

MUSIC

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vueweekly.com
VUE WEEKLY, March 2007

Yael Wand's Gifts Blossom

'One woman who came to a few shows brought me a book, one of these local plant guides,' recalls Yael Wand, the BC-based cabaret folkie's speaking voice gently hinting at her musical one, a sweet melodic singsong that doles out her words with the cadence of birdsong. "She thought I could use it to identify some of the flowers and know their Latin names when I wrote again."

As a general rule, you can tell a lot about a musician from the kinds of offerings made to them. Wand's unexpected gift from her fan was prompted by the tune that opens her newly released sophomore solo album, *At Your Door*.

"I've had a hard time in the past writing to a theme, but 'Wildflower' was written from the perspective of the flower," she laughs. "It's so easy to write sad songs, you know? There are so many more reasons to feel sadness. It's challenging to write happy songs, where everything's fine, without sounding cheesy."

She describes the titular wildflower, a bog orchid, as "this tiny white orchid in the mountains. It's so small that it's humble, but so delicate and beautiful when you look at it up close." For a record that celebrates constant renewal throughout the year, it's a fitting way to begin.

"I was living in Wells, this little mining town, while I was writing most of this album," Wand explains. "It's very different from Vancouver, where I grew up, with so much happening all the time. Observing the changes around me, watching what comes and goes in and out with the seasons, the flowers and the birds—it was all very inspiring. Living in this place of very quiet wintertime, so cold in the dead of winter in this white landscape, then spring comes and suddenly the colour is overwhelming. I think the peace transferred through to the songs."

At Your Door does reflect the architecture of this time and place of peace. All four seasons are acknowledged, along with their accompanying moods, throughout the record. Winter plays host to a hushed melancholy lit from within by nostalgia and hope. Spring bursts forth with an anthem of carefree affirmation and release; summer is indulgent and sensual.

And as the world folds back into itself and the leaves fall, so does Wand, shaping autumn into a permission to feel loss with her characteristically literate lyricism and well-curated zoo of semi-exotic instruments wrapping her gorgeous voice and rhythmic acoustic guitar with additional texture, warmth and depth.

"This is less overtly personal than my first solo album, which had that 'hint of angst' most people start off with," Wand muses. "It's still personal but broader. *At Your Door* starts at my house and wanders from there. Hopefully, it has both a sense of home and journey." **V**