

Mp3 Levi Wills - The View From Here



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His original songs blends blues, folk and melodic rock influences, with an occasional tinge of alternative something-or-other, all punctuated with bone-cutting lyrical imagery, tinged with irony, longing, absurdity. 15 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Blues, ROCK: Folk Rock Show all album songs: The View From Here Songs

Details: Levi Wills is a musical creative artist who has been writing songs since the 1960s, and has performed as a singer, guitarist and harmonica player in a variety of musical incarnations ever since. The View From Here speaks for itself, but a few words to whet your appetite cant hurt: The songs were selected from among a much wider catalog of possible choices generated over the decades since the 60s, and represent a sampling of old Levi classics, plus a handful of quite recent concoctions. The music is rooted in traditional Americana folk and blues forms and chord progressions, but is also influenced heavily by 60s rock (heard of the Beatles?), and of course by the legacy of the singer-songwriter greats of Levis earlier days: Dylan (obviously), Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Paul Simon, Randy Newman, Clapton, and on and on. If you listen carefully, you may even hear some more contemporary alternative rock influences (Cobain lives! Coldplay rocks!) Levi strives to keep things simple. The chord changes, melody and lyrics are the show here, instrumental histrionics are limited, although you will hear Levis well-seasoned acoustic guitar handiwork, plus his signature electric guitar solos on a number of tunes scattered about. The harmonica accents provide the taste of blues roots that are the wellspring of everything Levi writes. And, oh yes, dont forget the words. You just may find yourself doing a double-take, and feeling the compulsion to hear that tune again. Go ahead, treat yourself; life is short. The music is record of the last 50 years of Levis broad influences, augmented with a heavy dose of his original musical and lyrical sensibility that hopefully opens new doors of perception, connecting you, the listener, a little more profoundly to your own emotional and inspirational essence. Levis mission is

simple: to carry you one step closer to the future of American music. Now, back to Levi's roots. Born on Chicagos south side, just blocks from the blues clubs of Muddy Waters, Little Walter and Howlin Wolf, he was raised in a Chicago suburb in a musical family. Levis grandfather was a semipro opera singer in Chicago, and his mother played piano and sang at frequent house parties, while little Levi peered down from the upstairs balcony. Dad was a jazz enthusiast with an awesome collection of 78 rpm discs of 20s and 30s Swing and Dixieland recordings. The folks liked to tell the story of the night Louis Armstrong came back to their apartment to socialize after a late night gig in a Chicago club. Before he started public school Mom introduced Levi to her recordings of Josh White and Burl Ives. Early memories, before the first RCA TV arrived, include listening to the mesmerizing electric guitar sound of Les Paul and Mary Ford on the kitchen radio, playing Tennessee Waltz and Mockin' Bird Hill. Levi was fascinated by that kitchen radio, but couldnt really see it because he was too small to see over the countertop. The family, including Levis two older sisters, who also sang and played instruments, and performed in their high school musicals, never missed the Nat King Cole and Perry Como shows on TV, and sang along with Dinah Shore when she saw the USA in her Chevrolet. Levi was entranced by all kinds of music, and learned the words to the songs on the radio by Rosemary Clooney, Vic Damone, Patti Page, Vaughn Monroe, Joni James, Frank Sinatra, Doris Day, Bing Crosby Peggy Lee, The Ames Brothers, and so many more. Later, Dad played his records of Billie Holiday, Sara Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, and tried to explain why Louis Armstrong, with his seemingly ridiculous voice, qualified as one great vocalists of all-time. After dinner, Levi and his sisters did the dishes together and sang harmonies to Broadway tunes and movie musicals like Singin in the Rain, Oklahoma, Carousel and Guys and Dolls (Ive got the horse right here, his name is Paul Revere). As time went by, radio pop music began to get more intriguing. Songs by Johnny Ray, Bill Haley, Frankie Laine, Brenda Lee, Ernie Ford, and Gene Vincent delivered a more emotionally authentic impact, and led to exploration into the roots of folk and blues. Precocious young Levi bought a Folkways album with his allowance money, opening his musical horizons to the distinctly non-suburban souls of Big Bill Broonzy, Leadbelly, The Weavers, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Cisco Houston, Woody Guthrie. Suddenly music seemed to speak directly to raw, authentic emotional experience. Eddie Fisher no longer mattered. You know the rest. Tom Dooley led to Joan Baez, Ian and Sylvia, Pete Seeger, and finally . . . to Bob Dylan. Levi recalls first hearing Masters of War on an obscure FM station out of Naperville, Illinois, the only one that played the traditional folk music he craved. The announcer

