

ADRIAN YOUNGE PRESENTS... **VOICES OF GEMMA**



A1. STRANGER BY THE SEA

A2. SILHOUETTE DREAMS

A3. HEAVEN'S FOUND • A4. COMEBACK

A5. THE LEAVES

B1. UNFORTUNATE BREAKS • B2. STARLIGHTS

B3. DREAMS WITH YOU • B4. CHASING LOVE

B5. MAKE A MELODY

In the great and ongoing culture war between high and low, raw and refined, the real versus popular, certain territories have been ceded: styles considered mainstream get to be pretty, lovely and optimistic. Styles originating underground are presumed to be gritty, burly and practical.

So it's a subversion of a kind, and definitely an intellectual challenge, to bathe a foreboding bass line in a lilt. To make gloomy shine. To trojan horse some heavy feelings in a delicate vocal.

Adrian Younger's *Voices of Gemma* embodies the potential of the hybrid. By just saying no to the borders a label like underground might impose on a creativity like his, he's able to fashion a sound that elbows its way past your defenses, whatever they are. You don't want to hear anything grim today? Had enough of that on the news, thanks? Younger has a couple of angels on hand to waft a hard truth over so that when it hits it feels like a kiss. Sick of the saccharine piped over aisle 4 at Walgreens? Younger's palming you a melody fit for impending doom.

Voices of Gemma comes from Younger's refusal to accept the premise. His stance is there in every artist's job description — the determination to suction up sounds and flavors and phrases from all over the past and present and imagined and documented, and then splice and dissolve what he finds into more possibilities and new ways of seeing, something fresh.

On this project his songs are precise, the set ups delivered with a satiny finish and, in the low end, just a hint of louche. His characters are lyrically poised, but when it comes to their emotional lives, as portrayed melodically, it's one cliffhanger after another. Younger's female leads take up residence in their upper register, a fairytale landscape pierced only once by a man's voice. The dreamy, internal feeling singers Brooke deRosa and Rebecca Engelhardt conjure up is tethered to the earth by music that's filmic and deeply intelligent. Here there are easter eggs left in accent notes and fills. Care has been given to every detail, and the old way of doing a thing (bring in an orchestra, record to tape) is the way its done; it's like listening to a five-star hotel.

Voices of Gemma is luxurious, a style that we forgot could be present day, as accustomed as we are to sampled and thrice-removed versions of it. This is high-class signified, a world-class realization.

CATALOG: LL035-LP
FORMAT: LP
LABEL: Linear Labs
STREET DATE: 07/13/18

