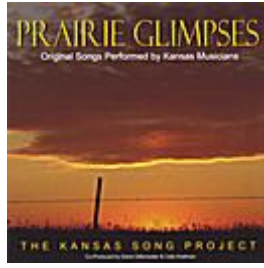


Mp3 The Kansas Song Project - Prairie Glimpses



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Music from the State of Kansas. Original storytelling songs about Kansas people, places and historical events done in a contemporary bluegrass and country folk style. Recorded by performing Kansas musicians and bands. Produced by Kansas Artists. 16 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Folk, COUNTRY: Bluegrass Details: Diane's Story about Prairie Glimpses: When Cally called me in the fall of 2002 I had just been laid off my job at a local television station. I decided to try teaching private music lessons at my house, teaching alternative styles of violin, like bluegrass and Celtic music. I knew that if I was ever going to make my living doing what I loved, this was the time. The minute I declared myself a teacher the students started coming. Cally was one of the first ones. My first memories of music is my dad playing records of classical music and Broadway shows. My mother, Shirley Meek, had been a music major at Washburn and my father, Fred Meek, had been an art major at Washburn. His father, my grandpa, had been a musician, having his own vaudeville show and traveling the northwest circuit. My uncle George had a great record collection of Sousa Marches and my favorite was Alvin and the Chipmunks. Because of my roots it's no surprise that I've been a musician all my life. I learned piano first, because my parents both played. Then when I was in the fourth grade you could pick an instrument to play in the school. We had a violin that my mom had used in college, so that was how I ended up playing the fiddle. Interestingly enough later on I discovered that my mother's grandfather had also been a fiddler. Musically, my first love was the band, The Monkees. I was 10 years old and I knew I was destined to be a rock and roll drummer. Then I heard Simon Garfunkel, Peter Paul Mary, James Taylor, John Denver, and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. I bought my first guitar when I was twelve years old and taught myself to play. I still remember the first tune I learned, Gentle on My Mind. I played until I had to put band-aids on my finger tips so I could keep playing. I started taking private violin lessons when I was 13 and I was asked to join the Topeka

Symphony when I was fourteen. I went to Washburn University on a Topeka Symphony Scholarship and graduated with a degree in Violin Performance in 1978. I never did get to play the kind of music I wanted on the violin with the exception of playing for musicals. I played for many different musicals for various groups around the Topeka area. The good thing about musicals is that I got to play a lot of different musical styles. Finally, after turning twenty-six, I was able to meet up with some people that played Bluegrass Music. As I mentioned, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Bands music was the style that spoke right to my heart. It was kind of a soft rock/bluegrass style. That was how my journey into Bluegrass Music began. I had to figure it out for myself because there were no local instructors in roots style music in the area. I played with a couple of different bands before joining up with the bluegrass band, Pastense in the summer of 1995. We have since recorded three CDs. I have become a fairly good bluegrass fiddler and I won the Kansas Fiddling and Picking Championship in 2002. All this leads up to the style of music I composed for the Kansas Song Project. I have been influenced by so many great artists over the years. I love the acoustic sound. I have used guitar, fiddle, mandolin, piano, dobro, and banjo in different configurations. I wanted this CD to have an totally acoustic sound. I wanted a common thread running throughout all the songs. A sound like playing in your living room, or being at a family gathering where several people played instruments and sang songs together. I composed most of the songs with the help of the performing artists assisting in the arrangements. I felt that I did not want to compose all the songs on the CD because I didnt want everything to sound alike. I also wanted to allow the other performing artists to have ownership in the arrangements of the songs. I stayed open to what other people might be hearing in the music and what strengths they brought to the songs. It was important to me from the start that we were all bringing something special to the project and that we would all leave our own mark on the songs. That is what is so special about this first CD. We are all Kansas musical artists and we all have grown up here and been influenced by things from here. We have all stayed or returned here and bring all of our experiences to our music. We want to leave a lasting piece of history to those to come after us about how it was for us in our time, especially musically. We have included many songs about Kansas history. We werent able to live through those experiences so we had to learn about them from the people who did live through them and wrote about them. Now we have taken what we have learned, put it in words and music, that added the emotion that we experience when hearing and reporting these stories. The songs arent written to sound like the time period they happened in. They are in real time. Our time.

On one song, called Women of the Sojourn, Cally describes the pioneer women giving up everything they had or wanted to follow their husbands dreams of going west. As I took her lyrics and put them to music, I tried to capture how it would feel to do this. It must have been very hard to leave everything you had owned, known, and loved behind to do this. It would take nerves of steel and endurance beyond what I would risk to knowing what I know she would have had to endure. I had originally composed it for guitar, mandolin, bass and fiddle, but then Randy worked in some piano to help the Faris brothers with the feel of the song. It sounded so right for this song that we left the piano track. The piano seems to add a lot the emotion. Terri Laddusaw adds the vocals to this song and you can hear in her voice, one woman, alone but strong. Those women were so brave, so devoted, so strong and because of them I had a future. I hope that in a very small way I am creating a future for those who come after me. I hope that we are preserving in this CD a testimony to all those who settled here, who live here now, and those to come in the future. Kansas is a beautiful, unspoiled, state rich in history and rich in opportunity. I hope this CD makes you proud to be a Kansan. I also hope that you will listen to it more than once and let the music and the words soak into your soul. To some extent it is honoring those who experienced the unimaginable to us these days. They came through the experience and are still teaching us today. Better yet, put the CD on in your car or truck and take a ride through the Kansas countryside as you listen to the songs. Enjoy.

In the fall of 2002, during a major change in my life, I started writing song lyrics. One of the subjects I was drawn to was Kansas history and particularly from 1850 to 1890s. The biggest problem with my songwriting endeavor was I did not play an instrument. I had recently seen Pastense, a local bluegrass band, perform at a coffee shop in Topeka. The fiddle player, Diane Gillenwater was exceptional. I knew her father, a fellow artist. So I called Diane, and arranged to have coffee with her, to meet her and share my recent writings. We immediately clicked, and she looked at the song and said that with a few changes, she thought she could set this to music. I started taking fiddle lessons from her. Not only was I her first student, but I was her first student to flunk! So I decided to focus on writing. I began to accumulate a lot of lyrics about Kansas and we decided to take it a step further and this was the birth of Prairie Glimpses - The Kansas Song Project. We felt this could be a great way to promote Kansas history and inspire others to check out different people and places in our state. We began to talk to music friends of ours and asked them if they would be interested in either singing or playing on the CD. I had written lyrics for about 22 songs but we eventually narrowed it down to the ones listed here. Cally's Story about

Prairie Glimpses: The initial tracks to several songs were done by Mitch Rosenow, a producer/engineer in the Kansas City area. He's a native Kansan also and holds Kansas very near and dear. His encouragement and involvement early on were instrumental in this project becoming a reality. As time went on, travel became a problem so we eventually moved the recording to Exceptions Studio in Topeka, owned by Randy Wills.

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