



Kate Campbell **"Wandering Strange"** Eminent Records

If you've been following Campbell's career to date [five albums in as many years], you will probably have deduced that without first releasing **"Rosaryville,"** her stunning fourth solo album, Kate would never have been able to record **"Wandering Strange."** Let me explain. Having already established herself as a lyrically absorbing Southern storyteller, it's not beyond the wit of man to deduce from its title that **"Rosaryville"** included songs possessed of religious themes. For example, the closing "Ava Maria Grotto." Where the latter collection featured ten original songs [composed circa the late 1990's], some of the cover material on **"Wandering Strange"** is over two hundred years old. Kate liner notes open with the words *"I grew up singing hymns from the Baptist Hymnal. As a preacher's daughter, I was at church every time the doors were open."* In truth **"Wayfaring Stranger"** is Campbell's way of giving something back, as well as being an attempt to shine a torch in these practically faithless times. From the viewpoint of sustaining her standing as a recording artist, the contents of this album represent an extremely courageous move on Campbell's part. That's not to say that the contents are entirely traditional in source. In fact the album opens with Gordon Lightfoot's "The House You Live In." There are also four Kate Campbell co-writes featured here. "10,000 Lures" written with Mark Narmore, metaphorically applies a fishing theme to focus upon those daily temptations that come in many guises for us mortals. The album was recorded at Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and "Now Is The Day Of Salvation," a song about salvation, faith and belief, was co-penned with local hero Spooner Oldham, while Kate's husband Ira co-wrote "Bear It Away." The murder of four young girls - Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley and Carol Robertson in the Birmingham, Alabama church bombing of September 15th 1963 is retold in the latter song. The closing track, appropriately titled, "The Last Song," and written with Walt Aldridge imagines the events that took place between the Last Supper and the arrest of Jesus a matter of hours later. The six hymns, which Kate sang regularly during her early years, that underpin the reason for, and the spirituality of, this collection include three drawn for the late eighteenth century ["Come Thou Fount," "There Is A Fountain" and "Jordan's Stormy Banks"]. Completing the disc is one from the nineteenth ["The Prodigal"], and two from the early twentieth century ["The King's Business" and "Dear Little Stranger"]. Before I forget, if you wait patiently there's a hidden track - "Miracle Of The Rosary" - that follows "The Last Song."

Footnote. In anticipation of the album's release [Spring 2001], during the winter of 2000, Eminent Records released a two track CD single that featured "Dear Little Stranger" and a non-album cut - Guy Clark's "Madonna w/Child ca. 1969."

Folkwax Rating 8 out of 10

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