

ARRIVING SEPTEMBER 16, 2016

Beautiful Life: Songs of Prince Re-Imagined

Susan Voelz's third studio album, a 20-year project
recorded in both Austin, Texas, and Chicago.

The essence of each song is re-orchestrated through her unique
sonic prism of strings, beats, vocals, and guitars—
with Charlie Sexton (guitarist, producer), Grammy-nominated vocalist Abra Moore,
Poi dog Pondering creator Frank Orrall, Jared Tuten (guitarist producer),
and cellist Alison Chesley (aka Helen Money).

— Octave8Records —



WHY A PRINCE RECORD?

“It was a steamy night in Austin, Texas. To entertain our hot selves we decided to record a Prince song. The tape rolling through the Tascam Cassette Recorder began to melt giving the violins and guitars on *Money Don't Matter 2 Night* a nice wobbly tone. This was the first song of what unexpectedly became a 20-year Prince project. We spent days recording deep in the cool dark rooms of the legendary Austin Rehearsal Complex. In Chicago, we set up in an attic apartment, chilling champagne out the window during a blizzard and later took over the basement to record vocals and trumpet in the shower.

“We listened deeply to Prince’s recordings, falling in love with the essence of each song. Then we’d pull instruments down off the wall and let new sounds inspire us.”

“The songs are reinventions. They are re-orchestrated through SMV’s unique sonic prism. On this, her third record, she has woven together her mastery of rock strings (the lush violin played as a member of Poi Dog Pondering) and the tenderness and tumult of her duets with punk poet Alejandro Escovedo, resulting

in the magic carpet ride of *Die 4 U*, the dervish of *Anna Stesia*, the sway of *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World*, and the sexy strength of *17 Days*.

“Prince and I did meet. Poi Dog Pondering was recording at Paisley Park. Walking through the lounge one evening, I heard a rustling above and behind me. I turned and he was slowly coming down the stairs. We looked at each other and we each said ‘hello.’ A simple little blessing.”

1. **Anna Stesia**
2. **The Most Beautiful Girl in the World**
3. **17 Days**
4. **I Would Die 4 U**
5. **The Beautiful Ones/Rant in the Rain**
6. **Miles Away** (orig.)
7. **Take Me With U**
8. **I Wish U Heaven**
9. **When U Were Mine**
10. **Reverse Life** (orig.)
11. **Money Don't Matter 2 Night**



SUSAN VOELZ BIO

“Sounding like Nico and John Cale fused into one (somewhat sweeter) being” (*Musician Magazine*), Susan Voelz (pronounced Velz) has pioneered the violin-in-rock music as an original member of Poi Dog Pondering, punk poet Alejandro Escovedo, British rock legend Ronnie Lane, and John Mellencamp.

“One minute her violin sounds like the sweet voice of angels, and the next minute it is a twisted cacophony inspired by demons” (Deadboy blog), or as an WXRT radio host described it, “a bat with butterfly wings.”

As a solo artist, she creates “powerfully atmospheric music” (*Trouser Press*), playing a 5-string violin (her grandfather’s) through guitar effects, inspired by music as varied as Madame Butterfly, the Velvet Underground, disco strings, and big band ballads.

Her violin and string arrangements can be heard on many recordings including James McCartney, Broken Social Scene, Mono from Japan, and Federico Aubele among others. She has composed and recorded music for TV and film, including Peabody Award winning *Frontline*, *The Lost Children of Rockdale County*, its follow up *Merchants of Cool*, and Jonathan Demme’s *Jimmy Carter: Man from the Plains*.

Published Author: *The Musicians Guide to the Road—A Survival Handbook & All Access Backstage Pass to Touring* (Billboard Books/Random House). Timothy White, former editor of *Billboard Magazine*, called it “A remedy for the road.”

<https://www.amazon.com/Musicians-Guide-Road-All-Access-Backstage/dp/0823077764>

Originally from Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, she lived for many years in Austin, Texas and now resides in Chicago.

