

Mp3 Leslie Alexander - Garden In The Stones



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country folk /acoustic 13 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Folk, FOLK: Modern Folk Details: Leslie Alexander grew up on an Alberta sheep farm couldn't wait to get to the city. She hit the road, made a bunch of mistakes wrote songs about them. She wound up singing on a street corner in Vancouver for spare change. She does not consider this a mistake. Along came producer John Ellis (Be Good Tanyas), who put together Leslie's first CD Bird in the House (1997). Tom Zillich (Westender) called this collection of tunes about street life redemption one of the best indie releases I've heard. Anyway, it got Leslie out of the rain into some coffeehouses where she set her sights on the concert stage. Then she contributed a recording to the Grrrls with Guitars Compilation #1(1999), jumping in a van with a bunch of other Grrrls to tour Western Canada. Noticing the disappearance of grain elevators from the prairies, Leslie began writing songs about the contrasts between her rural roots her new home in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside that would become her second record Savage Country. Fellow ex-busker Harry Manx turned up, fresh off the plane from India, so Leslie gave him a good dinner a few gigs. John Ellis Wyckham Porteous took them both into the studio to make Savage Country (PHD Canada 2002), also enlisting the help of the Be Good Tanya's Sam Parton, Angela Harris (Maximum Music) Linda MacRae. Since then, Leslie's appeared on concert festival stages across Canada, headlining or sharing the spotlight with the likes of Mary Gauthier, Corb Lund, Jim Byrnes. Music writers praised Savage Country wherever she went, the record turning up on Campus, CBC, BBC, Australian National Public Radio playlists. In 2004, Savage Country was #4 Most Played Canadian Folk/Roots album on the CBC's Galaxie Satellite Radio. Invited to open shows for Barney Bentall in support of his upcoming record on True North (Spring 2006), before long Leslie became a part of his acoustic-based trio, playing banjo, guitar piano. Pre-production with John Ellis Wyckham Porteous for her third record was underway when Jane Siberry popped out of

the crowd one night offered to help, contributing vocal tracks inviting Leslie to open shows for her.

Barney Dustin Bentall also pitched in, as well as folk/roots Sony/BMG artist Jeremy Fisher. Garden in the Stones was inspired by Leslie's roof garden in downtown Vancouver, where she found comfort after the deaths of her grandmother and her priest. The cycle of the seasons, the passage of day into night and the stubbornness of new life in a harsh environment are recurring images throughout the recordings. Leslie created Garden with faith that there are still some folks out there who believe in the value of an old fashioned full-length album designed to be experienced as a single body of work. Her original artwork on the album jacket recalls the alt-country psychedelia of artists like Gram Parsons back in the sixties, a time when album art was as important to the buyer as the music. With Garden in the Stones, Leslie's goal is to travel with the listener on a journey through some of life's most difficult passages and to arrive at a place of hope. Recorded with minimal overdubs at Vancouver's Factory and N.A.L. Studios, Garden moves through roots traditions including folk, bluegrass, traditional country and blues. Treatments range from sparse intimacy to full production, complementing tunes that range from gentle introspection to flat out folk rock'n roll. Garden in the Stones has generated some buzz as two of its tracks advanced to the semi-finals of the International Song Contest, three more recieved honorable mentions in Billboard's song of the Year Conest, two others were chosen to be featured on compilation CDs representing Sonicbids the Pacific Music Industry Association. Leslie's songs are currently receiving international airplay on her own recordings as well as cuts and co-writes with othr artists, and have been licensed to film and television. Performing solo or with her band The Wild Rose Hippies featuring John Ellis on pedal steel, banjo, guitars, Leslie's unique perspective, songs stories combine to create a show that moves from pin-drop intimacy to foot-stompin', flat-out folk rock'n roll, taking you all the beautiful terrifying places she's been.

BEST ROOTS ARTIST Heads up Leslie Alexander may be the best roots artist youve never heard of. Garden in the Stones, the third disc from this hard-touring folk-country crossover, is a strong album of eminently listenable songs . . . Featuring a sweet blend of acoustic and steel guitars, mandolin and harmonica courtesy her band the Wild Rose Hippies, plus Alexanders own Shawn Colvin-eseque vocals, Stones has strong radio play written all over it . . .

