

LINER NOTES BY FANNY CHIARELLO

EN “Before I begin creating music, I warm up. The exercises help me reach a state of openness and emptiness. Bring the physical opposites of my body into a state of tensionless tension, in order to unite drumming and singing,” explains Sabina Leone. Reading these words, you may imagine a meditative music, which softness absorbs the overflow of emotions specific to our times, while civilization continues to accelerate as if to crash more quickly against the point of no return. But that's not what we're talking about here. “I organize my thoughts and emotional chaos with music,” she says. It is about giving chaos a harmonious shape.

There is indeed something hypnotic about the four tracks on *Rubbish Rubbish*, quite understandably as each was conceived through improvisation over loops. Yet, what strikes you upon first listening is their eclecticism. Héloïse's musical personality is strong enough for this first impression to be coupled with the satisfaction provided by a coherent whole, but with the added bonus of a little spice: that of freedom. Through this opus, you can sense the artist's boundless curiosity, which leads us far from asceticism. I consider it a form of healthy appetite for the infinity of musical possibilities: Sabina doesn't hold back from experimenting wherever her creativity leads her and develops each idea generously. “The creative process is different for each song,” she admits.

You might think you're dealing with a mutant dub record when you hear *Anelare l'aria*, which opens this EP, with its slow, deep percussion, delay effects and flute sound. Then Sabina's voice processed by some kind of glitchy auto-tune adds a sprinkle of trap to the mix. The lyrics, in Italian, describe the interference of technology in our earthly experience. The song stretches out into a hypnotic minimalism, with the pulsing of the frame drum.

Then it's as if you've left the dancefloor to freshen up and come back to another venue. But you stay, and you raise your arms because you're caught up in one of those melancholic club anthems that you remember long after the night has passed. *Rubbish Rubbish*, which gave the EP its title and which Sabina intended to be a punk song, has morphed into an irresistible Casio-pop hymn, carried by a warm, deep and vibrant voice: We don't need more waste on this world / We need more to unfurl, Sabina sings to us over silky, shimmering music reminiscent of *The Knife*—one thinks of *Pass This On* and its synth that sounds like a steel drum for eternity. I'm talking about the kind of alchemy that can turn pop into legend.

Then, without you being prepared, you're plunged into a room with a more mysterious atmosphere, *Essere Madre*. The musician loops her voice, becoming a choir of herself against a backdrop of a vocal drone, and over these loops, she improvises a lament, moving easily from low to high notes, using vocal techniques evocative of Meredith Monk or Lyra Pramuk, but also ancestral techniques such as ululation. We are in ancient Greece, with the mourners, and we are here and now, in a world where there is so much to mourn. “I dedicate this lament to all those left behind who have lost their loved ones in war,” says Sabina.

Piccola Mano also relies on loops, this time focusing more on the artist's primary instrument. My impression is that Sabina is tap-dancing while playing the drums—this, she tells me, is the effect of the triplets. Inspired by the experience of childbirth [something a nulliparous woman like me could not have guessed], this percussive pyrotechnics is accompanied by contrasted vocals: sometimes restrained, almost a breath, at times it expresses fully its plasticity, leaving a tremolo behind to suddenly vibrate the mic close to saturation. The intimate address of a mother to her daughter cannot erase the pains of childbirth nor the darkness of the world from which she would like to protect her.

In 1962, 25 year-old David Hockney presented four canvases in Young Contemporaries exhibition in London. He titled this eclectic four-piece body of work *Demonstrations of Versatility*, as a painted manifesto claiming that he refused to be pinned down to a single style. Yet you could always tell which was a David Hockney piece. I hear *Rubbish Rubbish* as Sabina Leone's own demonstrations of versatility.