

Mp3 Steve Klinger - Land Of Make-believe



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Songs of change and awakening: With biting political irony and evocative lyrics set to haunting melodies, Steve Klinger's music works its unique process as musical poetry. The more you listen, the more deeply his images seem to penetrate. 11 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, FOLK: Political Folk Details: Steve Klinger hasn't made a career of music. Instead, he's been a journalist and publisher of community newspapers and a college instructor of English and journalism. He's been writing songs for decades, however, and recalls cutting a tinny-sounding 45 on acetate as a pre-teen in a Coney Island recording booth. It was called Bluebirds Over the Mountain and was supposed to sound like the Everly Brothers, he says. Unfortunately, there was only one of me. These days Klinger writes and records in a casual home studio, playing keyboard, harmonica and guitar and overdubbing rhythm, lead vocals and harmonies on songs that range from folk-oriented acoustic ballads to ironic political commentaries and bluesy, surrealistic visions of upheaval and apocalypse. Some of my songs are a little dire because we're losing 200 species a day and committing torture in the name of democracy, but others are more spiritual, he says, because I never give up on the human capacity to transcend adversity, even if it's self-induced. One such song on Land of Make-Believe, his new CD, is The Change That Lives Within Us, which urges, amid flooding and destruction, It's time to sail upon the sea It's time to live as family Let the change that lives within us set us free Let the change that lives within us set us free Citing as his influences singer-songwriters such as Bob Dylan, John Prine, Townes Van Zandt and Jackson Browne, Klinger says he was intimidated for years by self-doubts that his creations couldn't measure up to what he was hearing from these artists, and especially the scope and power of Dylan's culture-changing music. But I stuck to it, and I let myself find my voice, because I had things I wanted to say, he recalls, and at some point it didn't matter anymore what anybody else had done or whether I would be judged against anyone. I just knew

how music has affected me and that I wanted to try to move people in some way to combine lyrics and melody to tell stories that could make people re-examine their perspectives. I think music triggers a process that isn't fully understood but is capable of raising consciousness as words alone can't do. Land of Make-Believe, Klingers second CD, tackles topics such as global warming in The Choice, which reminds us from a futuristic perspective that environmental collapse could have been prevented if more of us had assumed individual responsibility: My friends, the choice was yours and mine. In State of Denial he targets the smug excesses of patriotism and hypocrisy in a time of war and counterterrorism: in a land where democracy goes up on trial in our all-American state of denial Two songs deal with undocumented immigrants, a frequent subject in Grassroots Press, the alternative print and online newspaper (grass-roots-press.com) he publishes in Las Cruces, New Mexico. I wanted to examine the human side of illegal immigration, he explains, so I took an actual incident from the headlines and wrote a song (The Ballad of Galdino Perez) about an immigrant who loses his entire family in an auto wreck when the smuggler turns off his lights and has a head-on collision. The other track, Scapegoat Songs, was inspired by an e-mail complaining about an article on unsuccessful migrants returning to Mexico that was published in Grassroots Press. Rather than refute a litany of allegations how illegal invaders were costing us hundreds of billions of dollars, Klinger said, I tried to explore how fear and insecurity drive us to make scapegoats of those beneath us. An epic retelling of the Hurricane Katrina disaster (The Sacrifice of New Orleans) paints a vivid and poignant picture of a city caught in a devil's bargain, essentially sold out by government and corporate forces to serve their own interests, while the title track is an ironic commentary that touches on the subprime crisis, the Iraq war and the erosion of constitutional protections, illuminating this slice of contemporary Americana with the haunting refrain: Each day we choose more cell phones and TVs Each day we lose more civil liberties Living in our land of make-believe. Several songs are more personal, including two that pay homage to close friends and fellow peace activists whose loss was painful and yet inspiring because of the example they set; another lyrical song (Naked in the Light) is dedicated to his partner, Kathy Meyer, who sings backup vocals on several tracks. I just wanted people to hear the songs, Klinger says of his independently produced album on the Grassroots Music label, and I know the music industry has its own problems. I decided not to wait for the record companies to come knocking on my farmhouse door because I have things to say that might raise hell and consciousness at the same time." People who are interested in Bob Dylan Mark Knopfler John Prine should consider this

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