

Mp3 Tr Kelley - Water Wears The Stone



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Alter-tuned acoustic guitars, warm fretless bass, and stretchy yodel-y alto voice wrapped around Northwest politics, social satire, death, love, and madness. 11 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk-Jazz, FOLK: Political Folk Details: Water Wears the Stone - T. R. Kelley A review written for the Folk Acoustic Music Exchange by Daniel Nestlerode Follow me for a minute... It's 30 degrees outside, but you strip and climb into the hottub anyway. ...Or it's 95 degrees and you dive into a favorite swimming hole. ...Or it's 6:00 Monday morning and you taste the perfect cup of coffee. Ahhhhh..... You're a jaded record store clerk and you hear T.R. Kelley's CD, "Water Wears the Stone." (Ahhhhh..... OK, you're working in an independent CD and tape shop in northern California, and just for fun you volunteer to write reviews for a web site. For both endeavors you have to sift through mounds of new releases in an attempt to separate the wheat from the chaff. Would you become twisted and slightly cynical? Would you yearn for anything that would immediately distinguish itself from the prevailing trends? Would you wish to hear something that sounds different, so you can still profess an interest in new music? Then go put T.R. Kelley's Water Wears the Stone into your CD player. Go ahead, I'll wait... You feel better now don't you. I thought so. T.R. Kelley is from Eugene, Oregon. This instantly makes her cooler than anyone from Oregon's neighbor to the south -in fact I'd like to move up there so I could be cool, but then I'd be from California and much less cool than if I had just stayed where I was. But 'coolness' is not what T.R. Kelley is all about. Listening to her music, you get the feeling that T.R. Kelley is all about honest self-expression, and celebrating the joy of being alive. The disc opens with "Lilac Trees Where None Before Did Stand)," a song that sets the tone for the whole CD. It is rich and deep with layers that envelop listeners in the warmth of human experience and expression. The lyrics tell a story about the discovery of an old homestead now protected both by an orchard that the ancient occupants had planted and by a new growth of lilac trees. Lilac Trees

is a balmy evening discovery on three levels: Discovery of the past, realization of the continuity of human experience, and realization of the healing power of the Earth as it reclaims what was once dominated by humans. It is a theme that Kelley returns to over the course of the disc. Other subjects that Kelley addresses are the lusty lure of performing and listening to live music ("Jagged," "Steal a Glance"), life on the road ("Dance of the Road"), and the degradation of the forests of the Pacific Northwest with the subsequent erosion of the timber-based economy ("Clearcut Disillusion," "Downwardly Mobile (aka Gov't Cheez)"). Kelley appears to be the kind of person who lives all of her life to the fullest. For example, in "Downwardly Mobile" she turns the depths of economic despair into an invitation to drop out of the American consumer economy. No review of *Water Wears the Stone* would be complete without mentioning the song "One Size Fits All." Here Kelley manages to strike her singular sense of balance in a rap/rant about the inadequacy of the kind of clothing that bears the tag named in the title of the song. She uses a situation that would be disheartening for many women to celebrate her own body and exact some rhetorical revenge on the clothing industry. My wife said "Amen!" when she heard "One Size Fits All." I've canvassed other women who have heard the song, and they agree with Kelley and share the sense of empowerment that she expresses. With this song Kelley has simultaneously hit the nail on the head and struck a resonant chord with many women. When you go looking for Kelley's influences, look deeply because they can be subtle. On the surface, Kelley sounds like a disciple of Joni Mitchell around the time that Mitchell released *Hejira* and *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*. Kelley utilizes numerous alternate tunings on her acoustic guitars, the bass parts are fluid and melodic, Kelley's voice swoops from a deep alto to a clear soprano, and on "Walls" Kelley even uses back-up singers as Mitchell might have. However, Kelley's guitar tunings are a little more reminiscent of Michael Hedges than Joni Mitchell, and that's Kelley herself playing fretless bass. When approached on the subject of influences, the first name Kelley utters is Jaco Pastorius, and it turns out that the bass is Kelley's first instrument. You wouldn't know it to hear *Water Wears the Stone*, not because she neglects or dotes on the bass, but because Kelley finds the middle ground. She recognizes the beauty of simplicity and the power that a subtle use of the instrument can have. The bass parts Kelley are warm, round, and they complement the range and power of her voice. Without much in the way of percussion, Kelley has removed much of the necessity for the bass to carry the rhythm, and she has freed it to provide depth to her melodies. Over the course of this disc, Kelley sets a wonderfully warm embracing tone, writes fully expressive and balanced lyrics,

addresses a broad range of topics, and sings and plays with real power. But the one ingredient that puts Water Wears the Stone over the top is the honesty and conviction evident in every facet of her music. Kelley does not manipulate her listeners with arrangements meant to provoke emotion by indulging in cheap sentiment. Neither does she force the joy in her music by grinding out up-tempo tunes. Instead, Kelley simply lets us know how she feels and allows us the opportunity to join her. T.R. Kelley is a breath of fresh air in an industry that has become as stale as three day old cigar smoke hanging in a windowless bar. So climb into the hottub, dive into swimming hole, savor that coffee, and get yourself a copy of this CD. Copyright 1997, Peterborough Folk Music Society. This review may be reprinted with prior permission and attribution. People who are interested in Joni Mitchell Phoebe Snow Richard Thompson should consider this download.

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