



Kate Campbell "**Monuments**" Evangeline Records

An eerie unearthly sound introduces the listener to "Yellow Guitar," "**Monuments**" opening cut, as Kate relates a *shades of Robert Johnson* tale of meeting a *delta ghost* standing by the side of the road with his axe, "*Halfway to Memphis, Halfway to Tupelo.*" The upbeat "Corn In A Box" lists some of mankind's major achievements – *seven wonders come and gone only one still hanging on, landing on the moon in '69, the cloning of sheep* and so on. The punch line being, "*Evolution's almost through, there ain't much left that we can't do*" except for the paradox that "*We still can't grow corn in a box.*" Kate's lyric doesn't specifically comment upon the ethics of cloning, although in relation to the subject she states, "*I can't wait to get my own, She can go to work while I stay home.*" Gravity, this planet and mass communication all feature in the "Strangeness Of The Day," a song that focuses upon the miracle that is our Earth, and the miracles that have consistently happened here. An aged mahogany coffee table, which she bought some ten years ago at an auction, is the focal point of "Joe Louis' Furniture" - Kate [who is a self-confessed sports fan] tells the story of the greatest world heavyweight champion of them all, Joe Louis. Louis once owned the coffee table.

The swaggering New Orleans jazz tinged "New South" and the laid back "Petrified House", that follows, are a well-matched pair subjectively. Campbell's tongue is firmly placed in her cheek on "New South" with mention of "*Starbucks, latte, Mercedes, Wall Street Journal, valet parking, Italian loafers n' much more,*" added to which, in the "New South" the reality is that "*It's getting hard to find grits and gravy*" on a restaurant menu. How can a poor gourmet survive the culinary omission !!!! A theme of *nothing lasts forever* is explored in "Petrified House." A reclusive old lady "*the world hasn't seen since '78*" lives in one room of a big old mansion downtown. Now it's surrounded by "*strip bars and strip malls.*" In grander times, "*the front gates were three miles from the mansion,*" but property tax has forced her to gradually sell her heritage, piece by piece.

"How Much Can One Heart Hold" is a recollection of loss through Kate's lyrical portraits of the civil rights struggle, the war in Vietnam etc. Piano led, "The Way Home" is the first of two obviously Christian lyrics in this collection, and features the refrain "*You just let the good book be your map, Jesus is the way home.*" By way of serving his "*heavenly daddy,*" William lives a simple life by carving *monuments* from stone in "William's Vision." The latter song was written as a tribute/memorial to the late, William Edmondson c. 1870 – 1951. "Walk Among Stones" underpinned by a slow blues tinged tune, closes the album. Muscle Shoal Sound Studios, located at 3614 Jackson Highway, was, at one stage, a casket factory and Kate refers to this fact in the opening verse. The Stones recorded part of their "**Sticky Fingers**" album at the studio back in 1969. The reference in the second verse to a "*skinny kid*" being on "*Sullivan,*" is, possibly Presley rather than Jagger, since the final verse talks of "*two kings dying.*" Of course, my Presley / Jagger contention may be wrong. As for the *two kings*, one of them is pretty obvious.....can you readers out there figure out who the other one is?

Campbell has cleverly chosen one *monument* of American life as the lyrical focus of each song, a neat concept and a great song cycle being the result. And, what's more, not every *monument* has to be *carved in stone.*

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

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