

It's not her fault

"ALBUM" from Page 56

"Solitude Standing," her successful follow-up to 1985's underground smash "Suzanne Vega," is proof that Vega is the folksy parable spinner so many feminist artists have desperately tried to be for years. The difference is that Vega doesn't hammer the listener over the head with tired pseudo-politico babble.

"Luka," Vega's hit at the moment, seems an unlikely candidate for the pop airwaves. Few vocalists could get away with a song about the little kid downstairs telling how he gets slapped around. But Vega's deadpan delivery and sincerity removes the slightest vestige of melodrama and instead makes an impossible pop subject seem bearable.

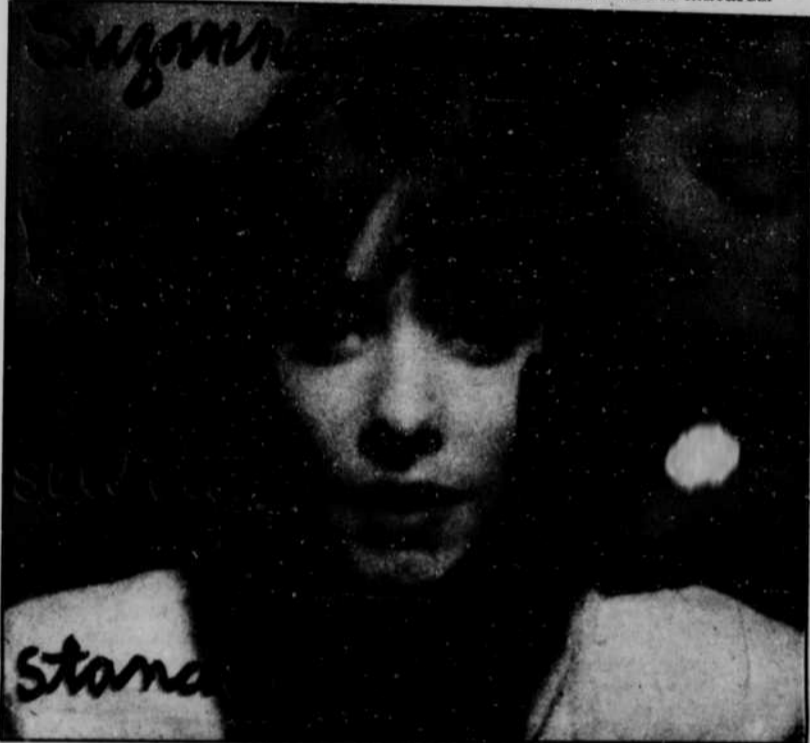
Vega's forte is her stream of consciousness lyrical forays. These aren't hummable ballads as much as they are melodic ramblings where Vega plays the subjective observer, thrusting herself into the situation and draining

each slice of veracity out of it.

In the a cappella opener, "Tom's Diner," Vega describes a mysterious woman entering one of the East's infamous greasy spoons. Vega doesn't bother explaining anything here or anywhere else on the album; she merely describes the scene and obscures the outsider's motives. She relates the fortitude of daily existence to her own neurosis without dragging the public into her demons.

If anything, "Solitude Standing" is about the loner and the romance behind that premise. On the title track, when Vega sings, "Solitude stands by the window/She turns her head as I walk into the room," you begin to understand the magnitude of her imagery and the meaning becomes simple. Vega avoids the source of her own angst, but it seems to creep up in each tacit fold of her paranoia.

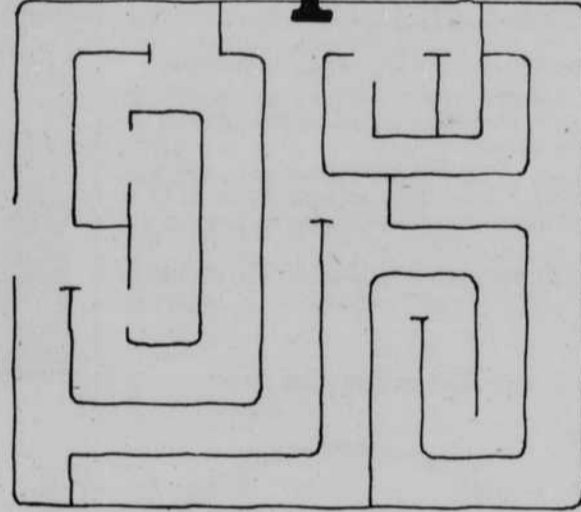
When that becomes evident in each song and each lyric, it's easy to realize just how important a talent Vega is going to be as her career matures.



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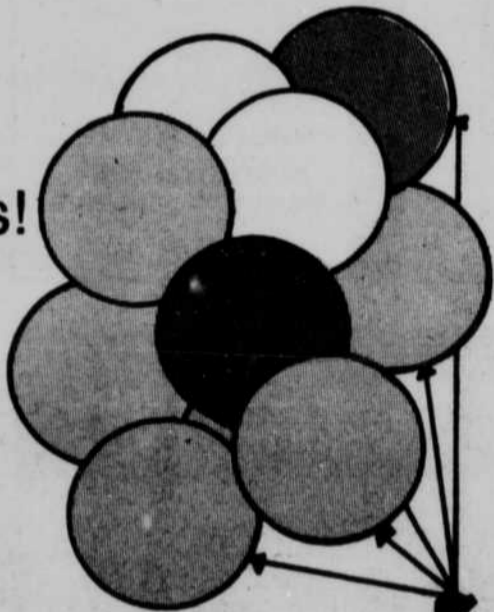
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