SOFÍA VALDÉS

A 20-year-old singer/songwriter born and bred in Panama, Sofía Valdés creates the kind of emotionally honest and beautifully original pop music that could only come from years of exploration. After learning to play guitar at the age of eight and writing her first song at 13, the independent-minded artist sharpened her craft in part by building an eclectic sonic vocabulary informed by everything from folk and bossa nova to ’60s Motown and ’70s soul. On her debut EP *Ventura*, Valdés alchemizes those inspirations into a sound all her own, gracing each track with her indelible songwriting and beguiling voice.

With its transcendent melodies and shapeshifting rhythms, *Ventura* is an elegant introduction the vibrant musicality that may very well be in Valdés’s blood: her great-grandfather was the legendary Cuban musician Miguelito Valdés, and her great-great grandmother was Silvia De Grasse (a Panamanian singer who once performed with Louis Armstrong). As a child, Valdés discovered her musical talents after a therapist suggested she take up guitar to improve her coordination and concentration as she struggled in school. She took charge of her musical education and quickly found her way to formative influences like Nick Drake, João Gilberto, Stevie Nicks, and Bobby Womack. Later on, she honed her distinct songwriting voice and soon began the process of bringing her debut EP to life.

Co-produced by Valdés, *Ventura* bears a lushly textured, endlessly unpredictable sound that perfectly echoes the effusive emotion of her lyrics. And in creating the EP, Valdés found her way to an unexpected outcome: a deeper connection to her musical legacy and heritage, and a newfound but undeniably powerful sense of self-acceptance.