

## Mp3 Ina May Wool - Crack It Open



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Rootsy songs with unforgettable melodies, powerful vocals, electric guitars, Hammond organ, and an eclectic assortment of acoustic instruments. 14 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, FOLK: Folk Pop Details: "I stood in a tent near the hospital in Exeter, NH, on a rainy day in June 2002. Thirty people were singing my songs along with me. 'J'ai Gagne (I Won)' and 'January Thaw' were favorites of the cancer survivors' support group there; a social worker had found my music on the Internet. It was such a visceral feeling of triumph over suffering and a joy at being alive and together - that day gave me fuel for months," recalls Ina May Wool. Ina May Wool has garnered her share of affirmation and acclaim since the release of her debut CD, "Moon Over 97th Street" in 1999. The Edinburgh Folk Festival invited her to play, and she toured the UK as well as in Europe. Representatives from BMI and ASCAP chose one of her songs for a CD of the 15 best unsigned acoustic artists worldwide, and she's been a finalist in the New Jersey Folk Festival songwriter contest and the Plowshares Songwriting Competition. The Just Plain Folks Music Awards named "Elephant Learning to Dance" the best song by a female singer/songwriter and placed "Moon Over 97th Street" in the top five albums worldwide. Suzanne Vega included one of her tunes on the Vigil CD, a collection by New York songwriters after 9/11 also featuring Vega, Christine Lavin, Richard Julian, and Jack Hardy. In the 13 songs on the new CD, "Crack It Open" (release November 2003), Wool travels further down some of the roads hinted at in her debut. "When Tears Come Down" rings of some undiscovered Hank Williams gem you'd swear must have been burnished by time. "Lucky" is a love song with just the right touch of quirkiness. "Frida" broods but stays vibrant with colors and celebrates Frida Kahlo's strength and fire. Throughout the CD you'll find gorgeous vocal harmonies and a musical palette featuring rich color from accordion to steel guitar to banjo to clarinet to Irish bouzouki to mandolin. "We were riding in the car listening over and over to this new CD - and it dawned on me that there is a theme I

hadn't planned at all coming through all these songs. It's all about survival with joy intact, with rebirth and renewal." Wool's come to this new place in her life and writing from an eclectic apprenticeship - from bar bands to opening concerts in her native New England to New York's off off Broadway and r b and jazz singing. She's found her way back to an intimate and personal blend of early acoustic folk guitar and vocal influences with the jazz, rock, and soul she's also loved over the years. Since the release of "Moon Over 97th Street" in 1999, Ina May has toured from Maine to D.C. to Chicago and shared stages with Leo Kottke, Sloan Wainwright, David Massengill, Dan Hicks His Hot Licks, and Richard Thompson. "Writing the songs for this CD I tried to let it come -- whatever it sounded like at 5 in the morning when I was writing a song in my kitchen. Maybe it was blues or bluegrass - I didn't know - but I had to stop worrying about those distinctions and just let it go." -----

INDIE-MUSIC.COM 9/11/04 Quote: "This whole album feels like an embrace." By Jennifer Layton This is my month. So many of my favorite indies are coming out with new projects. For some of them, it's been way too long between albums. Ina May Wool is one of those indies. The title track from her 1999 release Moon Over 97th Street still makes its way onto my mix tapes. Now, I have Crack it Open, a CD that kicks open the door the first CD cracked open and pours light and color everywhere. Moon was quietly reflective. Crack it Open is joyous, spirited, occasionally playful, and absolutely perfect from first note to last. In case I'm not being clear, I love this CD. Wool's voice has always had a Rickie Lee Jones feel. Here, she sounds like Jones playing a festival on a playground, pausing every now and then for a spin on the carousel or a trip head-first down the slide. There are sad songs here, but Wool's never been one to wallow in the blues. Instead, "When Tears Come Down" takes lyrics about getting burned and sets them to twangy, gutsy, soulful music. I found myself singing along with her, reading along with the lyrics in the liner notes, matching her note for note with no problem (other than the fact that my voice is, in terms of quality, the polar opposite of hers). She maintains a lyrical style that I loved so much on her first album -- her ability to write a song about anything and make it interesting. When she finds herself trying to keep worry and anxiety out of her head, without much success, she writes a deliciously playful song called "Big Black Bear." There is a black bear in my brain I thought that he was through with me But he comes crashing in and smashing everything I carefully placed all around my cabin ... I tried to teach him how to dance I put a little skirt on him A yellow rope around his big bear waist But all he wants to do is paw my garbage ... Inspired by a Frida Kahlo painting, she tells the artist's life in a haunting melody set to simple

