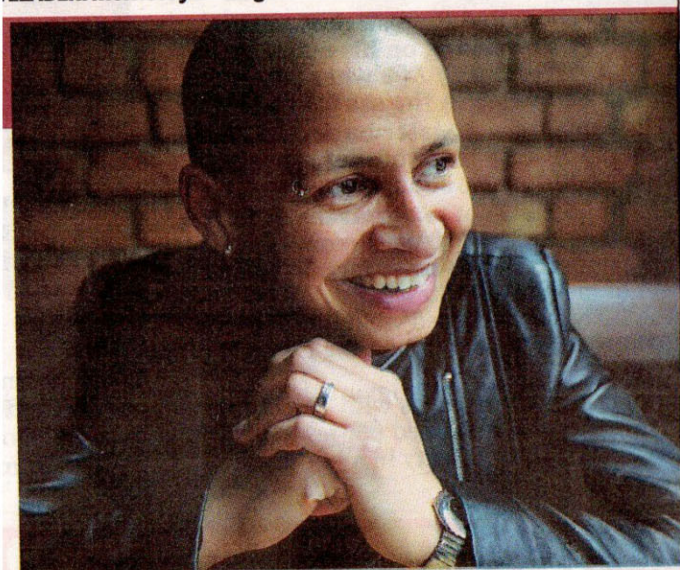




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QUEST FOR TRUTH: Shaz Oye's debut album shines

TOUGH URBAN HYMNS RING TRUE

DUBLINER Shaz Oye is an artist with something to say. Her debut album is probably the most intense collection of songs you'll hear this year.

"I feel I'm a beginner," says Shaz. "I only started playing guitar in 2001."

But these songs, produced by Shaz and Dave McCune, don't sound like the efforts of a novice. They are tough urban hymns with a history.

Explorations of hurt. A quest for inner peace. The stuff of the most powerful popular music.

"I was lucky when I was growing up," says Shaz. "As a small black child in Ireland you had to learn to fight your corner . . . I did feel increasingly detached. Because I wasn't part of the

Intense debut album from new artist with plenty to say on the stuff of life

mainstream white society. And I also came out in my teens as a lesbian . . . I had to try to find a sense of identity and belonging."

Shaz worked for the Dublin Aids Alliance and spent 10 years campaigning on issues of social justice.

During this time she discovered and developed her writing skills.

"That journey brought me back to music," she says.

Shaz recalls growing up in Dublin's North Wall. "My mother was a single

parent," she says. "She lived with her mother Mabel, my grandmother. Next door there was a woman called Auntie May and her sister Ann.

"I used to listen to Auntie May's record collection. She had a lot of swing, Glen Miller, Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald. My grandmother was fond of Jim Reeves.

"My mother was into Elvis. They are the influences I carried on a subconscious level. Then the person whose work made me sit up was Paul Weller. And Bruce Springsteen."

The Truth According To Shaz Oye will be launched tomorrow with a celebratory gig at Radio City in Store Street.