

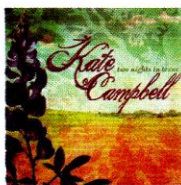
NEW RELEASES

Kate Campbell TWO NIGHTS IN TEXAS

Large River Music

★★★★★

*A live, gem-encrusted
song collection
captured at Blue Rock*



In a recording career spanning just over a decade and a half, the sixty-five minute, fourteen selection, seventeen song *TWO NIGHTS IN TEXAS* is Kate Campbell's thirteenth release, and her debut live outing. It was recorded in that hill country hideaway Wimberley, Texas, during a two-night stopover—April 8 & 9, 2010—at the Blue Rock Artists Studio and Ranch. Kate (acoustic guitar, piano, vocals) is accompanied throughout by Sally Van Meter (Dobro, vocals), Scott Ainslie (guitar, banjo, tambourine, vocals) and Don Porterfield (bass, vocals) and finds Campbell draw material from eight of her original studio recordings.

Campbell's lyrics often merge historic events; some well-known, some less so, but mainly with a focus on the American South—with everyday snapshots of life, and both are faithfully laced with honesty and reality, an approach that few master. That this one-time history professor has achieved this across more than ten albums, while retaining listeners' interest, is a testament to her skill with moulding concept into word and melody. Campbell's main co-writers here are Walt Aldridge, Johnny Pierce and (her) husband Ira. 2005's *BLUES AND LAMENTATIONS* furnishes two of the three opening tunes, respectively *Miles Of Blues* and *Free World*—of the latter title Kate comments: 'I'm going to keep playing it to make up for all the years it took me to write it.' They're separated by *Galaxie 500*, a fond recollection of a great American Ford-built automobile.

The *Steal Away Trilogy* is composed of Bobby Braddock's tale of the second coming *Would They Love Him Down In Shreveport* (2006's *FOR THE LIVING OF THESE DAYS* on which Kate collaborated with Spooner Oldham), the anti-war themed *Peace Comes Stealing Slow* (*BLUES AND LAMENTATIONS*) and ends with the traditional *Steal Away*. The bottom line, this eight minute plus (long) segue is simply stunning. Considering the lyrical content and the issues raised by Braddock's contribution, which was composed way back in 1967, in my mind, lifts this trio of tunes to mesmerising. The highlights here are literally too numerous to name. Among many, there's the energetic

travelogue *See Rock City* (1997's *MOONPIE DREAMS*, the religious/rod and line themed *10,000 Lures* (2001's *WANDERING STRANGE*), *A Cotton Field Away* (1995's *SONGS FROM THE LEVEE*) with powerful vocal support from Scott Ainslie, and the sly *Jesus And Tomatoes* (1998's *VISIONS OF PLENTY*). Campbell's 1999's *ROSARYVILLE* is a collection that deserves the accolade 'classic', and sat at the piano Kate's penultimate selection is a reprise of *Look Away*. Closing *TWO NIGHTS IN TEXAS*, from the same disc there's the bittersweet tale of tough choices *Rosá's Coronas*, which segues with the cinematic *Lanterns On The Levee* from *SONGS FROM THE LEVEE*.

Rarely featuring (all) new material, in-concert recordings live or die based on the quality of the performance. Apart from *Steal Away* the material performed on *TWO NIGHTS IN TEXAS* should be familiar to long-time Campbell fans. What I'm getting around to stating, is the proposition that relative to a work that is original and creative, while giving consideration to the criteria set out in the previous sentences, it would be difficult for a reviewer to lavish a maximum 5 star score on a live album. That said *TWO NIGHTS IN TEXAS* is a potent musical concoction—for instance *Crazy In Alabama*, co-written with Kenya Walker, still brings the chills—which is why Kate Campbell's latest musical offering has shattered one of my moulds.

Arthur Wood

www.katecampbell.com

Judy Collins BOHEMIAN

Wildflower Records

★★★★☆

*A not untypical Collins
collection of songs,
drawn from curiously
disparate sources*



Prolific is one word to describe the recent American releases from Judith Marjorie Collins. Her latest children's book *WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR* (Imagine/Peter Yarrow Books; ISBN 10: 1-936140-35-7), based on the 1940 composition by Leigh Harline/Ned Washington, was published on October 1. Concurrent with the release of the eleven song, thematic *BOHEMIAN*, Crown Archetype/Random House published her almost 400 page autobiography *SWEET JUDY BLUE EYES: MY LIFE IN MUSIC* (ISBN 10: 0307717348) which updates *TRUST YOUR HEART* (1988).

According to the *BOHEMIAN* press release the album's songs are: 'inspired by her recollections of the southern California

scene of the 1960s.' I'll let you, the reader, be the judge of that contention. Collins is an occasional composer and *BOHEMIAN* features a quartet of her creations interwoven with seven covers. Of the foregoing head count, an in concert reading of Collins' ethereal *Wings Of Angels* previously appeared on *WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL* (2003). Accompanied vocally by New York-based band Ollabelle, Collins opens this collection with the lyrically rambling and dreamlike *Morocco*. *BOHEMIAN* closes with her *In The Twilight* and *Big Sur*. The lyric to the former recalls the life of Judy's late mother Marjorie Collins Hall who died during December 2010, while through the latter half of the 1960s *Big Sur*, the Californian coastal hideaway, was home to a folk festival organised by Nancy Carlen. Collins played the festival from 1966 through 1968.

As for the *BOHEMIAN* cover songs, Joni Mitchell's debut solo album *SONG TO A SEAGULL* (1968) included the classic *Cactus Tree*, and here Collins shares the lead vocal with Shawn Colvin, while the ensuing *Pure Imagination* was penned by Anthony Newley/Leslie Bricusse and performed by Gene Wilder in the movie *WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY* (1971). According to Collins: 'I'd never heard it before. I saw some commercial for AT&T in the UK on which it was used, and it was just one of those moments.' 'Enchanted' the song became a *BOHEMIAN* shoe-in. Judy is joined, vocally, by Wildflower label-mate Kenny White on Michael Vietch's anti-war themed *Veteran's Day*. Launched in 2000, Collins stumbled across Vietch's music while a panel judge for Paul Stookey's bi-annual Music2Life contest.

Commencing in January 1968 a production of the revue Jacques Brel Is Alive And Well And Living In Paris, including *The Desperate Ones*, ran at The Village Gate Theater in Greenwich Village for four years. Supported by a string section, Judy delivers a haunting rendition of the Belgian-bred writer's composition. Woody Guthrie's 1941 song *Pastures Of Plenty*, subjectively evocative of the lives of the Route 66 California immigrants painted by Steinbeck in his Pulitzer/Nobel winning novel *The Grapes Of Wrath* (1939), is supported by a melody based on the traditional English folk song *Pretty Polly*. Pursuing that traditional vein it's followed by African-American lullaby *All The Pretty Horses*. Drawn from *LETTERS* (1972) the final cover is *Campo de Encino* Jimmy Webb's Latin rhythm propelled tale of Californian excess. **Arthur Wood**

www.judycollins.com