proclaimed that the song was by a new artist from New York, named Bob DYE-len. Who was this guy, and why was this sound so compelling?! His voice was bizarrely weird, but the sound and the song were transcendent, unlike anything Levi had ever encountered. This was REALLY IMPORTANT! Guitar lessons were now a priority. At age 17, Levi begged his always supportive mother, and took about eight lessons from an old blind guy, whose name he now forgets. The guy was way cool. He asked Levi to bring in his favorite songs, figured out the chords in about 20 seconds, and gave Levi the assignment to learn the changes by next lesson. This was all it took. Within a week or two, Levi started stringing chords together in his own way, coming out with what seemed then, in his innocence, like astonishing new combinations, and experimented with original melodies by humming along as quietly as possible, to avoid being detected by human ears. Levi went off to college with a new classical guitar, and eventually put together a folk rock band with his buddies, playing original tunes, with his new solid body Rickenbacker. When the Summer of Love arrived in 1967, the group gravitated together to a San Francisco apartment in the heart of HaightAshbury, where they practiced, wrote, did what summer hippies do, and listened to free Golden Gate Park performances by the Grateful Dead, Big Brother and the Holding Company, the Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe and the Fish, Quicksilver Messenger Service, the Youngbloods, and on and on. Music was everywhere, no longer the background, but the center of everything meaningful in life. As will happen to best of us (sometimes), Levi had to grow up. In the ensuing years he moved to Oregon, picked up a doctorate degree, became a professional psychotherapist, raised a family, started a multimedia research and development business and tried to keep plugging away at making music in the little time remaining. Performances and jams with various musician friends and rock bands, and occasional low key solo gigs, were interspersed here and there, but there really was no space in life to get too serious. But when the kids grew up and moved on to pursue their own professional directions, it seemed more possible to devote more time and passion to developing music as more than an avocation. Songwriting moved to the forefront once again. The decades of living, sometimes struggling mightily, and listening to and processing the intimate personal concerns of many hundreds of individuals in his role as psychotherapist provided a wellspring of experience and inspiration for expression through song. Levi the psychologist knew from experience on both sides of the couch that the process of songwriting was a microcosm of the essence of psychotherapy. Both involve, in part, connecting deep awareness of very private emotional experience to fantasy, imagery, and eventually to words. Adding music and the physical

acts of playing and singing to the process dramatically amplifies the personal rewards. Songwriting was Levi's own therapy, and the more he returned to the process, the more compelling and fruitful it became. On an impulse in 2007, Levi competed in a local songwriting contest in Eugene, his home of 34 years. Although no longer a fresh face (see accompanying photo at your own peril!), he auditioned some tunes to a panel of university student judges, competing against an array of more contemporary talent, and, yes, won the opportunity to perform at the Willamette Valley Folk Festival in Eugene, where his performance was broadcast live on the local public radio network. OK, that was a confidence booster! Next step: create some recordings. Levi implored his computer to do the multitrack recording that soared so vividly in his imagination, but was met instead with an endless quagmire of technical incomprehensibilities, inspiring him to realize heretofore unpotentiated talents for futility-laced profane vocalizations. Then luck happened. He was introduced via priceless mutual friends to the amazing James Bean, who was, of all things, an 18-year old high school student. James, it turns out, happens to be an incredible musician, musical aficionado, sound engineering techy, prematurely wise man, and proud owner of an incredible recording facility in the basement of his parents home. James will soon be a much in-demand musical producer and innovator, but at the point of his crossing paths with old Levi, he was looking to expand his experience and portfolio as a recording engineer. He asked to listen to some of Levi's songs, was suitably impressed, and decided to sign on to the birth of the Levi Wills recording enterprise. The result is the debut Levi Wills album: *The View From Here*. With inspired help from James on electric guitar and bass, plus the delightful and multi-talented Ron Wyckoff on drums (one of Levi's mates from the Eugene blues and rock band Total Hip - Levi plays guitar; don't miss it!), the album was recorded in James' parents' basement in the summer of 2007. (This is a good time to once again express deep appreciation to Jim and Margaret Bean, James' gracious and accomplished parents. And while we're at it, this project could never have been accomplished without the abiding love, affection and supportive encouragement from Levi's one and only: Nancy Woolfson.) If you like what you discover, please pass the word, play the music for your friends and send them here. And be sure to return for more updates about the Levi Wills musical adventure. This is just the beginning!

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