

...the new releases

Kat Eggleston SPEAK

Paperboat Music

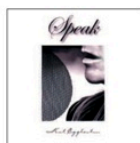
★★★★

Constructed around the bare-to-the-bone sounds of one voice and an acoustic guitar, *SPEAK* talks volumes

Kat Eggleston recently returned to her native north-west USA but before departing Chicago, her 'home' for over two decades, employing only her voice and acoustic guitar, she cut the twelve-song *SPEAK* at John Rice's studio. Self-released on Paperboat Music, the label takes its name from Kat's *Paper Boats*, which appeared on her album *SECOND NATURE*. In terms of the material recorded the *SPEAK* formula amounts to 'old, new and borrowed'.

In order of their appearance on *SPEAK*, Eggleston intentionally revisits one 'old' composition from each of her previous solo releases, namely *Home* (*SECOND NATURE* 1994), *Outside Eden* (*OUTSIDE EDEN* 1997), *Careless* (*THE ONLY WORD* 2005) and *Your Window* (*FIRST WARM WIND* 1990). As for the 'new' element, *SPEAK* opens with the enigmatic *49 Rooms*, a song Eggleston penned while attending a Lamb's Songwriter Retreat in Michigan. It's narrated by a hotel maid, who at one juncture only partially reveals her past with: 'You were my secret when I was a girl.'

The ensuing up-tempo selection *Road To Ruin* sets the scene with: 'With your first white lie, then you've just begun, On the road to ruin, who knows what you'll become?' Love and loss form the focus in *Everybody Knows*, while *Sanctuary*, a



paean to friendship, is prefaced by the Andy Cutting reel *The History Man*. Relationships, one edgy the other questioning, are respectively explored in *Trespass* and *Some Kind Of Wondering*.

Eggleston's rendition of *Birken Tree* has been adapted from the version that appears in the Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection Songs of the North-east of Scotland. The (additional) opening verse begins: 'As I rode out one morning fair, On Clyde's green banks.' That's a clear geographical error, since the River Clyde flows through the central region of Scotland. I guess it also helps that I hail from that area. That said, Kat furnishes a spirited rendition that truly captures the song's Celtic heritage.

In Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet's prayer for peace *I Come And Stand At Every Door*, the narrator is a seven year old who perished in the nuclear white light of Hiroshima. Kat's *One* written soon after 9/11, according to an album sleeve note, finds the narrator contemplate a similar holocaust—'When our cities crumble, one and all'—but toward the close attests that even in death love will remain. **AW**
<http://www.kateggleston.com/home.html>

Keith Greeninger & Dayan Kai MAKE IT RAIN

Waimele Records

★★★★

MAKE IT RAIN is quite simply a soulful sounding, classic acoustic folk song collection

Keith and Dayan share the



production credit on *MAKE IT RAIN*, which they recorded at OTR Studio in Belmont, California through the latter part of last year. I first saw and heard Keith and Dayan on the main stage of Kerrville's Quiet Valley Ranch during 1999. On that occasion, Keith's support band included Dayan. Apart from the appearance of Steve Uccello (upright bass) and Jim Norris (drums, percussion) on three of the dozen songs—they're also members of Keith's band *Water*—Keith (acoustic guitar, percussion, vocals) and Dayan (nylon and steel string guitars, Dobro, piano, flute, cajon, vocals) are the sole contributors to *MAKE IT RAIN*.

Kai takes the lead vocal on his *I Can Make It Rain*—'If you don't believe the magic, then the magic is gone.' His melodic ballad *Thanks For All The Things You Do* is self-explanatory by its title, while *San Juan Song* portrays neighbourhood characters. Introduced by a flute solo Keith reprises *Ruby And Rose* from his City Folk trio days, and *Arsenal Of Doves* from his solo album *GLORIOUS PEASANT* (2006). A prayer for once fertile California farmland now buried below highways and factories, the former offers: 'Silicon chips they're not like trees or fruit, They don't bloom in the springtime, Bring fruit into the fall.'

Apart from the traditional and appropriately titled *Bid You Goodnight*, which closes the collection, the remaining selections are contemporary folk music covers. Jesse Winchester's late twentieth century creation *That's What Makes You Strong* launches the disc, and the duo follow with *Please Be With Me*. Penned by Scott Boyer almost forty years ago, when a member of Cowboy, it's been covered by Tish Hinojosa, Duane Allman and Eric Clapton. *Friend Of The Devil* first appeared on the Grateful Dead's *AMERICAN BEAUTY* (1970). Propelled by a (uncredited?) mandolin and aided by Messrs. Uccello and Norris, and led vocally by Keith, the duo deliver a funky rendition. *MAKE IT RAIN* also features renditions of Jackson Browne's *Our Lady Of The Well* and English writer Sydney Carter's anti-war song *Crow On The Cradle*. **AW**
<http://www.keithgreeninger.com/>

Louise Mosrie HOME

Zoe Cat Music

★★★★

Award-winning Tennessee-based and bred writer scores a *HOME* run

Louise Mosrie was among the annual half-dozen winners of the 2009 Kerrville Folk Festival's New Folk Songwriting Contest. Released at the beginning of the year, *HOME*, which she co-produced, is this Nashville-based musician's latest recording. A finalist in the (folk oriented) Song Contest on the Singer-Songwriter Stage at this year's Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival, Louise scored one of the award winning top four places.

