

Mp3 Alice Peacock - Real Day



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Alice's first studio album is a wonderful set of country rockers, ballads, and honky-tonk workouts. Real Day pulses with a roots-rock sensibility reminiscent of the Jayhawks. 11 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Pop, POP: Folky Pop Details: Alice Peacock does not believe in keeping secrets. At least not in the catchy and smart folk-pop songs that are making her one of the hottest new singer-songwriters in the country. In her music, she believes in sharing secrets. Her songs are very outgoing, says John Gorka, among the most respected songwriting stars in the folk-pop world, and a confirmed Peacock fan. I think of what she does as intelligent pop; strong and plain-spoken, but theres more to it than might meet the ear on first listen. I think she has a real bright future. In a songwriter world awash in dour troubadours who believe that complexity is a sign of craftsmanship, brooding a sign of depth, and obscurity a symptom of great intellect, Peacocks invitingly melodic, open-doored and open-hearted songs are hitting people like a burst of clean spring air after a chill and musty winter. Fans leave her shows feeling like theyve met not only a real artist, but a real person; a friend whose songs they happily hum until they seem as much a part of their own lives as of hers. Peacock says she worries sometimes that her songs are too simple, that Im being too sophomoric. She sighs a moment, then adds brightly, But then I think of the Beatles 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand,' and how simple that is. And that one did okay for them, huh? It was the idea of a song as a conversation between singer and listener - a shared secret - that first drew her to music. Peacock grew up in a suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota, in a household that was loving but religiously strict; both parents were born-again Christians. Somewhere deep inside little Alice, though, there was always a stage-loving scamp struggling to get out. Her grandmother, Gritta Albrecht Gnass, had been a cabaret star and composer in Berlin before the Second World War. Her grandfather, Fritz Gnass, was a miner-turned-actor who appeared in Fritz Langs classic film, M, and was part of Bertold Brechts fabled

Berliner Ensemble, which produced radically populist plays as the shadow of Nazism fell over Germany. Barely knowing her grandmother, but feeling that same cabaret heart beating in her chest, Peacock retreated into music. She was so often seen hugging her little transistor radio to her ear that her father nicknamed her Radio Free Alice. And indeed, in many ways, she was like a refugee, huddled in her own world of singers telling their secret feelings only to her; and she dreamed of living in that land of songs someday. I was just dipped in radio as a kid, so my melodies come from everywhere, she recalls now. There was a lot of music around the house when I was growing up, but it was mostly religious. My dad, who grew up in Los Angeles, had a great Latin music collection, including a lot of Afro-Cuban music that I really loved. They were not stodgy people, you know, just very religious; and we were taught in church that rock-n-roll had a bad message. She majored in theater at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, and after her freshman year, was hired to do summer-stock at the American Folklore Theater in nearby Door County. There, she came under the spell of actor-playwright Fred Alley, who passed away last year at 38, just after his musical version of the film *The Spitfire Grill* was becoming an off-Broadway hit. But it was not his acting that entranced young Peacock. He was the first songwriter I'd ever met; you know, a person that I knew who wrote songs. There were a few people like that at the theater that summer, and it was very inspiring to see real people who wrote songs and made records on their own. For the first time, I saw songwriting as a creative possibility for me. She soon realized that those years spent hugging that radio had done something to her brain. Strong, pure melodies came easily to her; the kinds of melodies that seem strangely familiar on first listen. She also knew how to lay lyrics on them without sagging the melody down or making it hurry up. And she instinctively knew how to open her songs up so listeners could crawl right inside them with her. I think she pays a lot of attention to the craft of the song, says Gorka. It's like what Maya Angelou says about writing: Easy reading is damn hard writing. I don't think Alice thinks of herself as a serious writer, but I think she's a serious talent. Peacock says, I've always been drawn to songs that I remember easily and want to sing along with; songs I can feel a part of. I think that comes from when I was a kid, holding that little radio close to my ear all the time. I was looking for a friend, for songs that made me feel like I belonged. So I just naturally want to write songs like that. She moved to Los Angeles after college, just long enough to know what kind of career she did not want. It's so competitive, so cutthroat there, she says. I knew that I wanted to start writing and playing out, but there's no room to start there, no way to grow. It's all pay-to-play showcase kind of gigs,

with people trying to groom their images, not their songs; trying to do that rock-star thing where you remove yourself from your audience to create mystery. I really hated that. That's why I moved to Chicago; I knew they had a good live music scene, lots of open mikes. And, frankly, it was the midwest - I just needed to get back to me. She started hanging out at the legendary Old Town School of Folk Music, and quickly realized how much of her musical aesthetics were kindred to those of the folk world. The way she wanted to invite listeners into her songs, to share them in personal, honest ways, was exactly how the most successful folk performers treated their fans. As she describes what she loves about doing concerts, it explains a lot about why so many people who see her once are soon regular members of the growing Peacock flock. Part of the beauty of music, and what drew me to it, is the connection it creates between singer and audience, she says. You can't be on stage just doing your own thing at these folk clubs. There's no fourth wall to hide behind; you have to relate, draw people in. The audience is part of it with you, part of the show, and you can't do it without them. I just love that about the folk world, because for me, that's what music is all about - the connection, the interplay. Gorka recalled first meeting Peacock after a show he did at the Old Town School, a good five years before she began catching the country's ear with her songs. It is revealing of both the sweet nature and steely resolve that are making her a rising star. She came backstage to introduce herself, and said, Hi, I'm Alice Peacock, and I really like your songs. I wanted to tell you that, because I have a feeling we're going to work together someday. And we have worked together since then. That's just how she is about everything, very honest about whatever's on her mind. I think that's why she's getting popular as a performer, aside from her songs. You know, I've seen some songwriters who are real poets, but they don't share themselves with an audience, don't give a piece of themselves when they're on stage. But Alice does; she shares a real sense of the person behind the songs, rather than just somebody up there presenting an image. That outgoing way she has with an audience is a perfect fit to the kinds of songs she writes. I think she's going to be around for a long time.

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