

## Renee Cologne Biography

Another cover record? In the hands of a less talented, less eclectic artist, this endeavor could have been a disaster. However, in *Coverlings*, Renee Cologne breathes new life into a collection of 11 well-known songs from the 60's, 70's, and 80's in a way that is fresh, rich and nuanced.

(ASCAP) Multi-instrumentalist Renee Cologne first trained classically at the University of North Carolina in Greenville, N.C. before transferring and graduating from Berklee College of Music in Boston with a degree in Music Production and Engineering. She parlayed that knowledge and put her short attention span, need to multi-task and obsessive attention to detail to work, and began creating what she calls "soundscapes" – aural rooms with layer upon layer of texture that intend to offer a listener surprise and reward upon repeated listens.

Cologne first exploded onto the downtown New York scene in the mid-1990s, performing at top venues including Joe's Pub (at the Public Theater), Fez, The Cutting Room, and CBGB's (RIP), to name a few. In 1994 the New York Foundation for the Arts awarded her their prestigious Artists' Fellowship grant for Music Composition. This enabled her to build her first home studio, start her own independent record label called *Backdoor Records*, and release her debut CD entitled *Aromatherapy*, because, how can you not call your first album that when your last name is "Cologne"? She toured in promotion for her own music, as the drummer in the all-girl all-star band Big Panty, and as a background singer and guitar player for the inimitable MeatLoaf. These travels took her all over the world and to exotic places like Slovenia, Mexico and the UK performing with MeatLoaf for their Hyde Park "Party in the Park", before hundreds of thousands of people.

As a composer and singer, she has written or performed for stage, dance and film. Her collection of a cappella choral pieces entitled *Hymns to a Hungry Planet* was a nod to her passion for the Bulgarian Women's Choirs. But it was Cologne's second release, *The Opposite Of* (2004), that finally brought together all of her influences into a tidy, powerful package. Playing many of the instruments herself, and honing her skills as a programmer and producer, *The Opposite Of* was a beautiful, complex and densely orchestrated record, featuring strings, horns, industrial beats and soaring melodies. *Collected Sounds* said of *The Opposite Of* "There are records that are immediately arresting. This is one of them."

2007 saw the release of *Rock & Roll Housewife*, which dealt with the everyday life of a housewife, sort of – what to do with the FedEx man, how to buy appliances at Sear's and when it is time to resort to yelling at the top of your lungs. Though on first glance the album title and some of the song lyrics have a humorous bent, there is depth and heartbreak just below the surface. The album garnered accolades and was included on KGRL's List of Influential CD's and found Cologne chosen as THE ARTISTS FORUM "2007 Artist of the Year".

*Coverlings*, Cologne's newest release, reveals yet another layer: beyond singer, songwriter, producer, engineer, and soundscape artist, it turns out Cologne also shines as a curator. Choosing songs that have resonated with and moved her over the years, Cologne curates a new kind of soundscape - a "coverling." The title came to her early on: there was something alien

about the word but also very human, as in earthling vs. alien; as in human acoustic sounds (voice, the sound of a bow on a string, a French horn) meeting alien machine sounds (beats, created odd sounds, synths). In paying tribute to these varied artists, Cologne interprets, deconstructs, and then *reconstructs* to create lush, ethereal covers that are both comfortingly familiar and strikingly alien.