

CECILIA JAMES

Bio

Short

Cecilia James is a songwriter and visual artist from Santa Barbara, California. Set to dreamy guitar-based arrangements, her blend of conceptual and autobiographical writing favors nuance over flair and is ripe with a melodic sweetness that allows intimacy to become a calm and sublime feeling. Her debut EP, *Different Ground*, is set for a mid-summer 2021 release.

Medium

Cecilia James is a songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and visual artist from Santa Barbara, California. Set to dreamy guitar-based arrangements, her blend of conceptual and autobiographical writing favors nuance over flair and is ripe with a melodic sweetness that allows intimacy to become a calm and sublime feeling.

In 2017, James released her first single, a breezy surf-rock tune entitled “Malibu,” that saw her collaborate with fellow Santa Barbara multi-instrumentalist and producer Maxton Hunter. Her 2018 follow-up, “Sonic Baby,” presented a much more stark and atmospheric sound palette that was largely fueled by James’ tender, velvet-like melodies and the track’s psych-tinged guitar passages. Shortly after the release of “Sonic Baby,” James embarked on her first tour, traveling across the American Southwest, performing her growing collection of songs on the stages of desert bars and music clubs everywhere from California to Louisiana.

From the latter portion of 2018 through early 2020, James returned to the studio to complete the sessions for her first EP, which had started multiple years prior with the tracking of “Malibu.” Teaming up with producer Jesse Rhodes and a variety of other musical collaborators, she finished work on her official debut, the aptly titled *Different Ground*.

Comprised of deeply personal songs written between the ages of 15 and 20, the material on James’ first release reflects the sea of changes that occurs in the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Set for a mid-summer 2021 release, the EP’s seven tracks offer a charming mix of confessional guitar jams and warm, jangly beach-pop that evokes the cool blue skies and sun-kissed vistas of California’s central coastline.

Long

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Raised in the small coastal town of Carpinteria, California, Cecilia James, full name Jamey Cecille Geston, grew up surrounded by the arts. Her mother and father, the latter of whom was also a musician, encouraged her early endeavors in music, dance, and performative arts, and by age 11, she was dabbling in writing her first songs. As a teenager, she harnessed her skills by performing at nearby Santa Barbara’s street fairs and farmers markets, eventually graduating to playing local venues and immersing herself in the region’s vibrant music scene.

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Comprised of deeply personal songs written between the ages of 15 and 20, the material on James’ first release reflects the sea of changes that occurs in the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Its title could be interpreted as a symbol for not only new terms, but new perspectives, new people, and new paths across unfamiliar waterways onto more meaningful terrain.

Set for an mid-summer 2021 release, the EP’s seven tracks are performed with a subdued yet intense fervor that illuminates the material’s vulnerable core. With compositions dating as far back as 2015 and as recent as last year, these are songs close and dear to James’ heart: vessels that capture the emotional trials of growing up, pouring yourself into your art, and trying to find your footing in an ever-changing world.

Coated in a delightfully hazy aesthetic, the music on *Different Ground* offers a charming mix of confessional guitar jams and warm, jangly beach-pop that evokes the cool blue skies and sun-kissed vistas of California’s central coastline. The slow-burning beach-grunge of “Pretty In Your Eyes” binds spoken word into a winding melody to channel feelings of longing and romantic desire. The restrained guitar work and subtle accents of percussion on “Headrush” and a stripped-back rendition of “Malibu” also paint a mellow, summery picture, furthering the project’s meditative mood and ambiance.

Elsewhere, such as on the verbose “My Name Is To Call,” James’ delicate vocal cadence works to great emotional effect, fluctuating alongside the song’s chord progressions to enhance the drama inside the relationship-focused narrative. In these instances, her rhetoric finds joy in the wonder that adorns new romance and comfort in the solace of lost love. This premise is fully realized on the EP’s closing cut and title track, “Different Ground,” which suggests that while the personal differences that often end relationships can be painful, those same conflicts can also be the breeding grounds for immense personal growth.

Different Ground is a project born from youth and shaped by obtaining experience. With her first body of work, Cecilia James has introduced herself as a capable songwriter with an enchanting edge.