



04. A Kiss to Build a Dream On (2:46)

Written by: Bert Kalmar, Harry Ruby, Oscar Hammerstein II (Public Domain 1935)

Arranged by: Amber Rubarth/Inspired Music (ASCAP), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

05. Down Home (Interlude) (2:05)

Written by: Amber Rubarth, Dave Eggar, Charles Justin Palmer, and Tim Snider

Inspired Music (ASCAP), Dave Eggar Music (ASCAP), Chuck Palmer Music (ASCAP), Little Timmy Publishing (SESAC),

Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

06. Novocaine (4:57)

Written by: Amber Rubarth

Inspired Music (ASCAP), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

07. Darkest Dark, Brightest Light (1:47)

Written by: Amber Rubarth

Inspired Music (ASCAP), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

08. Tundra (Interlude) (2:16)

Written by: Amber Rubarth, Dave Eggar, Charles Justin Palmer, and Tim Snider

Inspired Music (ASCAP), Dave Eggar Music (ASCAP), Chuck Palmer Music (ASCAP), Little Timmy Publishing (SESAC),

Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

09. Good Mystery (3:20)

Written by: Amber Rubarth

Inspired Music (ASCAP), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

10. Washing Day (5:05)

Written by: Amber Rubarth and Adam Levy

Inspired Music (ASCAP), Lost Wax Music (ASCAP), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

11. Sneak (Interlude) (2:16)

Written by: Amber Rubarth, Dave Eggar, Charles Justin Palmer, and Tim Snider

Inspired Music (ASCAP), Dave Eggar Music (ASCAP), Chuck Palmer Music (ASCAP), Little Timmy Publishing (SESAC),

Chesky Productions (ASCAP)



I can remember experiencing,” she says. “It was a full moon and the air was so ... there was just something perfect about it. And I was there all by myself. Paris to me is one of those funny cities ... it’s so beautiful and romantic and there’s so much that you can take in, but I feel like when you’re there by yourself it’s almost too much to handle. First I feel elated by everything and I’m soaking it in and then a moment later I am depressed there’s nobody to share it with. I had played a show the night before and had a night off before going to the next city. And I didn’t have anyone to share this perfect night with so I walked around all night and then went back to my hotel room and wrote this song. Because I’d rather have interaction with a guitar than be alone.”

Another affecting tune, the somber “Washing Day,” was co-written with Adam Levy, a guitarist-songwriter who has also worked with Norah Jones. “It’s one of the first co-written songs I’ve done,” says Amber. “I love Adam’s writing, and we decided to try something together. That morning we got together I asked him if he had any ideas he’d been playing with and he says, ‘I had some, but I left my notepad in my pocket and it went in the washing machine.’ And I looked at him and said, ‘That is the song!’ It’s such a beautiful image for what happens in life—we’ve been putting all this effort into something and all of a sudden it disappears. So we sat on opposite ends of the room and wrote different images and ideas and then mashed them together. He just started strumming something and I started singing and within a few hours we had the whole thing.”

Amber turns in an ebullient reading of the Oscar Hammerstein II nugget “A Kiss to Build a Dream On,” inspired by a 1951 Louis Armstrong recording that she fell in love with a month before going in to record *Sessions*. Her other well-chosen covers include an intimate take on the Carter family’s 1928 Appalachian lullaby “Storms Are on the Ocean” and a starkly revealing solo interpretation of Bob Dylan’s “Just Like a Woman.” “That is one of my favorite songs,” she says of the anthemic Dylan number from 1966’s *Blonde on Blonde*. “I love this idea that we have an outside persona that can be so strong, but somewhere there’s a little crack that can break through to our most vulnerable inner point. It felt like a good fit with the rest of the songs on the album. I don’t play a lot of covers, I choose the ones I get so attached to emotionally that I can’t differentiate them from my own.”

Four elegant instrumentals provide brief interludes throughout this heartfelt recording. “Dave [Eggar] and I have been starting a lot of our shows together with an instrumental piece,” says Amber. “It serves as a bit of a palate cleanser and allows space to move from one mood to another.”

Amber takes the listener through a full range of moods on *Sessions from the 17th Ward*. Accompanied by her empathetic sidemen, she breathes deep meaning into each piece on this remarkable work.

—Bill Milkowski

Bill Milkowski is a contributor to Jazz Times and Jazziz magazines. He is also the author of JACO: The Extraordinary and Tragic Life of Jaco Pastorius and co-author of Here and Now! The Autobiography of Pat Martino.



Amber Rubarth

Sessions from the 17th Ward

The first lonesome strains of bowed cello filling the spacious room that is in St. Elias Church in Greenpoint, Brooklyn resonate with heartland memories. Violin joins the sparse arrangement followed by some gently strummed guitar. Enter the voice—a fragile hush tinged with melancholy but ultimately conveying a pure, uplifting message of persevering in the face of hopelessness. This stirring interpretation of Tom Waits’ “Hold On” is a chilling introduction to the extraordinarily gifted singer-songwriter Amber Rubarth, whose disarmingly honest vocal delivery and vivid lyrics cast a spell on *Sessions from the 17th Ward*.

Legendary producer Phil Ramone has called her “part of the new old-soul generation.” Indeed, Amber sings with a kind of depth that belies her young age. Reflective, achingly beautiful gems like “Letter from My Lonelier Self,” which won the Grand Prize in 2010’s NPR Mountain Stage New Song Contest, have been her stock in trade over four previous recordings. But on this fully realized outing, she raises the bar a couple of notches. Flanked by kindred spirits and consummate string players Dave Eggar on cello, and Tim Snider on violin, and with gently persuasive underscoring from percussionist Chuck Palmer, Amber testifies with intimate, endearingly candid story songs full of personal memories and eloquent images, her voice ringing out with radiance and clarity in the cavernous church.

