



Kate Campbell "**Twang On A Wire**" Big River Music

It only seems to be a matter of months since "**Monuments**," Kate's most recent collection of original material was released. Darn, if she hasn't gone and self-released another disc. Where "**Wandering Strange**," her Y2K album for Eminent Records, was a well considered *side trip* into the world of gospel music, with "**Twang On A Wire**" Campbell *memorialises* a number of songs that were Country Chart single successes – well, almost all - for female performers during the period 1968-76. The liner states that "Til I Can Make It On My Own" was a hit in 1975, but according to Whitburn [#] it didn't debut on the chart till 2/76. As a gesture to the *self-assured emancipation* these songs wrought in the world of country music, which was mostly peopled at that time by male performers, Kate closes this self-produced collection with the album title track. It just happens to be one of Kate's own compositions [co-written with Mark Namore].

Of the twelve other songs on the disc, half were written or co-written by women. The opening cut, "Rose Garden," penned by Joe South, gave Lynn Anderson a Country # 1 in early 1971. Rather than fall into the trap of exclusively choosing material that reached # 1, Campbell has included a few more obscure, though no less worthy, numbers. The cheating song "Honey On His Hands," sung by Jeanne Pruett, only reached # 41 midway through 1975. Dolly Parton's "Down From Dover" from her "**The Fairest Of Them All**" [1970] album didn't even chart, and neither did the early career Emmylou Harris co-composed [with Bill Danoff] classic "Boulder To Birmingham." Proving the longevity of a *good* song, Dolly revisited "Down From Dover" on her 2002 album "**Little Sparrow**." The other Parton song on "**Twang On A Wire**," "Touch Your Woman" saw Dolly score a # 6 chart success in the Spring of 1972. Of the artists *memorialised* on this recording, it's worth noting that, only Messrs. Parton, Harris, Loretta Lynn and the late Tammy Wynette went on to enjoy significantly long and continuous periods of success in country music.

"Til I Can Make It On My Own" became a Country # 1 single, as I said earlier, for Tammy in early 1976. The song re-entered the chart three years later performed by Kenny Rogers and Dottie West. The other # 1 country songs Campbell has chosen to cover are "Mississippi Woman, Louisiana Man" [originally titled "Louisiana Woman, Mississippi Man" and performed as a duet by Conway Twitty/Loretta Lynn, summer '73], "Would You Lay With Me (In A Field Of Stone)" [Tanya Tucker, early '74], "Funny Face" [Donna Fargo, fall '72], "Harper Valley P.T.A." [Jeannie C. Riley, fall '68], "Satin Sheets" [Jeanne Pruett, Spring '73] and probably the most covered song in this collection, Kris Kristofferson's "Help Me Make It Through The Night" [Sammi Smith, early '71]. Willie Nelson took the latter song back into the charts in the Spring of 1980 scoring a # 4.

Supporting Campbell on this tribute album is an *all star* quintet of *left field* pickers, of whom Jeff Finlin [drums], Kevin Gordon [guitars] and Will Kimbrough [guitars, piano] are solo recording artists in their own *right* – and *write*, I guess. Completing the line-up is Dave Jacques [bass] and Jay Zdad [guitar, lap steel], while Tricia Walker and Sylvia Hutton supply backing vocals. Campbell's composition "Twang On A Wire," the aforementioned closing cut, is a tribute to the theme and contents of this album – ie. great [country] songs. Indirectly, the lyric also lauds the unwavering vision that songwriters require while in pursuit of their muse and that *holy grail* – a great song. The cut fades at 3:35 and then runs on silently for just over sixty seconds, at which point a three-minute *reprise* of "Funny Face" kick in. As for her take on the *chosen twelve*, Campbell voice consistently let's the song lyrics shine through.

Note.

[#] - Joel Whitburn compiles and publishes a series of books based on the annual contents of numerous Billboard sponsored music charts.

Folkwax Rating 6 out of 10

Arthur Wood

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