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## Music News Of The World

-- Aug 11, 1997 --

Edited by Michael Goldberg

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### Juliana Hatfield Labors Over More 'Mature' Work

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No release date of new LP as alterna-songstress says she's still got a lot of work ahead of her.

**A**ddicted To Noise New York correspondent **Matthew Budman reports** : Rock songstress Juliana Hatfield is apparently not in any rush to get her music out. It's been about two years since fans last heard from her.

And there's no sign that she is nearing completion of her latest work any time

soon.

But when the sweet-voiced alterna-rocker finally does emerge from the studio -- whenever that may be -- Hatfield said she expects to have a few surprises for her fans, namely a more mature collection of songs with more sophisticated production.

Until then, those waiting anxiously for Hatfield's follow-up release to 1995's *Only Everything* will have to be patient, she said. "In December I told people the album would be out in February," Hatfield said on the phone from a Holiday Inn in South Carolina. "In February I said it would be out this summer. Now, I don't know."

The reason? She simply isn't happy with the recordings. "At this point I'm still writing, and I'm going to go back in the studio, but I don't know exactly when. I may put out an EP before the album comes out," she said.

The new songs are expected to represent a change in direction lyrically. "I think the new ones have a different point of view," she said. "They're not so wounded. The worldview of the songs has expanded. They're not all about psychic pain anymore. I'm a lot less miserable than I was in my teens and early 20s -- everyone's pretty miserable in those years."

Part of the change in approach to her socially conscious writing style and personal touch, she said, has to do with making a statement without hitting listeners over the head with it.

"I want my writing to be more subtle and yet more powerful at the same time. I want to say things that people can understand, but I don't want to knock them over the head with them. There are ways to say something other than just *saying* it."

Though Hatfield's studio sophistication has grown along with her lyrical sense, listeners shouldn't bother seeking out fresh influences on her music -- there will be no trace of the trend toward trip-hop or electronica, for that matter. "On some of my new recordings, there's a bit of sampling, but it's so subtle that people won't even notice it," she said. "I'll never radically alter the process of recording. I'm still very much into guitars and amps. I think guitars and amps and acoustic drums come across live much better. There's got to be room for fuck-ups to give it humanity. Otherwise it doesn't sweat and bleed enough."

Considering that she's spent years disavowing the label "a woman in rock," Hatfield was to many who have followed her career an unexpected addition to the all-female Lilith Fair this summer. "When I was first asked, I thought I didn't want to do this women-in-rock thing," she said. "But I realized I was bored and restless, and playing to lots of people is fun. And the festival was fun. It was strange for me because everyone on the tour seemed very well-adjusted and sober all the time. It sort of freaked me out. I'm used to scuzzy rock tours and feeling insecure and seeing outrageous things."

The tour's New York stop, she said, proved somewhat difficult, however. Like others performing on the festival's second stage, she had trouble rousing the diffident crowd. "The audience was disconcertingly mellow. I had to ask them to stand up," she said. "But I blame myself for that. I thought that we kind of had a bad show."

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