Whether it’s the energetic cautionary tale “Don’t You (Take Him as a Lover When You’ve Got Him as a Friend),” the insinuating swing of “Novocaine,” the playful “Good Mystery” or the poignant “Darkest Dark, Brightest Light,” Amber inhabits each tune like an engaging tour guide. As she says of “Good Mystery”: “I was angry at the time and wrote the song from the perspective of the person I was angry at.” Her point of view on “Darkest Dark, Brightest Light” was a tad more cerebral. “It’s about how much activity there can be inside of us, in dreams, in thoughts, and conversations we have inside our heads.”

Some of her most striking imagery comes across on the haunting “Full Moon in Paris,” which was inspired by a memorable visit to the City of Lights. “It was one of the most beautiful nights

01. Hold On (5:41)

Written by: Tom Waits
Native Tongue Music Publishing (ASCAP)

02. Don’t You (2:12)

Written by: Amber Rubarth
Inspired Music (ASCAP), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

03. Strive (Interlude) (1:17)

Written by: Amber Rubarth, Dave Eggar, Charles Justin Palmer, and Tim Snider
Inspired Music (ASCAP), Dave Eggar Music (ASCAP), Chuck Palmer Music (ASCAP), Little Timmy Publishing (SESAC), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

12. Full Moon in Paris (3:26)

Written by: Amber Rubarth

Inspired Music (ASCAP), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

13. Just Like a Woman (3:57)

Written by: Bob Dylan

Dwarf Music (SESAC)

14. Storms Are on the Ocean (3:39)

Written by: A.P. Carter, Maybelle Carter, Sara Carter (Public Domain 1927)

Arranged by: Amber Rubarth/Inspired Music (ASCAP), Chesky Productions (ASCAP)

Musicians

Amber Rubarth: guitar, vocals

Dave Eggar: cello

Chuck Palmer: percussion

Tim Snider: violin

Credits

Producer: David Chesky

Co-Producer: Dave Eggar

Executive Producer: Norman Chesky

Recorded, edited, and mastered by: Nicholas Prout

Assistant Engineer: Alex Sterling

Production Coordinator: Lisa Hershfield

Cover Photo: Brian Blausen/B & B Studios

Tray Card Photo: Luciana Pampalone

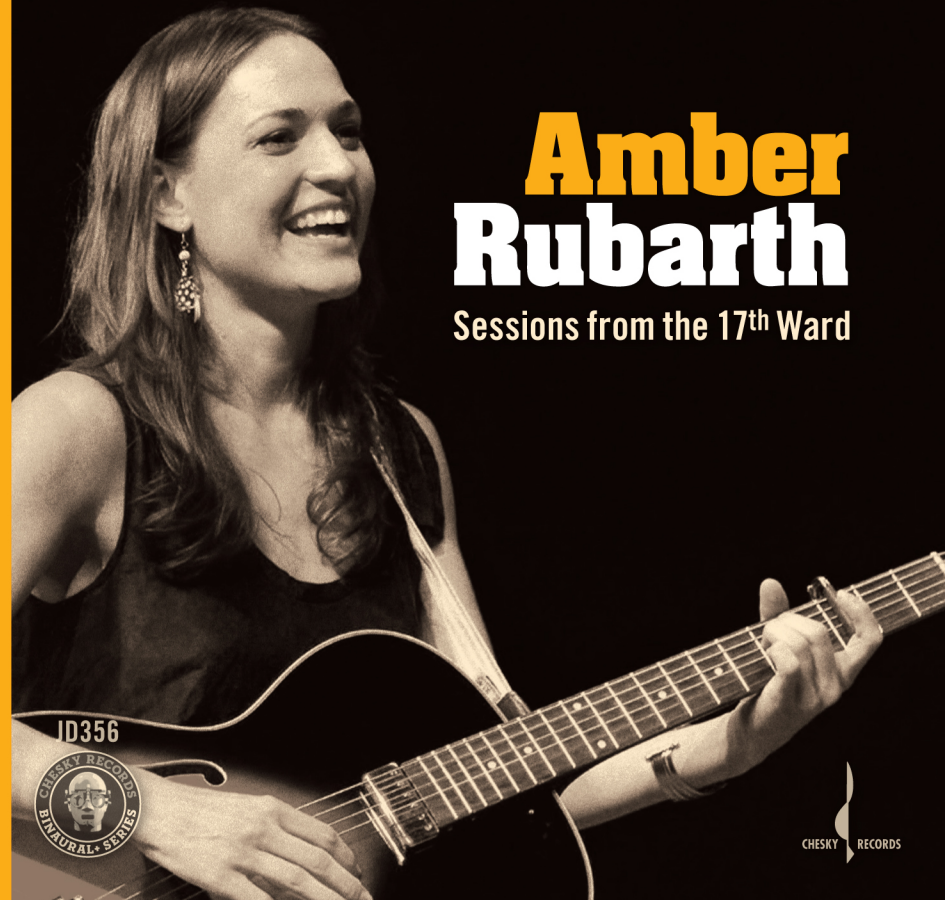
Session Photos: Nicholas Prout

Graphic Design: Jeff Wong

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For more information: www.amberrubarth.com

Management: Jim Recor for Clear Entertainment



Amber Rubarth

Sessions from the 17th Ward

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