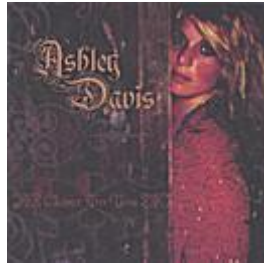


Mp3 Ashley Davis - Closer To You



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World music, pulling from various musical cultures supported by haunting vocals and a sturdy Celtic backbone. 12 MP3 Songs WORLD: Celtic, NEW AGE: Healing Details: Ashley Davis brings Celtic myths, medieval literature, and a vivid imagination to her music. Raised on the plains of Kansas, Ashley was exposed to country and bluegrass music and began performing around the region at the age of fourteen. By eighteen, Ashley moved east to Nashville where she completed her undergraduate degree at Belmont University and discovered Celtic music. In Nashville, she was featured as a solo performer at local English and Irish pubs. While visiting her father, a guest lecturer at the University of Limerick, Ashley discovered the Irish World Music Centre, directed by Mchel Silleabin. The following spring, Ashley was accepted as one of two singers from around the world to work toward a Master's degree in "Traditional Irish Singing." While at the Centre, Ashley had the wonderful fortune studying under the tutelage of an amazing roster of performers: Steve Cooney, Karan Casey, Tony McManus, Lillis O'Laoire, Aine U Chellaigh, Frank Harte, Ian Carr, Niall Keegan, Sandra Joyce, Gary Shannon, and Mchel Silleabin. After electing to study DADGAD guitar, Ashley's songwriting moved even deeper into the tradition. She also had the honor and pleasure of writing with and studying under the great John Spillane. As a result, Ashley opened one of his shows in Ireland, performing her own material, including their co-written song "Background Music." After completing her M.A. in September of 2002, Ashley was hired as the soloist for Michael Flatley's "Lord of the Dance", performing nine shows a week for thousands of Irish music and dance enthusiasts from around the world. Ashley has journeyed from Kansas to Nashville to Ireland to Las Vegas. All of these places have contributed to her growth as a performer and songwriter. She now lives in New York City, where she continues to intertwine these eclectic influences of her past into her own music. Her new album, "Closer to You," is rooted in these places and traditions, but invites listeners

to join Ashley as she explores new territory. NEWS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! After three years of writing and recording her first publicly released album, Ashley has finished "Closer to You," available through this website. Here's what Ashley has to say about the album: "I began writing this album when I was 26 years old, while working on my Master's degree in Ireland, at the University of Limerick. Two years later, and now living in New York, I can give you eleven songs and say: Here are my footprints. With this album, you can follow me culturally, musically, and emotionally through the past three years of my life. But really, aren't we all a collection of our experiences? You will hear Kansas in my songs -- my father playing me record after record of '60s folk music as the attic fan dragged the summer through the screen door. You will hear the seven years that I lived in Nashville, where I began to shift my style after listening to the musical wordsmiths who dwell there. You will hear me walking the banks of the Shannon River every day that I lived in Ireland, wondering how I could ever leave this beauty and trying desperately to bring some of it to you. And finally, you will hear me living in New York, where on a daily basis I am exposed to the music of multiple cultures, just by walking down the street. In the years to come, I look forward to sharing many more chapters of my life with you. For now, please enjoy these last few." (intro letter, liner notes of Closer to You) Ashley is very excited about this album and looks forward to hearing your feedback. She is currently arranging a tour of the United States, UK and Ireland for 2005. We'd love to hear from you-drop us a line if you so fancy! Stories behind the songs on the new album "Closer To You" Closer To You I had always wanted to write a song around the medieval elegy The Wanderer. I cannot say that I achieved it with this piece, but I was delighted for the opportunity to revisit the poem. Gawain sent me a chord progression that seemed to fit perfectly with writing a song solely around sea imagery: Vikings; endless, lonely days on the sea; miles upon miles of water, etc. Musically, we tried to paint a canvas of sounds that evoked these images. For example, if you listen closely to the chorus, you can hear waves lapping against a ship that Ben sampled and slowed down to the tempo of the song. Rhiannon's Lullaby Rhiannon, the great goddess of Wales, has held a strong place in Celtic lore for many moons. Wronged first by her parents, then by those closest to her, she did not have a life that matched the beauty of her countenance. In legend we do not picture her standing in the cold by the castle gates, telling every passerby a murderous story pinned on her by her ladies-in-waiting. No, she is remembered for her passionate beauty, her flowing white horse, and her gentle patience for the sins of those around her. I took the tale a step further and put a bit of wrath into Rhiannon; some vengeance if you will. For this song