Monday Magazine (Victoria) A LOVELY LOOK BACK Garden in the Stones is country-tinged folk music that yearns to find a bit of paradise amidst the stones and asphalt of life. . . . swampy, funky, bluesy . . . Alexander looks at the dark places of her mind as the dogs of war bark all around her. With help from Barney Bentall and Jane Siberry, Alexander crafts

a lovely look back at the land we have lost and how we must value what's still here. Star Phoenix (Saskatoon) GARDEN GROWS ON LISTENER Garden continues Alexander's musical quest through the West . . . Her voice and music are possessed of a slight sense of other times and places, some distant and others as close as around the corner . . . Her integrity and street-level grit lyrics create an intimacy that touches the listener with a cold bluesy edge, both foreboding and funny . . . delivered with a bold storyteller's spirit. Whether she works her smooth way through swaying ballads or barks out a down-on-the-street blues, she has the keening soul of a prairie wind blowing through downtown streets.

Vernon Morning Star GREAT ART Death makes for great art . . . many of the songs deal with a dark period in the Alberta-born artist's life. Luckily, Alexander offers a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down . . . sweet, gentle country folk that recalls everyone from Emmylou Harris to Victoria Williams . . . gorgeous. Calgary Sun LABOUR OF LOVE Alexander may break out into mainstream attention with her latest . . . a true labour of love . . . the ambitious project showcases Alexander's musical diversity and amazing vocal range. Garden in the Stones has the potential to establish her as a true Canadian star.

Lethbridge Herald ALEXANDER AT HER BEST Garden in the Stones shows Alexander at her best a diverse singer-songwriter who is as comfortable crooning a Patsy Cline style country ballad as she is belting out a bluesy number . . . effortlessly switches pace with each song, moving from roots to blues back to country . . . a compelling storyteller too, who sings about the seasons of human experience about love and loss, happiness and sorrow, life and death. After listening to Garden in the Stones, it's difficult to imagine someone as talented as Leslie ever having to busk on the street. Five Out Of Five Stars /

Nanaimo Gazette NATURAL EASE Alexander sings with natural ease . . . even with album art that recalls the psychedelic 60s, this former farm girl never comes across as just another tie-dyed dreamer. The raw production, understated arrangements and gritty blues influence contribute to the record's depth. And throughout the songs lurks the cold, bony hand of mortality. The Vancouver Courier NO PHONY "Leslie Alexander writes and sings with great insight and compassion. . . about loss of roots, innocence and even life. Still, buoyed by an optimism inherent in the title of her strong new album, Garden in the Stones, Alexander never makes you feel bad. She can be country . . . she can be folk . . . she can even be a little bluesy. The one thing Leslie Alexander seems incapable of being is phony." Comox Valley Record

CHANTEUSE BREAKS HEARTS Western Canadian Leslie Alexander's third release is the continuation of the (you could wager to say autobiographical) adventures of a farm girl who ends up in the gritty city . .

. Alexanders story-telling describes an urgent search for meaning in a trapped life that the protagonist knows is ending minute-by-minute . . . Dont let the bright album cover fool you, Garden in the Stones gets as sad as a retail chain springing up over your local graveyard. Its an album worth its day in court. Metro Vancouver HAUNTING QUALITY Societys poisons and pollutants have been seen and felt by this artist . . . danger, hard times, even premature death . . . theyre all among the subject matter of these extremely personal songs . . . yet the words and music are of such haunting quality that the listener feels as if his or her own fears have been recognized. Alexander somehow manages to entice listeners to circle the wagons with her, ensuring everyone is safe, so the garden can be planted, away from the creeping ugliness. Cowichan Valley Citizen A PURE, NATURAL VOICE Alexander has a pure, natural voice, an accomplished band and she writes songs with sincerity and conviction . . . the gentle It Would Break My Heart (to Break Your Heart) glows with affection as does the Siberry-assisted bonus track Sleep, both of which feature some lovely slow handed lead guitar from John Ellis. His guiding hand is notable on virtually every track . . . Americana UK TAKE A BREATHER Country girl Leslie Alexander wound up in Vancouver singing on the street for spare change, but since producer John Ellis (Be Good Tanyas) came across her she has put out three CDs and picked up some radio airplay. . . . Mr. Ellis provides some tasty electric and slide guitar, as well as vocal harmonies. Jane Siberry is a guest and has invited Leslie on tour. Here you can feel the earth of the farm and the soft brush of country air. Slow Down delivers a message we would all be wise to heed in these days where most are rushing around like headless turkeys. Take a breather, slip on this disc and find yourself slipping into sympathetic resonance and flow with the universe. Attractions A&E Magazine (Victoria) VITAL Alexanders latest album is vital . . . Garden in the Stones is her best yet, combining folk and country with a smattering of blues. She exhibits a nice, breezy touch in which you can read a bucolic oasis in an urban environment. The Province (Vancouver

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