

Mp3 Jocelyn Arem - What The Mirror Said



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"Insightful, perceptive singer songwriter takes a look in the mirror and finds her exceptional voice" 9 MP3 Songs FOLK: Gentle, HIP-HOP/RAP: Alternative Hip Hop Details: Review of What the Mirror Said By Frank Rivera c) 2007 "Look at you, look at you dreaming," opens Arem on her debut album What the Mirror Said. That stanza sets down the feel for an impressive freshman effort from a battle-hardened veteran of the Northeastern folk scene. And yet the most characteristic element of Arem's music is its continual refutation of easy classification. Sure, Arem's dulcet tones are in part the calmly harmonious folk of the Appalachian Mountains. It is a music refined with performances at the famed Saratoga Springs haunt Caffé Lena and directly influenced by the likes of Woody Guthrie to Joan Baez. Yet it is not the bass guitar which provides the backbeat to Arem's opening song but the metronomic intonation of a beatboxer. The blending of hip-hop and folk is not a fusion to be avoided, at least not under Arem's adept fingers. Nothing could be more American, and, if anything, Arem's music is a love letter to Americana. That "you" whose dreams she's watching is none other than 20th century icon of American idealism Jack Kerouac. It is the first of many references music and lyric, intended and perhaps subconscious that knits her music into what it is: a celebration of those that inspire her and the adventure of a young songwriter's quest for identity. What the Mirror Said couldn't be a more appropriate title, for the introspection it implies. It is a quality that typifies Arem's music. As a native Marylander, her music is neither wholly the folk of the North nor Southern country but is instead an amalgamation of the two. She cleverly uses a country twang to play up the rustic qualities of "Juarez". On the other hand, "Serenade at Midnight" evokes Canadian Joni Mitchell's serene contemplations. While there is admirable work in her lyricism and musical arrangements, the real strength pushing her music to another level is without question her voice. This is a voice of a woman who, while she may not know her place in the world, is comfortable finding her way

through it. There are rich, earthy tones that calm and soothe and that reveal her training, her simple passion. She's playful, too, letting the cadence and meter of her voice wrap and jump on notes like a spoken word poet; a sense of vocal improvisation that doesn't seem to take away from the purity of her voice. While it is clear that this is still the opera prima of a new artist, the potential is clear. Arem established the groundwork for future efforts that will hopefully follow a similar channel. Her talent is evident and her desire is clear; future projects will only encourage a maturation of a natural singer-songwriter. She asks, "What could I say that hasn't been said in some play or sung in some song?" after realizing all that Kerouac and Arem's influences have accomplished. Well, my dear, you can apparently say and sing a great deal.

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