



Tish Hinojosa **"A Heart Wide Open"** Valley Entertainment

Hinojosa released a **"Best Of"** live collection and [once again] updated/enhanced her 1990 cassette/1991 CD Christmas recording during the past five years. **"A Heart Wide Open"** is her first studio album to feature new material since **"Sign Of Truth"** [2000], and was recorded for her M2 label. It has been leased to Valley Entertainment in North America, while the Dutch Corazong label released an enhanced version of the disc in Europe. The collection was co-produced by Tish and two members of her road band. It seems like guitarist Marvin Dykhuis has been at Hinojosa's side literally forever, and their recording session co-conspirator was bass player Glenn Kawamoto. Retaining continuity with **"Sign Of Life,"** the cover artwork for **"A Heart Wide Open"** is the work of another Austin based female songbird/songwriter, Sarah Hickman. Guest contributors on **"A Heart Wide Open"** include Flaco Jimenez, Cindy Cashdollar and Raphael Gayol.

"A Heart Wide Open" finds Tish wend her way through the kind of folk/country/pop styled material that graced her **"Homeland"** and **"Destiny's Gate"** recordings. A reggae beat provides the foundation for the opening cut "Never Say Never Love Again" and while Tish [at turns] delivers the lyric in English then Spanish, Asleep At The Wheel's Ray Benson adds his vocal support. Other love themed lyrics on this recording include "Would You Love Me Back Again," "Something More Than This" and "Lock And Chain." In the past Hinojosa has been an active campaigner, particularly on behalf of Mexican Americans, for the United Farmworkers of America, the National Women's Political Caucus and the National Association of Bilingual Education. The idealistic "Whatever Happened To Everyone Wanting To Care" amounts to her personal assessment of society today. "Kitchen Table" finds Hinojosa drawing upon cherished [and realistic] childhood memories of her parents and how, back then, the kitchen was the hub of family life. Her parents resurface as the central characters in "Finding Paris," as Hinojosa recalls how her mother always dreamed of one day visiting the French capital. As the song closes Hinojosa comments that dreams can be fulfilled in many different ways.

"Blue Eyed Billy" is the sad tale of a college boy, Billy Gomez, who *lost his youth* while serving as a soldier in WWII and returns home to pump gas for the rest of his life. A talented but emotionally fragile female artist is portrayed in the melancholy "The Poet The Painter." "Derechos de el Corazon" [the title translates as "Right Of The Heart"] is the only song on **"A Heart Wide Open"** sung entirely in Spanish, and its Latin rhythm is emphasised by contributions on accordion [Chip Dolan] and Spanish guitar [Marvin Dykhuis]. Once upon a time the song titled "Shotgun Rider" was scheduled to appear on Hinojosa's second, but ultimately unreleased, A&M/Americana album [circa 1990]. This road song has finally found a home on this collection, albeit titled "Shotgun Ridin'." The almost five-minute long closing track "Thousand Shades Of Red And Blue" is a slow, wistful number. In the opening verse, the narrator offers *"I could lay forever and dream a dream of you, Beneath a thousand shades of red and blue."*

"A Heart Wide Open" contains a number of engaging songs, although on a few occasions my attention strayed – particularly on the slower songs. I mentioned earlier that the European Corazong version of **"A Heart Wide Open"** was enhanced, and it features one live track as well as video material.

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood
Kerrville Kronikles 04 & 05/05