inspired her, she uses her voice as a true improvisationalist. Born and bred in London, her personal style of sparkling wordless vocals, largely acoustic backing, and romantic melodic songs, positions her, without doubt, as this year's discovery.

Yet it is not only Saunders masterful voice, but her talent as a songwriter and arranger that sets her above the rest. Six of the ten songs on *Cotton Skies* are originals. The coolness of her poetic, alluring, compositions and dreamy lyrics are balanced with an outstanding selection of fiery arrangements by composers Hermeto Pascoal, Egberto Gismonti and Airtó Moreira. Saunders dark, sultry ballads are offset by exuberant, hip swaying grooves while her take on Moreira's 'Xibaba' will no doubt top this year's made-for-summer playlist.

Saunders was brought up in a family steeped in music – her grandmother was a classical pianist who improvised at the age of 11; her sister is a contemporary classical composer, and her father a renowned classical pianist, arranger and choral conductor who indulged his love of jazz late at night with records by Oscar, Fats and Bird. It is no wonder then that she naturally took to the piano writing songs from a very young age, and initially trained as a classical musician. Yet her fascination of improvisation led her to specialise in Jazz Voice at Trinity Conservatoire, and a healthy teenage desire to explore different cultures and musical repertoires led to her immensely diverse musical tastes. From Nina Simone, Flora Purim, Betty Carter and Santana to 90's ambient, Reggae, Latin and 70's soul. But it is Saunders love of *rhythm* and her enthusiasm for the great composers of Brazil such as Hermeto Pascoal, whose obsession with sound and artistic virtuosity inspired her to record *Cotton Skies*.

Joining Saunders on *Cotton Skies* is an explosive line-up of some of the finest UK based musicians - **Byron Wallen** and **Nick Walters** on trumpets, **Bruno Heinen** on piano and Rhodes, **Larry Bartley** on bass, **Jon Scott** on drums and **Chris Wells** on percussion.

www.emilysaunders.co.uk

The Vortex

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