

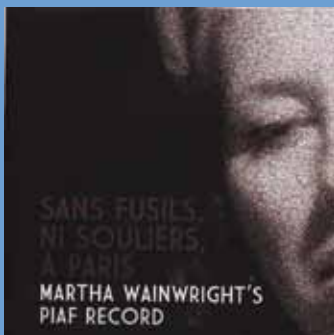
STYLING THE STEREO

Reviewed by Quentin Mills-Fenn

MARTHA WAINWRIGHT'S PIAF RECORD

*Sans Fusils, Ni Souliers,
A Paris*

Martha Wainwright's latest documents a live show of rare French songs associated with legendary chanteuse Edith Piaf. Wainwright has a lovely voice, of course, and sings with a ripe, throaty rasp; wisely she doesn't cover iconic titles like *Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien* or *La Vie en Rose*. It's a family affair, with Wainwright's husband, cousin, and mother around for support. And if she doesn't have quite the pipes or the pathos of Piaf - who does? Her producer, the great Hal Willner, provides an authentic sounding backdrop of strings, accordion, and piano. Wainwright makes a welcome appearance at the Winnipeg Jazz Festival on June 27 at Pantages Playhouse Theatre, where she will be recreating her Piaf show.



METRIC

Fantasies

Broken Social Scenesters Emily Haines and James Shaw have a winner with their project Metric: both the band and its latest CD, *Fantasies*, picked up Juno awards this spring. Coming several years after the band's previous release of new material, *Live It Out*, *Fantasies* is a little new

wave, some rock and roll, and Haines's ice-cool voice. The tracks might be somewhat lacking on hooks but the production is crisp and guitar-clangy, providing roaring support as Haines reflects on love and pop music. Top 40-friendly songs made for shaking the speakers on Portage Avenue on Cruise Night.

ANDREW BIRD

Noble Beast

Andrew Bird and his band entertain us with violin, whistling, clarinet, and such things with his latest set of quirky/folky/jangly chamber pop. (I almost expected to see musical saw among the instruments listed.) It's an alt-folk elegy to the natural world that's both nostalgic and timeless, sad and glorious. Bird's lyrics are clever ("calcified arthymatists?") while never losing a sense of humanity. With Bird, the heart is in the splendid details. Be sure to get the two-CD version with the "Useless Creatures" disc for even more gorgeous whimsy. Bird will charm all when he performs at the Winnipeg Folk Festival this July. You'll find yourself singing along to words you've never heard before.



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