I chose a beautiful traditional melody from the Isle of Mann. I found it during my travels and rewrote it to suit the lyrics and then brought it to Ben who came up with the beautiful progression underneath. The Silk Road Last year I heard a young woman from Uzbekistan on NPR, singing traditional songs from the Silk Road. The beauty of her voice struck me, and the forms of the songs inspired me to listen to Eastern music and study its forms more closely. Previously, my musical interests were solely Western. On a trip to San Francisco, I played some of these newly discovered treasures for Gawain. He responded by writing the hypnotic chord progression that you hear pulsing underneath the melody and words, supplied by my own hand. Those "words," however, were the hardest part for me. How could I write about the beauty and mystery of the Silk Road if the farthest east I had traveled was Budapest? I wrote to professors around the country, trying to find collections of Silk Road poems that could offer some insight. I did not find collections, but bits and pieces floated my way, along with a couple of documentaries and a book on Wu Zetian. After gathering this information, I put it all away and thought about it for about four months. I knew that all of these beautiful new creatures of knowledge would eventually settle down in my head, and finally move down to my hand. The Fields I wrote this song one evening while living in Limerick. My room was the size of a shoebox, yet it was the most comfortable room I have ever lived in. There was the usual winter storm blowing outside my window while I tried to sleep, with my bed pushed up beside the glow of my furnace. It wasn't the noise of the storms that stirred me on these nights, however, it was the ghostly warriors the storms brought with them. I could look out my window and see generations moving through the trees when these storms came to visit. I can still close my eyes, three years later, and see myself in that room writing this piece for no one but the Celtic storms that swept through my nights. Voyage I am not a sea-fearing woman by any stretch. Raised on the Great Plains, I would rather see land each way I turn. Yet, I have always been fascinated by those who spend their lives at sea, especially those voyagers, plunderers, and fishermen who sailed when there were no tracking devices to find them once they had set off on their journeys. How dark those nights must have been. While writing this song, I imagined those nights, and what it must have felt like to watch the ships leave, or in reverse, to watch the land fade into the distance. It seems these men had an addiction to being out on the open water. Too much time at home, and they were restless to set sail again. I pictured what must it have been like to be on the shores of the lands that the ships were approaching, with their tall masts and longboats full of strange faces, wondering who was coming and for what purpose. Just for a While Melancholy has no sense of time.

Wounds can be two years old or two thousand years old and still feel fresh. We have all lost someone through the parting of souls, whether in this life or not. The significant ache that remains can be eternally overwhelming. I wrote this song with this question in mind: "What if we could go back, just for a while, and see that person once more? Peacefully, finding ourselves in their arms, or by their side in our happiest moments together." The great characters of literature have battled this question; their success left for the reader to interpret. Two of my favorites make an appearance in this song: Ophelia from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Elaine from the Arthurian cycle of literature. Both had a very resolute way of dealing with their sadness, but it is not for their dealings that they were chosen. It is for the tragic beauty and color with which they graced the pages of our minds. Come with Me I first traveled through the Highlands of Scotland on a literary tour when I was 20 years old. There, I saw beauty that I thought existed only in our dreams. The colors, and the evening gloaming that came over the mountains, still call me back into their arms when life proves uncertain. Five years after the trip, while studying in Ireland, I was paired in an ensemble class with a Scottish flute player. She had a six-part Scottish reel that she wanted to use, so I set about trying to find a song that worked with this. My dear friend Rosie had sent over a lovely old book of Scottish songs that she'd found at a street fair in New York. I read through the songs one Saturday afternoon, and I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the language. The words transported me instantly back to the Highlands. With those memories gaining strength, I put the book away and created a song about leaving the complexities of life to return to the basics. Nothing represents this notion better than the highlands of Scotland, with their rugged beauty. Only in My Mind Sometimes we find ourselves in relationships that function much better in memory than in reality. With this piece, I tried to express the feeling of walking that painful line, when you know the relationship is inevitably not going to work out. You know there is a cold winter waiting for you, around the next bend, and yet you give every petal of yourself to that person, hoping to discover a new reality. Dreaming of You I had never had my heart broken... until a few years ago. In the past, I had secretly delighted in romantic tragedy, but this was nothing I had felt before. I was certain that I was ruined, my ideals of love extinguished permanently. It was a sad prognosis at 26 years of age. I remember calling my father from overseas, sobbing uncontrollably on the phone (something I was not known to do), asking him if I would be able to function normally again one day. To this day, I remember his exact reply: "Ashley, I promise that you will get better. It won't be today, or probably even two months from now, but you will get past this." I believed him. Later that summer, I

found myself at my kitchen table in Ireland, writing this song -- not only for myself, but for those around me who were struggling with the same issues. Today, with a healthy heart, I can say: If you are suffering from this kind of ache, you will heal in time. I promise. I am living proof. The Hills of Another Day During the writing of this song, the gentle memories of my life wrapped every known emotion into one. When I am in my twilight years, I picture myself rocking on my front porch in the evening, dreaming of the times when my heart was in its fullest of colors. I believe it will be in those quiet moments that I finally get to stop and enjoy the memories I am creating now. Coming Home Statistics show that more Irish are now moving home to Ireland than moving to America. My great-grandfather, two-times over, emigrated from Northern Ireland during the great exodus in the 1840s. We do not know much about him, except that when land was offered to settlers, he seized the opportunity and moved west to farm its unforgiving prairies. It is for his courage, and that of his young bride Miss O'Malley, that I am a Kansan. I haven't lived consistently in Kansas since I was 18 years old, but wherever I go, when people ask me where I'm from, I always say, "I'm from Kansas... but I live in ____." The north of Ireland has had many cloudy days since my ancestors left, but it is once again moving towards a prosperous peace. I'm sure Mr. Davis would be proud of the place he came from, and the place where he landed.

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