

Album of the Month February 2007

Martha Wainwright, Special Edition Album FVW2

Martha Wainwright born May 8, 1976 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada is a Canadian-American folk-pop singer.

She comes from a family that some would call "musical royalty". She is the daughter of Kate McGarrigle and Loudon Wainwright III, and sister of Rufus Wainwright, yet she writes and sings with a style completely her own. Her full length self-titled debut ***Drowned In Sound*** was released in 2005, and debuted at No 18 on the Canadian album sales charts.

"Their family feuds have been painfully played out in their lyrics for more than 30 years and now three members of this prodigiously talented musical family are about to tour Britain to promote new albums."

Richard Jinman, "The Wainwrights", *The Guardian*, April 15 2005

Martha Wainwright is in full flight, speeding through Manhattan on her way to Joe's Pub, where she will launch her debut solo album. But there have been technical problems at the soundcheck and her phlegmatic drawl betrays traces of anxiety and fatigue "I felt I went out there and played a good game," she says of the album, a confessional recording of country and folk-tinged songs. Her lack of bravado is understandable.

She is the youngest member of the Wainwright family, a musical clan which includes her older brother, the critically lauded baroque pop star Rufus Wainwright, and her parents, the folk legends Loudon Wainwright III and Kate McGarrigle. Martha knows her music will always be judged against theirs. And when your father has been hailed as "the new Bob Dylan" and Elton John calls your brother "the best songwriter on the planet", the comparisons can be intimidating. Her mother, a woman she describes as her "greatest support", has flown from Europe for the launch but Martha's brother and father were too busy promoting their own albums this week to attend the launch. Martha, who has spent years in the shadow of her pretty and prodigiously talented brother, has learned to live with it. "He used to tell me that Kate wasn't my mother and that I was an alien," she laughs. However her passionate acoustic-pop sound has led many to make early comparisons with the likes of Tori Amos and Courtney Love.

But her brother's success has been a useful spur, prompting her to pick up a guitar and enter the family business. She has a more fractious relationship with her 58-year-old father, whom she has described as a man who wrote songs about his children instead of raising them.

Alternative Indie folky Martha has produced an album which in turn excites and relaxes. Some powerful compositions display raw emotion which is obviously drawn from living a life less ordinary. Martha spins her compositions across the emotional spectrum and who are we to doubt her sincerity

Strong as steel . . . soft as honey.

Larayne Kyffin
2nd February 2007