



Kristina Olsen "All Over Down Under" Take A Break Productions

After cutting a couple of early career, self-released tapes with her Loose String Band, Olsen recorded a quartet of albums for Rounder/Philo from the early through the late nineties. Her most recent pair of studio releases, on her Take A Break label, featured Australian cellist Peter Grayling. Grayling also appears on this disc along with, fellow countryman and *skilled* piano accordionist, George Butrumlis. The album title hints at the contents, and was recorded *in concert* during March 2001 when Olsen undertook an Australian tour.

The twist with the material of this particular collection is that Olsen has included ten new compositions. She's also been magnanimous to her sidemen, in that the album includes one composition by each of them. Both instrumentals, "Raphael & Hillary" by Grayling was written for an ABC Radio book reading programme, while Butrumlis airs the traditional sounding "Portsoaken." It seems that they learned the latter tune in the car park, immediately prior to performing it in the show. Three of Olsen's older songs "Truth Of A Woman," "The Man With The Bright Red Car" and "Better Than TV" are reprised at the end of this disc, aka the *Second Set*. During the interval the audience had been invited to write song requests on pieces of paper, and for the second set Kristina drew titles from a hat.

The three pickers create a wonderfully rich sound, and between them contribute the sounds of acoustic guitar, steel body slide guitar, sax, concertina, cello [at turns sonorously moody, then rhythmically upbeat], mandolin and accordion [Butrumlis playing adds tremendous colour to the melodies]. Kristina has had the good sense to incorporate nine segments of stage patter, and while her songs introductions come across as factually enlightening, the remainder are spontaneously humorous [and even bear repeated listening]. The liner includes an instruction on which tracks to programme, if you want to hear a *music only* CD.

Apart from being a *soulfully articulate musician*, Olsen is a compulsive dancer – I've seen her enthusiastically join the side stage throng at the Kerrville Folk Festival – and her love of tango dancing is given full and enthusiastic expression in "How I Love The Tango." Elsewhere, the opening "Fallen Bicycle" recalls an old love affair, while "Tony's Sax" is Olsen's instrumental contribution. "The Weekend Is Here" gives the female viewpoint relative to the escape from the drudgery of a 9 to 5 day job, and is a darned fine toe tapping and fun song to boot. Where the latter cut explores the total fulfilment of boy/girl passion, "The One That Didn't Get Away" and "Sweet William" hail from the same source.

This disc is available from www.amazon.com and the entry on their site states, *explicit lyrics*. Now if Kristina were some spandex clad heavy metal goddess or a pin impregnated punk princess, I could accept the *possibility* of aural offence. As it stands Olsen & Co. merely mention *prostitutes, brothels, lesbians, turbo charger vibrators, pubic hair, useful thing to do with panty liners* and such. Counter to the language that is uttered on many stages, world-wide, these days, there's genuine humour here and **no four-letter words** were employed during the recording. OK, the closing cut "Better Than TV" is a tale of sexual congress - a natural human expression of love they say. As for - **Explicit** – I don't think so!!!

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

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