VIDEO 1

From *Beautiful Life: Songs of Prince Re-Imagined* “I Would Die 4 U”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTBUq63F5f4>

VIDEO 2

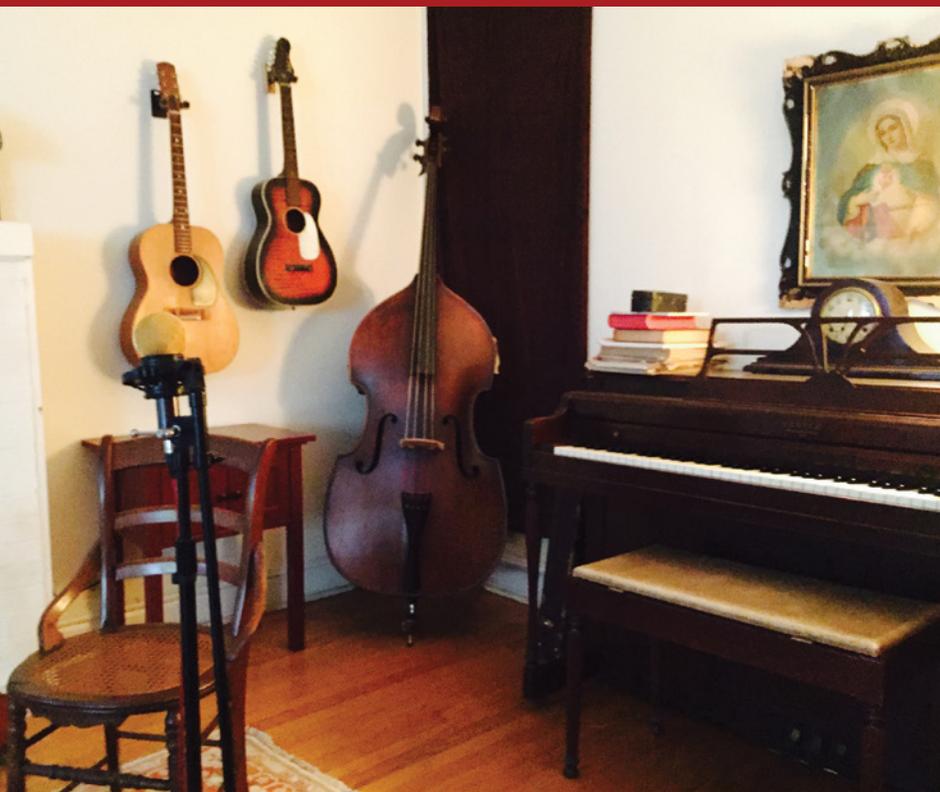
SMV with Alejandro Escovedo record release at Waterloo Records Austin, TX
“Chelsea Hotel” live

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVEt4r66m3Y>

VIDEO 3

From *Summer Crashing*
“Taka Look Around”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiZy1u0WLxY>





The Songs and the Stories

Money Don't Matter 2 Night. The strings and guitars got all bendy sounding from the heat melting the tape. Max recorded a few passes of trumpet that inspired us to create an instrumental song keeping vocals only in the chorus.

Take Me With U begins with a tritone (devil tone) melody that I love to play on violin with Chris Searles drumming. Years later, Thomas Dunning came over to record two wonderful words: "Thank you." Still, the song wasn't going to make the cut until the french girl, 'hip drop' mix was created by Rick Gehrenbeck.

Charlie Sexton's upright piano begins **Anna Stesia**. His studio was at the back of the Austin Rehearsal Complex where Jared and I were then recording. While plunking out the piano chords, I saw a banjo looking instrument—a turkish cumbush—hanging on the wall. We took it down and loved the tone.

There are a lot of vocal harmonies on the original **I Wish U Heaven**. I interrupted Charlie's cello practice to record him singing and it became a

duet. Then he picked his cello up off the oriental rug and we recorded cello, too.

Before leaving Austin, I bought an SK-5 Casio Sampling Keyboard at a garage sale. The best of its eight sounds are 'piano' and 'pipe organ' on **When U Were Mine**. At the end of the last chorus, we hear a song from the other side of the tape bleeding through in reverse, arriving at the perfect moment and pitch (**Reverse Life**).

