SX Exhibit 221 DP

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Jonatha Brooke *Back in the Circus* (Bad Dog/Verve)

Jonatha Brooke has been making intimate, well-crafted records for years, but she remains an outsider to super success, her literate folk-pop going mostly unnoticed by the public (if adored by critics). Befitting her Amherst coffeehouse roots, *Back in the Circus* is stocked with lovingly detailed songs as well as cover versions of other artist's work, Brooke lending her aching soprano to very personal renditions of "God Only Knows," "Fire and Rai and "Eye in the Sky." Singing against unsettling drum machines and comforting keyboards, Brooke sounds world weary in songs rent with emotion. It's as if she's survived some travail and needs to lean on her friends (us). "Sleeping With the Light On" is sung as if she's under the covers, with Brooke's lyric "There's an order to things now that you're gone" ringing true for anyone who has ever been devastated by a breakup. "No Net Below" sound uplifting at first, but belies another failed relationship. Comedy Central this ain't, but Brooke's fireplace folk may b just what battered heads and lonely hearts need. (KEN MICALEF)