



Lucy Kaplansky **"Every Single Day"** Red House Records

Accept it, after a quartet of discs, as much as Lucy and her hubby, Rick Litvin, have established an enviable track record by repeatedly turning out quality material, we are never going to get a whole album consisting of only their tunes. Kaplansky's incurable addiction is, and remains, the covering of songs by other scribes and poets. As much as she is a writer and performer, Lucy is a fan. She is also a member of that rare breed, who take a song by another composer and [in performance] make it entirely their own. Sic, track two here - the Celt, Paul Brady, is one of Lucy's long established, favourite composers. Supported by the dual electric guitars of Larry Campbell and Duke Levine, Brady's "Crazy Dreams" is a grab you by scruff of the neck *tour de force* that explores the distress and confusion that ensues when a once white hot passionate affair dims with each passing day. "The Angels Rejoiced Last Night," a forty-year old number penned by the Louvin Brothers, is a regular feature of Kaplansky concerts, while Steve Earle's "You're Still Standing There" closed his 1996 *comeback* album **"I Feel Alright."** The quartet of covers in this collection is completed by the title track of Julie Miller's 1999 solo album. For me, "Broken Things" was the only decent song on an otherwise lacklustre collection. On this rendition Kaplansky is joined on backing vocals by the estimable, Jennifer Kimball. The one from Boston (as opposed to the Nashville based songwriter).

On her most recent UK tour, last December, Kaplansky premiered a number of new, or partly completed, Rick n' Lucy tunes. "Written On The Back Of His Hand," which opens this disc being one of them. From a state of innocence and purity at birth, the dawning of each new day brings the opportunity for each of us to learn something new about our universe. The foregoing hopefully explains the concept of what is one of the finest lyrics this New York based couple has fashioned [to date]. What's more, I pray that the closing *"one true word's gonna beat a pack of lies"* is a principle that mankind never loses sight of.

The declining career of a performer who was once *"back lit from inside"* is analysed by the narrator in "Every Single Day." Buddy Miller supplies the backing vocal on the upbeat *let's not pull any punches, because I love you* song "Don't Mind Me," while John Gorka carries out the same duty on the Earle contribution I mentioned earlier, plus the hauntingly honest recollection "Song For Molly." The latter song, featuring the telling line *"It's a dirty trick this growing old,"* is a paean to Lucy's maternal grandmother. Just suspended your disbelief for a moment, and picture this - Lucy, age thirteen, and her mother are paying a visit to her grandmother who is hospitalised. Her description of the building is so stark, you can almost taste the antiseptic. Alas [for the two visitors] Molly's mind is in some other place. Years later, Lucy's mother shows her a ring and adds the words *"this was Molly's, It was her mother's ring, I'm keeping it for you, As she kept it for me."* The fact that, to this day, Lucy does not recall being a treasured grand-daughter, adds further irony and poignancy to the repeated closing line *"This is what I remember."* I guess the conclusion is - in this life, we should make every moment count. While long time Kaplansky fans would probably chose the sassy "Ten Year Night," as her finest song, there is a thoughtful maturity to "Song For Molly" which, in my opinion, places it in a league of its own.

And finally, there's the slightly more *down to earth* trio of songs - "Guilty As Sin," "Nowhere" and "No More Lies." Cheating songs are a much-explored genre and "Guilty As Sin" is, at least, a neat pop/rock addition, while an undercurrent of bitterness permeates the narrators words in "Nowhere." Finally, the martial beat of "No More Lies" tells of a cheating husband who has received his deserved comeuppance. While I might appear less enthusiastic about the latter tunes, I would contend that Rick and Lucy have more than done their homework with their other [new] songs - but I guess I've made that clear already.

Folkwax rating – 8 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 08/01

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