



Tish Hinojosa **"The Best Of Tish Hinojosa - Live"** Rounder Records

Recorded during early August 2002 at the Cactus Café on the University of Texas campus in Austin, the seventeen cuts on **"Live"** find this San Antonio bred, Tex/Mex songbird reprising *highlights* from her [so far] fifteen-year long recording career, circa 1988 to 2002. She's supported by *long-time* sideman [and occasional album co-producer] Marvin *Denton* Dykhuis [guitar, mandolin and vocals], plus from **"Sign Of Truth"** [2000], her most recent studio album, Glenn Kawamoto [bass]. Also aboard is former Asleep at The Wheel alumni - Danny Levin [fiddle], plus Marty Muse [pedal steel] - sideman for the Robison Brothers and a veteran of countless Austin recording sessions. Robert Madden [drums] and Arturo Garza [perc.] complete the line-up of support players that *packed* the *compact* Cactus stage for this recording session.

Drawing material from eight of her ten *original song collections*, on a number of the tracks Hinojosa indicates the source and date of the original recording. Fourteen of the songs bear the mark of Hinojosa's pen, and Tish also provided the lyrics to Robert Skiles [aka Beto of Austin combo, Beto and The Fairlanes] melody "Cumbia Polka y Mas," plus she arranged the traditional "Otra Vez." Since the outset Hinojosa has consistently employed Spanish lyrics in her songs, and a considerable number of the selections on **"Live"** pursue that route although her use of that language hardly distracts from appreciating each song. Midway through the collection Tish performs a new composition, the bluegrass inspired, but somewhat bland, "She's A Highway." Accordionist Santiago Jiminez Jr. joins Tish for the aforementioned "Otra Vez," and her set continues with "Con Su Pluma En Su Mano (With His Pen In His Hand)," Hinojosa's tribute to her friend and musical mentor, University of Texas in Austin *border historian* Prof. Don Americo Paredes. Jiminez closes out his contribution to **"Live"** on Hinojosa's signature tune and tribute to her *late* parents, "West Side Of Town." Further pursuing the arts, "Manos Huesos Y Sangre (Hands, Bones And Blood)" is Tish's personal tribute to the late Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, recently the subject of a Hollywood movie.

In terms of inspired playing, Levin's contribution to the **"Culture Swing"** track "Bandera Del Sol/Flag Of The Sun" is stunning, while the band *totally nails* the penultimate, inspirational and upbeat "God's Own Open Road." Career wise, this *best of* disc hardly breaks new ground for Hinojosa. For newcomers, it totally works as a primer to the music of Tish Hinojosa.

Folkwax Rating 6 out of 10

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