

Mp3 Ken Skeens & Leigh Goldsmith - Americana-down A Barefoot Road



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Americana acoustic contemporary lyrics in traditional style original songs with harmony 12 MP3 Songs in this album (45:37) ! Related styles: FOLK: Gentle, COUNTRY: Americana Details: CD REVIEW

AMERICANA DOWN A BAREFOOT ROAD KEN SKEENS LEIGH GOLDSMITH By: Keith Hope This new cd by Ken Skeens and Leigh Goldsmith is simply outstanding. It combines well-written songs, gorgeous lead and harmony vocals, professional production and excellent instrumentation, resulting in a Florida folk album that is among the very best. Many of you know Ken and Leigh and have enjoyed seeing them perform many times at the Florida Folk Festival, the Will McLean Festival and others. For those who don't, here is some background information on this husband and wife Florida folk duo taken from the cd cover: Ken's musical roots come from his Appalachian heritage. His paternal grandfather was known for his singing in the mountains of Kentucky. Ken's home was in a coal company mining camp complete with a "company store." Saturday nights were spent listening to the Grand Old Opry on a battery powered radio. . . [and] Ken learned to play guitar by watching the local "pickers." Leigh grew up in a small town in Pennsylvania where she loved to walk the country roads. She enjoyed singing harmony with her dad. . . . The joy of music was also passed down to her from her maternal grandfather. His family sang and played a variety of instruments. . . . The cd starts off with Ken's distinctive, soothing, soft-spoken baritone explaining that although life may take us in many directions, "that sweet memory is calling me, I'm going down a road I know." The memory is of home and every road leads there. Leigh's harmony vocal comes in on the second chorus and "that sweet memory" is blessed with "sweet harmony." The next song has a similar theme living for the time when you can return to your roots by "Goin' Home." This song is a good example of what a fine songwriter Ken is. No words are wasted; every

phrase supports the theme and the consistent internal rhymes tickle your ear, for example: It's a hard night of drivin' Why did I ever roam But I bear that load on a lonesome road And live for goin' home. The background instruments, dobro and fiddle, are wonderful on this track, adding to the mood of longing and joy for home. "In the Light" is "a reminder of our blessings and of the Spirit within us." The first verse grabs your attention immediately and guides you gently into the mystic: What shall I give you as the keeper of the key I shall give you peace and love and perfect harmony How shall I send it then as the brother of the dove It shall fly on winds of truth on wings of perfect love. As on all the tracks, Leigh's beautiful harmony vocal fits perfectly and effortlessly with Ken's. "In My Dreams" is a sensuous love song. And what better for a love song than a gorgeous waltz with tasty acoustic lead guitar, double-tracked fiddle and perfect harmonies: I feel magic in your motion... Your soft skin is my potion With warm lips I can taste. "All American Jeans" is a complete change of pace a humorous send up of "an American icon." As us old folkies grow, so does the stress on our jeans: Oh them all American jeans just a bustin' at the seams Check 'em out as they pass Strains the stitches on that denim just to squeeze your fine self in 'em I assure you they do show a lot of class. It's hard to have a favorite song on this cd, but "Secrets of the Sands" sure stands out and lingers in my mind. Starting with a haunting and beautiful spanish guitar intro in a minor key, it's a song about how the sands, sun, wind, storms, and ocean all whisper to us about the history of the Earth. And if we listen close enough, we'll learn the secrets of the sands: Out where the highest ground's a sacred mound with windsong in the trees There's baby cries and lullabies and ancient melodies Echoes and shadows, whispers on the wind Speak to me of mysteries, of things that have been Oh this is hallowed ground, tread lightly, its fate is in your hands Where 'ere you go be still and know The secrets of the sands. Everything works well on this song, the lyrics, melody, harmonies, and spanish guitar, blend together to create a great recording. While most of the songs are written by Ken, Leigh also is an accomplished songwriter. "Silver to Gold" is her gift to her "second parents for their 50th wedding anniversary," and what a gift. Another beautiful waltz, this one features an accordion (or concertina?) and what sounds like Leigh singing harmony with herself: The romancing and dancing goes on For their love is an unending song Together they never will part As each memory they hold heart to heart. Silver to gold, to have and to hold Through all the smiles and the tears Silver to gold, two lives unfold Walk hand in hand through the years. I am knocked out by and dearly love "The Ballad of the Nauga." When I caught on about half way through the song, I had to laugh out loud and hit the replay button to start from the top.

I hope you will have a similar experience so I won't give away the secret here. Cautionary but hilarious, it tells a sad, yet familiar tale of how we humans have "shot and skinned" many a critter until they could hide no more, and went extinct. This song is a classic. "Goin' Back" is another song written by Leigh and it's a beauty also. In it she is thanking her Mom and family "for that precious simpler time that is 'always there right in side of me.'" Ken adds a nice harmony on this one and again, Leigh harmonizes with herself. It evokes what we must all feel from time to time, a longing to go back to a better place: I'm goin' back to a time when life was sweet I'm goin' back to the home that I know I'm goin' back to a peace of mind that I had I'm goin' back to long, long ago. This cd ends with a masterpiecethat's the only word that does it justice. To songwriters and those who want to write, this song is an example of songwriting at its best. To start with, the title says it all and titles are important: "Down a Barefoot Road" paints a nostalgic picture of the carefree days of youth, especially if you were lucky enough to grow up somewhere near a dirt road leading to a fishing hole. (Check out the photo on the back cover). Folks, it just doesn't get any better than this: Fishin' pole in my hand, fresh bait in a rusty can Headin' for the promised land Down a barefoot road Hopin' I can catch some trout, feeling free, school is out Livin' life without a doubt Down a barefoot road Swing 'neath that big oak tree, guly, guly stingaree Olee oleee all in free Down a barefoot road Lighnin' bugs in mason jars, singin' with that ole guitar Wish upon a fallin' star Down a dusty road. A special tip of the hat to Bob Rafkin for his excellent production and to the studio musicians for their fine work on guitar, fiddle, dobro and bass. You'll love this cd so go buy it at the next festival or check out Ken's website at (where else) kenskeens.com. Ken and Leigh, great work here, I don't know you'll top it, but I bet you will.

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