

Caitlin Canty: Neon Streets

By Freedan Oeur
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Sincere vocals and intricate arrangements make *Neon Streets*, a seven-track EP from New York-based Caitlin Canty, a welcome addition to the singer-songwriter canon. On “Shore”, Canty’s vulnerability gives lines like “You don’t know which way you want the wind to blow” a rich texture, her trill echoing Kathleen Edwards’s song “Mercury”. The bridge is a triumph: a sublime key change anchors the song for a brief moment before Canty returns to singing about love adrift. Elsewhere, Canty throws it down on the rollicking country twang of “Two Hands”, a nice change of pace with the singer-guitarist tipping her hat to both independence (“She’s never had trouble getting the cap off the bottle”) and her own Vermont roots (“No sob stories / No Ben & Jerry’s”).

Accompaniment from quintet Darlingside (who co-produced the EP) deserves props, with Harris Paseltiner’s cello-playing a true standout. His cello sashays wonderfully with a mandolin riff on track “Neon Streets”, and the opening melody to “In the Way” combines with Canty’s humming to make for the album’s saddest *leitmotif*. A cello and kick drum combo gives “Thin Moon” an eerie thump, and occasional back-up vocals (especially Don Mitchell’s harmonies on “Neon Streets”) help to pack plenty of emotional weight into the album’s short running time of 24 minutes. “The road keeps turning in her favor”, Canty sings on opening track “Halo”; if future albums with Darlingside—three others are in the works—deliver on the promise of *Neon Streets*, then Canty deserves her own career to take the same turn.