

Mp3 Alice Despard - Vessel



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Washington, D.C.'s indie maven unleashes her internal voice. 9 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, Shake Roots Rock Vessel Songs Details: The songs of Washington, D.C.-based singer-guitarist Alice Despard are like New York City rock 'n' roll played on an old Harmony acoustical guitar -- like Patti Smith interpreting the work of Neil Untried Despard fuses her nonrational poetic observations with a warm mysticism, producing sparse, intellectually muscular songs that resemble nothing so much as four-minute pop hymns. Blending the stark realism of the Velvet Underground with the oblique optimism of early R.E.M., they play as fresh and original while touching some of the most significant bases in modern rock. Add to this mix the influences of Van Morrison, the Beatles, Mission of Burma, East River Pipe, Vic Chesnutt, and the Sea and Cake, and you find you're listening to a songwriter as distinctive as any in alternative pop. Swinging between poles of urban angst and alt-country pastoralism, Despard fuses the external and the internal, the physical and the spiritual. From her formative years leading the group Hyaa! to a solo career spanning four albums, she has carved out a unique vantage point. With each record, her perspective resonates more deeply. Despard's new 'Vessel,' released by U.S. indie label Wampus Multimedia, brings her expressive voice to the fore. Comprised of original material both old and new, it reinvents her traditional indie aesthetic as a sort of unamplified melodicism, the abrupt beauty of a singer left standing after all the Marshall stacks have blown. While Despard's recent solo efforts, 'Push Me Pull You' (1999), 'Alice Despard Group' (2000), and 'Thinning of the Veil' (2003), were rooted firmly in the whirl-'n'-blur of indie pop, 'Vessel' relies on the arresting candor of her unadorned voice. While Despard makes what The Washington Post called "lush, ethereal country rock," the music's heady spiritualism is difficult to classify. Whether accompanied solely by her acoustical guitar, or by inventive collaborators Evan Pollack (drums), Philip D'Ambrosio (bass), and Bobby Birdsong (lap steel), Despard leaves sonic

fingerprints not found in the recordings of other artists. From the Velvet-esque "The Well" to the soulfully plaintive "By the Way" to the sweetly sparkling "Hold You Up," 'Vessel' speaks to a rich internal life. Produced by Mark Doyon at Wampus Sound Studio, 'Vessel' is part of the Wampus Multimedia Sessions series, featuring literate singer-songwriters captured in the studio over the course of a single day. The focus falls on the intimacy of performance, evoking the mood of a live show in the context of the studio.

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