The familial themed album title song opens this collection of thirteen Mosrie originals and co-writes. The



funky sounding backdrop to *God Lives In Arkansas*, a song inspired by an Ozark Mountain detour that Louise and her husband undertook on the way home from a wedding in Oklahoma, will doubtless remind long-in-the-tooth readers of Bobbie Gentry's 1967 crossover hit *Ode To Billie Joe*. Mosrie's southern gothic portrait is energetically supported by the raunchy harmonica and vocal chords of Stepchild's Emil Justian. Scott Neubert (acoustic guitar, Dobro), Byron House (bass) and Butch Simmons (drums) furnish the rhythmic backbone to most of the selections, others pickers who contributed to the recording sessions include album co-producer Jon Young (electric bass), Matt Combs (fiddle) and Donna Ulisse (vocals), one of Louise's co-writers.

One of three songs co-written with Mike Richardson, *The Battle Of Blair Mountain* recalls the week long, organised armed uprising that involved over 10,000 West Virginia miners. This 1921 strike led to the partial recognition of labour unions by mine owners, and gave rise to the term 'redneck' because of the red bandana worn by the miners. Set in current times the *Backroads* and *Fly* lyrics merge themes already explored in *Home* and *God Lives In Arkansas*—the climactic line in *Backroads* being: 'Daddy lived in the country till the day he died, Now I've come to understand why.' The bittersweet *Maybe I'm Your Angel* finds this Tennesseean reveal her tender side, while a failed relationship forms the focus in the ensuing Ulisse co-write *Don't Come Looking For Me*.

Blackberry Winter is a (Southern) term describing a short cold spell that coincides with the time blackberries are in bloom. Co-written with Mike Richardson their tuneful collaboration of the same name follows in the wake of similarly titled recent odes by David Mead (*Blackberry Winters* 2009) and Jud Caswell (*Blackberry Time* 2007). Considering Nashville's recent trials and tribulations, an outward looking positivity pervades the *I Love This World* lyric that quite simply celebrates exactly what this music town is all about. The autobiographical *Tennessee* follows, the penultimate *Sweet Relief* is gospel tinged, and Louise warps up *HOME* with the sensitive ballad *You Have My Love*.

Mosrie's compositions are thoughtful, refined creations. Given repeated listening, they will penetrate your consciousness. Spend your time thus, you'll also be hooked. **AW**

<http://www.louisemosrie.com/>

Melissa Greener DWELLING

Anima Records

★★★★☆

Be awake and alert, expend the time, and you'll grasp the *Technicolor grandeur* contained within Greener's *DWELLING*

Five years on from the release of *FALL FROM THE SKY*, Greener returns with her John Jennings



Laurie Lewis BLOSSOMS

Spruce & Maple Music

★★★★★

Sunshine music from a sunshine personality

Laurie Lewis was a new name to me, so I Googled and went on YouTube and I was sold. Some lovely music on-line meant that I came to the album with high expectations and I was not disappointed. The sound of this music was refreshing like clear air, I hope I'm not overstating here, I don't think I am. The opener, a two part acappella *How Can I Keep From Singing* is a hymn of praise to creation—it probably echoes the 19th Psalm for those of a theological bent, whatever, it sets up the album beautifully. The second track *Lark in the Morning* written by Kate Macleod is a nice mid-tempo song of lost love, a touch Celtic and maybe a hint of Kathy Mattea here, and for some reason it also felt like a song for the road. *Chain of Letters* is next a slowish 6/8 song of lost love. Song four *Cool Your Jets* is interesting, primarily a three part vocal harmony song with an opening that nods to the Swingle Singers, this light hearted tune is a bit throwaway and maybe the weakest track on the album. There follow three songs that take us through the gamut of acoustic country sounds, *Roughest Road*, *Burley Coulter's Gong* and *Unfinished Life* leading to two exquisite instrumentals—*Sophie's House* a fiddle duet written by Laurie and then the traditional *Beaver Creek*. The tenth track *Return to the Fire* is a stunner, sung acappella it is written in Laurie's words 'for the many Vietnam veterans that I have listened to'—beautiful. *Here Today* written by Scott Huffman and Laurie is a sad little song that reads as a testimony left behind by one about to depart this life. *Train of Love* is the Johnny Cash song very well played; *Tell Me True* is a song of yearning to know the future. The closer *Sirens* is again a song that seems to be a homage of sorts to the departed. In summary then a very fine album, beautifully recorded and played. It is a little melancholy, perhaps because it is dedicated to Laurie's Dad and in part it is both a tribute and a song of mourning for his passing, but the melancholy is infused with a refreshing sense of peace and tranquility—music of the open air and full of sunshine is highly recommended. **VM**
www.laurielewis.com

