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Beautiful thing (Sarah McGregor)

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beautiful thing
sarah mcgregor
Origin OR081

reviewed by Michael Hannan

Sarah McGregor is a talented singer-songwriter with excellent creative support. This, her second album, is expertly produced by Kevin Kehoe and uses the fine musicians with whom she normally works (with the surprising omission of guitarist Steve Grieve) as well as a wonderful supporting cast of other instrumentalists and singers. Her songs have simple constructions, often only using two or three chords for any one section, but they are well crafted both lyrically and melodically. Although the style of her music is at the soft end of contemporary music, some of her songs have an interesting edgy quality brought about by a calculated tension between chords and melody (for example “Being Myself” and “Only Human”). The generous fourteen tracks cover quite a deal of stylistic territory: the cool bluesy “Coming First” turns into a funky concoction with the addition of Wonderesque clavinet part; “Paid my Dues” is cleverly arranged and produced reggae; the rocky “Did You Really Believe” incorporates dramatic distorted electric guitar textures and strange noise elements; while “Sick of Love” and “Fools like Me have pseudo-rap sections. A few tracks stand out: “Into You” and “Beautiful Thing” are appealing songs with very classy production values.