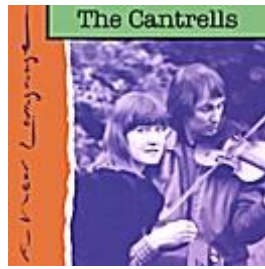


Mp3 The Cantrells - A New Language



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All acoustic, all Emily's originals with help from Tim O'Brien, mandolin, Jerry Douglas, Dobro, and Mark Schatz, bass. 10 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Bluegrass, FOLK: Modern Folk Details: Emily Al Cantrell "The Cantrells" Formed in 1983; Emily Cantrell, born in Memphis, TN; Al Cantrell (Al Ehlers), born in Corvallis, OR. Biography: Oregon-born Al Ehlers was raised along the shores of Washington's Puget Sound in a place with the picturesque name of Three Tree Point, roughly midway between Tacoma and Seattle. The son of a church organist (his father), he traces his earliest musical influences to the Bach fugues he heard while still in the womb. After starting as a violinist in grade school, he gravitated to rock and roll and the electric bass, with his introduction to country music coming by way of Grateful Dead covers of Merle Haggard songs. Becoming disenchanted with the "fast lane" rock and roll life, he returned to the fiddle and came under the influence of Idaho fiddler Teddy Jones. By the early 1980s, having absorbed the further influences of fiddlers the likes of Vassar Clements and Johnny Gimble, he had made his way around the British Isles and Norway and had returned to play throughout the Southwest as part of the Chuckwagons of the West shows. He was living in Estes Park, Colorado in 1983 when he was invited to audition for a Boulder-based bluegrass band called The Tractors (not the same as the retro-country band of the 90s). The band's leader was Emily Cantrell, and two years later they were married. They have been performing together as a duo ever since, combining elements of folk, bluegrass, old time, western swing and whatever else suits their fancy into their own distinctive brand of acoustic country music. Emily Cantrell was raised in Nankipoo, Tennessee, a few miles north of her Memphis birthplace. She began playing the piano at age four, and spent much of her childhood playing music with her older brother Jim. She also discovered at an early age that she had a special voice, a clear, rich soprano that captivated listeners and has drawn comparison as an adult to Joni Mitchell. Perhaps a more appropriate

comparison, though, might be to the talented Nashville singer and songwriter Matraca Berg. Like Berg, Emily Cantrell is an accomplished songwriter - most of the songs on their two most recent recordings are originals. After moving to Boulder in 1980, she met Tim O'Brien, leader of the legendary neo-traditionalist bluegrass band Hot Rize, and he asked her to sing harmony vocals on "Queen Of Hearts", on his solo album "Hard Year Blues". She formed The Tractors in 1981, with Al joining two years later. Following the band's breakup, they remained a couple, professionally as well as in private life, and Al took her name, Cantrell - "Little Singer". After hearing them perform at a party, Robert Redford was so taken with their music that he included them on the soundtrack of "A River Runs Through It", and Al and Emily themselves appear in the movie, playing their instruments in the church picnic scene. Among the most versatile singers around, Emily Cantrell nearly redefines the word "chanteuse" - listening to her brings the sense that she would be equally at home as the vocalist fronting a band for Bill Monroe, Duke Ellington or Bob Wills.

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