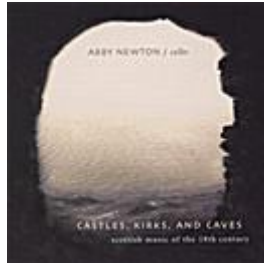


Mp3 Abby Newton - Castles, Kirks, And Caves



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Since my first visit to Scotland twenty years ago I've dreamed of performing its ancient music in the castles, churches, and caves that bear witness to that haunted country's tragic and fascinating history.

This recording project is that dream come true. 14 MP3 Songs WORLD: Celtic, FOLK: Traditional Folk

Details: In the spring of 2000, Abby Newton, an American cellist long known in the folk music community for her interpretations of Scottish music, traveled to Edinburgh to record a CD. Joining her on the project were a group of Scottish and American musicians hand-picked by Abby as much for their love of early Scottish music as for their outstanding musical abilities. Abby's goal was to perform and record Scottish music from the Baroque period at historical locations, taking advantage of the natural acoustical quality of each space. Many of the tunes selected for this project have histories specifically linked to the places she visited. Because the cello is primarily viewed as a classical instrument, folk music enthusiasts might be surprised to hear it played in this context. But from the late 17th to early 19th centuries it was common to encounter the cello, along with the violin, at country dances and musicales. In those days, the line between serious music and popular entertainment was not so strictly drawn as it is now. Indeed, musicians often moved freely between idioms. James Oswald, a prominent Scottish composer of the 18th century, is a particularly interesting example. A "serious" musician, he augmented his more conventional Baroque compositions with Italianate settings for rustic folk tunes. He even composed short tunes that later found their way into popular usage. Throughout much of Abby's musical career she has campaigned to restore the cello to its traditional place in Scottish music. She first heard this music in 1974 when she met the Scottish singer Jean Redpath. Jean was looking for a cellist to join her on her first U.S. release and Abby was intrigued by the idea of accompanying a vocalist. That meeting inaugurated a musical friendship that has spanned fifteen albums and more than two decades. It was with Jean that Abby first

visited Scotland in 1978. The warmth of the people and the melancholy beauty of the landscape moved her deeply. On that tour she met Tom Anderson, the legendary teacher and champion of Shetland fiddle music. Together with Tom and Jean, Abby performed a concert at Blair Castle that Abby now recalls as one of the seminal experiences of her life. In a very real way, that concert planted the seed for this project two decades later. Since then, Abby has visited Scotland many times and has performed both there and in the U.S. with well-known Scottish musicians including Aly Bain, Alasdair Fraser, Mairi Campbell and Corrina Hewet. Participating in the project are some of the most accomplished players in traditional Scottish music today. Leading the list is David Greenberg, a young Canadian who has made waves internationally with his violin playing in both Baroque and traditional idioms. He is the driving force behind Puirt a Baroque. Also on board are Mairi Campbell and Dave Francis known in Scotland for their collaboration as The Cast. Corrina Hewet, the Scottish harper of Bachue Cafe, Fred Hand, a superb guitarist from New York, and harper Kim Robertson bring their considerable talent and energy to the ensemble. The title "Castles, Kirks (churches), and Caves" describes the four settings on the itinerary. They include Hatton Castle, Dunkeld Cathedral, Fingals Cave, and The Magdalen Chapel. Nature and its elements are a feature of all traditional Scottish music, and each of the locations is nestled in a dramatic natural setting. The historic interiors and the mercurial Scottish weather presented a series of challenges and rewards to the musicians and sound crew. The result is a recording of unusual richness and intimacy. From a review in the Atlanta Celtic Quarterly by David Marcus of Abby's first solo recording, Crossing to Scotland: Before the piano, the 'cello was the instrument used to accompany dance music in Scotland. Abby Newton has made it her mission to re-establish that tradition, and she does it with grace, love, and lyricism... This is the most absolutely elegant album I've heard in a long time, and one that easily makes my A+ list... The 'cello has always been the instrument I'd want to be shipwrecked on a desert island with; now I know who I'd want to have there to play it.

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