percussion and gently chiming music. (I love how one line in the chorus ties back to the title of the album: "La vida abierta -- life opened," she sings. Cracked wide open.) Inspired by a cab ride, she writes the driver's story in "Taxi," singing about a Pakistani immigrant "rovin' round in a concrete sea." And the woman who inspired "Rosa" should be flattered by the shuffling beat, beautiful spirit, and total abandon in the rock song with her name on it. The song even has a string section. It feels like the ocean. I have to mention one more favorite: "Serial Lover," a bluesy story told by the definition of an eternal optimist: This is a story of serial love It ain't no romance novel There was Johnny and Tommy and Sean and Tim There was Jake and Norbert and Slim It could be for a week, a year or one night It's always the same But it's totally opposite Don't laugh - I still might get it right I'll be in practice for sure ... I think Jim Croce loves this song as much as I do. Crack It Open is one of those rare albums in which all the songs tie together in a common theme, even though their tempos and moods and lyrics change from one track to another. I can feel Wool's creative spirit floating out of the speakers and soaring around the room. If I opened the front door right now, the rain would probably stop. This whole album feels like an embrace.

----- "Sharp hooks and arrangements and a good feel for C&W roots - and, hey, even downtown NYC jazz hipster Marc Ribot (not one known to suffer fools - or folkies - gladly) appears on her Crack It Open (Bang Zoom)". --The Boston Phoenix

----- "One of my favorite unheralded New York singer/songwriters." --John Platt, WFDU ----- "When Ina sings a line, you see the story in your mind which is what singing is all about anyway. Great singing, never gratuitous or condescending. I never noticed any affectations getting in the way of the story telling. She is a great communicator in the tradition of Johnny Cash, Sinatra, or Patsy Cline though she sounds nothing like them. (I only bring them up because of their ability to make the listener see the story in their mind. She has that same talent which is rare.)" -Vinnie Zummo, musician and producer who has recorded with Joe Jackson, Shawn Colvin, Roger Daltrey, and Art Garfunkel

----- "Ina May Wool takes us into deep dark caverns populated by off-balance elephants, dangerous bears and other perilous creatures of our own emotions. Her songs provide a steady beam of light to guide us. Her voice provides the power." Marilyn Rea Beyer, Music Director, WUMB Radio ----- Ina May Wool is a wonderful writer and performer who has played major and minor festivals. This second album release is a distillation

of her writing and performing talent, which we are delighted to reveal, contains three more songs than originally intended. "Taxi" tells the story of so many of the taxi drivers in New York with sympathy and a good ear for words. The title track, "Crack It Open," is beautifully performed and would deserve a good deal of airplay on stations that play good meaningful music. "Big Black Bear" is a fascinating lyric married to a nice tune. It draws your attention and holds it to the final word. What more should a song do? The life of a touring singer-songwriter is condensed into just under four minutes on "Here We Go." "Opening shows for the once nearly famous, concerts and TV and agents galore" -- let's hope that one or more of the latter spy this great talent and make her much more than "nearly famous." "Lucky" is a very slow track but it is my favourite on this album of good tracks. The first of the bonus tracks is the beautiful "Dinosaurs" that recalls childhood in some heartfelt lyrics. "Serial Lover" is another mini epic story set to music that bears careful listening as Ina May draws us through a series of love affairs. The CD ends with "Heavy Hearted," but anyone listening will only be feeling this way because they have run out of tracks on a lovely album of original songs that display a rare talent for soul-searching lyrics and performs them to perfection. - Rambles Online Music Magazine written by Nicky Rossiter published 8 May 2004

----- "...a kind of plucking musical conscience picking at the corners of the universe that have been sadly deprived of songs written about them. "To draw the distinction I first heard from the late great Jason Robards in 'A Thousand Clowns,' there is childish-- best for kids-- and there is childlike-- essential for everybody-- and the childlike soul warbling 'Frida,' 'Big Black Bear,' and 'Dinosaurs,' on Ina May's new 'Crack It Open' is casting dangerously powerful magic." Robin Batteau (of Buskin Batteau), well-known and highly regarded singer/ arranger/producer,

