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### ***Becky's about to rip into city***

Don't mention comfy shoes or the country club to Becky Duke. The former nurse rips into the suburban dream from the opening bars of her debut album. "Who gives a damn about growing old gracefully she exclaims, setting the tone for a dozen songs that give no-good men short shrift, but are also poignant confessionals on love and sex.

For Duke, *Like it Like This?* is the result of five years of hard slog since she turned full time musician.

It's a richly produced album, with some expert guitar playing from song writing partner Bruce Knapp and acoustic bass from Danny Thompson. And Duke's candid observations on love and relationships mark her out as a skilled songwriter, especially on *You Only*. "There's a fair bit of sex and depression" she jokes. "I suppose you could say that I have an interest in human experience and about relationships. "I had the chance to learn through nursing how to empathise with people. I think that really helps with song writing."

The 34 year old's voice echoes strongly of Tori Amos, and she's happy to cite other strong female artists – Kate Rusby and Ani di Franco - as influences.

And a friendship struck up with Heidi Berry – who guests on *Can You Hear Me?* - taught her the merits of going it alone after she left nursing in 1996 to hone her musical skills. "Heidi's contract with 4AD wasn't renewed because she hadn't done well commercially – even though she's made something like five albums. "It taught me that you can do all that and still find yourself out of a deal. I set up my label to be in control of that."

Now touring the country – she arrives in Worcester this month – Duke has ruled out any return to nursing. But she continues a regular live slot at psychiatric hospitals around her native London and donates £1 from every album sold to the mental health charity MIND. "In a strange way, it was after I left nursing and started doing this that I actually found out who I was she adds.

Becky Duke plays the Marrs Bar, Worcester, on Sunday June 17. Tickets cost £4 on the door. But The Pulse has two pairs of tickets with two pairs of albums for a special competition draw.

What is the name of Becky Duke's friend and famous singer-songwriter who guests on her debut album? Send your answer on a postcard with your address to Becky Duke Competition, Pulse, Evening News, Hylton Road, Worcester, WR2

5JX. Please ensure your answers arrive by Friday, June 8. The first two correct answers drawn will win.