



Diana Jones **"My Remembrance Of You"** NewSong Recordings

Just like those devious tricksters John Gustafson and Max Goldman I've now hit 60, so I figure that it's my right to behave like a cheerless curmudgeon! A doubting Thomas! A grumpy old man! I think the unsolicited copy of **"My Remembrance Of You"** dropped through my letterbox sometime in April 2006. In late May, probably just after 2.00pm on a Texas hot Sunday afternoon, I noticed a woman walk, stage right, into the backstage area of the Threadgill Theatre. Now I religiously [and annually] check the Kerrville New Folk Song Contest list of 32 finalists, as, more often than not, a few familiar names appear there [alongside possible ringers], but somehow Diana Jones' name had slipped my attention. Well, I mean to say John Smith!!!! That was, until that moment of visual déjà vu, when I suddenly realised *"That's what's her name...that album...in the flesh."* Now I clearly recall how, a little later, one of the two songs Diana performed was the not half bad "Pony." I'm always looking for 'keepers' and it possessed real potential.

Sometime in April or May I had given **"My Remembrance....."** a cursory spin and figured *"Sounds like Iris."* What do I know? Back in 1992 I pegged Iris as a Mary McCaslin clone! If *"DeMent"* was my hurried aural judgement of Jones' music, all my eyes perceived - on the liner - was a woman in a wrap dress, in one instance, walking wistfully into the distance carrying a suitcase [+]. Those CD liner 'olde world' photographic reflections only appeared to confirm what my ears had adjudged. Late May again, Sunday evening - having segued six hours forward in Texas time, it's now a little cooler, and from Kerrville's mainstage Diana Jones is declared one of the six winners of the 2006, 35th song contest. It was time, I figured, for this old misery to "Pony" up, fly straight and pay attention to Ms Jones.....

The rear of the liner booklet bears the legend "In remembrance of Robert Lee Maranville," Diana's paternal grandfather who passed away a handful of years ago. Adopted at birth, Jones established contact with her biological family about a decade and a half back. Her forebears, who mostly lived in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, included a number of musicians - and her beloved Robert Lee had mostly certainly been one of those. Jones love of music, including writing songs, began at an early age. Decades later, torn between her brushes, oils and canvas, and performing her words and melodies on a concert stage, Diana made the decision to pursue a career in music around the time she found her biological family.

In the album opener, "Pretty Girl," Jones adopts the persona of a weary, probably down at heel, taxi dancer, a breed who live *"in the way of harm, Not safe inside our mother's arms."* "My Beloved" finds the narrator reflecting, via the arrival and departure of Spring flowers, on a love, now and forever, lost, while "All My Money On You" which follows is a tale of aces, Jacks, Queens and Kings and those occasions when you're compelled to go on the lam. "Pony" is one of those songs that, in the hearing, instantly becomes a movie filled with sweeping panoramas. Though not stated the young narrator heartrendingly yearns for days of innocence and freedom, long gone. For the past decade this Native American child has lived and been schooled in the white man's world. The song is set in 1924. Even though his teachers *"are mostly kind you know,"* the school dorm has become his prison as he recalls, a deceased father who *"loved me I know"* and how *"Winter in Dakota, The hills are cold and white."*

"A Hold On Me" finds Diana explore the blues, then changes to a waltz pace for "Up In Smoke" the 'act in haste, repent at leisure' contemplation of a now rocky marriage. Jones switches from guitar to fiddle on the gospel tinged "Cold Grey Ground." Tantamount to the narrator's last will and testament, his request is for his body to be taken from the north to south and buried in *"the red clay that my soul can bare."*

Sounding far less sombre, and fired up by a spirited melody, Jay Ungar plays fiddle on “Fever Moon” wherein Diana’s narrator dreams of being in the arms of a man “*Reserved in his countenance, And his affections for me.*” While you would think that a waltz is intended to soothe, the narrator in “Lay Me Down” relates how she is “*deep down sad.*” The penultimate cut “Willow Tree” is a cautionary tale about [mis]trust and redemption, and is followed by the album title track – the contents are simple and succinct, yet tender and sincere.

Jones’ voice appears to emanate from somewhere at the back of her throat, and her intonation at times bears a decided old time country twang. Raised in NYC “**My Remembrance Of You**” is Diana’s third recording, the predecessors having appeared in 1996 and 1998 during her Austin years. A Nashville resident these days, Diana’s light appears to be shining brightly.....

Note.

[+] – On one of the “**Infamous Angel**” liner pictures, Iris carries a suitcase.

Folkwax Score 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 07/06.