----- CollectedSounds I was expecting Country. Perhaps it was the fringed leather coat on the cover. But I'm pleasantly surprised. "Taxi" has sort of a down home country feel to it. But the other songs are different. Especially "Frida". Wool's voice is clear and strong but sweet too. The songs are well written and clever. "Dinosaurs" might be my favorite here. As a whole it's very homey and comfortable reminiscent of Lucinda Williams. Amy, producer of Collected Sounds, March 30, 2004 ----- "When I cracked open Ina May Wool's new CD, Crack It Open, I was treated to a pleasant cross of Lisa Loeb/Syd Sraw/Rickie Lee Jones on a disc that contains songs that can cross as many as five genres in a single song. I'm guessing she's got a good thing going on with her audience." Andrew Aber, Voice Choices, The Village Voice, 11/03

----- Tribes Hill CD Review Ina May Wool Crack it Open Reviewed by Mary Beth Kean Ina May Wool's new CD "Crack It Open" offers a rich variety of insight, humor, and wisdom both lyrically and musically. It is sure to pique your curiosity and excite your imagination. In her liner notes, Ina May expresses amazement that, when selected, these songs actually had a theme running throughout. She says "All the songs are about rebirth and about surviving with joy intact." This message is clear, witty, inspiring, and emphasized by a wide variety of musical punctuations. Big Black Bear first got my attention. The string arrangement weaving in and out of Ina May's soft whispery voice added a sense of intrigue. I felt like I was listening to a campfire song or a bedtime story. Ina May describes a big black bear messin' up her cabin and pawing her garbage. Is she talking about giving power to things we have no control over? She goes on humorously suggesting if she gives the bear chocolate candy it seems to calm him down. In Whatever I Had to Do the electric guitar juxtaposed against Ina May's words is as edgy as her message about walls. She sings, "I didn't build it all at once... started when I was small... I did it to survive... I can't take as long tearing it down". In Crack It Open the acoustic guitar and the vocal back up are more soothing as the lyrics explore what may happen as we go through the process of cracking open a bitter reality. "It's a nut, it's a seed with the milk that you need at the core". The mandolin and slide guitar drive the beat of the strong earthy rhythm of the song When Tears Come Down. In this song Ina May asks us what we gain from love. She suggests "You see the sky, you feel the ground... you have your story, you have your path... . Drums again, like a heartbeat, are prominent on Frida, a song about how the artist Frida Kahlo coped with tragedy in her own life. She turns to the power and gift of the loving embrace of the universe. Here We Go reminded me that any creative process requires a plan "First get a car....", and the process can be wrought with obstacles. Ina May reminds us of state troopers and bass players. But she goes on to sing "Then have the time of your life... laughing so hard that you fall on the floor". In the background the Wurlitzer organ accompaniment sent me back to that first car and "the break up of the band". The Wurlitzer also lightens up the song and you can imagine laughing so hard you'll fall down. My favorite song Lucky is a tender and insightful love song. Guitar and piano carry the melody along as Ina May sweetly compares the joy of finding someone very special to the luck of finding magic beans that grow into a beanstalk, or finding a "twenty dollar bill on the road lucky". Lucky, like completely unexpected and without strings. "I got lucky when I found you."

LUCKY I got very lucky When I found you It was drab here in me-ville I was playing around On all the

wrong teams In every farm town I was farmed out Look at me now I got lucky Yes, I got very lucky When I found you I had beans in my pocket You came around Beans jumped to the ground Roots go down Shoots go up I climbed the bean stalk I got lucky I got very lucky when I found you I was yelling into the wind With stones in my mouth Compare/contrast Here I am at last Whispering into your ear I got very lucky when I found you Twenty dollar bill on the road lucky Hog lucky, hawk lucky Wheeling around in the sky lucky Buck lucky Yes I got very lucky when I found you

----- Ina May Wool has made a strong follow-up to her debut. She's got the knack for telling stories with her songs....Musically it reminds me of Suzanne Vega's intricate folk-pop. The new version of "When Tears Come Down" is just gorgeous....This album's a treasure. - The Ectophiles' Guide

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