In Chicago, we took over my roommate's basement bedroom to record **The Beautiful Ones**. We paid him with a case of Red Stripe beer. For the **Rant in the Rain** outro, we asked the drummer to play as if he and the drum kit were tumbling down the stairs.

The aftermath of **The Beautiful Ones** is **Miles Away**. Max recorded trumpet in the shower.

Alison Chesley pulled her cello across the alley, her glasses on, her slippers on, to record **17 Days** in front of the fireplace. Abra sang at Rob Halverson's old East Austin house studio on a hill. Of course the

place was said to be haunted. She channeled the ghosts. So did Robert. Well, so did everyone.

A theatre in San Francisco loaned me mics to record my vocals and strings for **The Most Beautiful Girl in the World**. Kornel drove down to Wicker Park to add his smoky fireman vocals. Abra sang up into the high wood ceiling of Rob's studio.

We chose to play **I Would Die 4 U** at a Hoot Night in Chicago—the theme was death. It went well so we decided to record it. But the song was on hold until the Houda twins arrived in Chicago. I gave them tracks to remix. A few weeks later, they handed me a CD after a sound check and we walked out to the alley to listen on my car stereo. Sublime.



PREVIOUS RELEASES



13 RIBS

Released by Voodoo Records/Dixie Frog, Paris, France, and Pravda Records, Chicago

Between sensual Oriental pleasure and childlike nursery rhyme, this first solo album from Susan Voelz turns in upon itself like a kaleidoscope. . . . like two people waltzing, sad and exuberant, has the appeal of violets and a rendez-vous in an English garden.”

—Christian Larredie, *Les Inrockuptibles* (French Review)

PAST PERFORMANCES

Carnegie Hall, Lollapalooza, Bonnaroo, Red Rocks, Roskilde, Barbicon, Continental Club, Austin City Limits, Saturday Night Live, Tonight Show, across Canada, the U.S., Japan and Europe.

SMV and Poi dog Pondering Pritzker Pavillion, Chicago

SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Website: <http://susanvoelz.com/>
2. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/susan.voelz>
- 3a. You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SusanVoelz>
- 3b. You Tube 2: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjod5Qz0DjuZ9xgkVcLd2Sw>
4. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/susanvoelz>

ALBUM REVIEWS

“The album is an intriguing, musically cohesive 13-song cycle. . . . ‘The Bed Song’ benefits from a lovely arrangement and a tender intimacy. . . . ‘Map of You’ . . . becomes softly sensual.” —Jim Bessman, *Rolling Stone*, ★★★ [13 Ribs]

“Find this record, buy it, treasure it, show it off to your friends. . . . Voelz has considerable writing skills and an engaging voice that ranges convincingly from world-weary to fresh, sometimes in the same song.” —Eric Selbin, *Utne Reader*, [13 Ribs]

“The low-key but powerfully atmospheric music orbits closely around a nucleus of Voelz’s breezy voice and mournful violin. . . . with occasional solar flares illuminating the twilight. Mighty fine.” —*Trouser Press Guide to '90s Rock*, [Summer Crashing]

“Sounding something like Nico and John Cale fused into one (somewhat sweeter) being. . . .” —Rob Patterson, *Musician Magazine* feature, [13 Ribs]

LIVE REVIEWS

“Voelz would take over with melodic fury, loose strings on her bow flopping around angrily, with the symphonic equivalent of a wicked electric guitar solo.” —*Milwaukee Journal*

“One minute her violin sounds like the sweet voice of angels, and the next minute it is a twisted cacophony inspired by demons.” —Deadboy blog: the Birchmere, Alexandria, Virginia 2008

“Voelz’s violin was as heartwarming as a long-awaited kiss.” —*Milwaukee Journal*

CONTACT

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SUMMER CRASHING

Released by Voodoo Records/Dixie Frog, Paris, France, and Pravda Records, Chicago

“An Aural Crush of dreamy melodies awash in seductive strings and droning guitars. A mesmerizing trip.”

—*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*



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