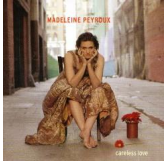


Madeleine Peyroux - Careless Love (2004)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 27 March 2017 15:24 -

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1. *Dance Me To The End Of Love* (L. Cohen) 2. *Don't Wait Too Long* (J. Harris / L. Klein / M. Peyroux) 3. *Don't Cry Baby* (S. Bernie / J. Johnson / S. Unger) 4. *You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go* (B. Dylan) 5. *Between the Bars* 6. *No More* (B. Russell) 7. *Lonesome Road* (G. Austin / N. Shilkret) 8. *J'Ai Deux Amours* (V. Scotto / H. Varna) 9. *Weary Blues from Waitin'* (H. Williams) 10. *I'll Look Around* (G. Cory / D. Cross) 11. *Careless Love* (W. Handy / M. Koenig / S. Williams) 12. *This Is Heaven to Me* (F. Reardon / E. Schweikert)

Madeleine Peyroux — vocals, acoustic guitar Dean Parks — guitars
Larry Goldings — piano, Wurlitzer electric piano, Estey Organ, Hammond organ, celeste
David Piltch — bass Jay Bellerose — drums, percussion Lee Thornburg — trumpet
(tracks 6 and 12) Scott Amendola — brushes (track 10)

With the release of her long awaited follow-up album, *Careless Love*, Peyroux's potential as an artist is truly realized. Her smoky voice and knowing delivery make each song her own, whether she's singing vintage tunes by W.C. Handy and Hank Williams, or contemporary songs by Leonard Cohen and Elliott Smith. Producer Larry Klein (Joni Mitchell, Shawn Colvin) weaves strands of acoustic blues, country ballads, classic jazz, torch songs and pop into a vibrant fabric that is both timeless and thoroughly up to date, with Peyroux's arresting vocals always front and center. --- madeleinepeyroux.com

Why it took vocalist Madeleine Peyroux eight years to follow up her acclaimed *Dreamland* album is anybody's guess. The explanation from her website bio claims, "I could have kept running with it, but I took a breather." Really it hardly matters, since there have been plenty of capable singers to fill that void. Produced by Larry Klein, *Careless Love* is essentially *Dreamland* part deux. She lost Yves Beauvais and Atlantic Records, as well as a stellar cast of

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edgy jazz and rock session players, but she did gain Larry Klein. There are some fine players on this album, including Larry Goldings, Scott Amendola, David Piltch, and Dean Parks, and it's a much more focused set than Dreamland. That she's on Rounder is just an "oh well." Since Klein is not reined in by having to be a "jazz" producer, his sense of restrained and subtle adventure is a perfect foil for Peyroux's voice and phrasing, which is still too close to the Billie Holiday model for comfort. The material is a curious collection of modern pop songs, country tunes, and old nuggets. There's an original as well in "Don't Wait Too Long," co-written with Jesse Harris and Klein. Peyroux's reading of Leonard Cohen's "Dance Me to the End of Love" that opens the disc is radical, sung like a German cabaret song, and lacks the drama of the original, which is on purpose but it's questionable as to whether it works.

Her cover of Bob Dylan's "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go" works much better. It keeps the breeziness of the original but focuses on the object of the song still being very present to the protagonist -- delighting in the presence of the Beloved. Parks' guitars play sparsely and pronouncedly in the mix, as Amendola's brushwork complements the spare cymbal and tom-tom work of Jay Bellerose as well as Goldings' in-the-groove organ and piano. The hinge track on this record is the empathic and moving version of Elliott Smith's "Between the Bars." With tense sound effects whispering in the backdrop and Goldings' celeste setting the atmosphere, once again Amendola's brushes whisper and shimmer, giving the singer an anchor in the depth of the song's melancholy. It's simply awesome. The sparse haunted treatment of Hank Williams' "Weary Blues" is devoid of its country trappings and rooted firmly in the uptown blues tradition of Holiday's 1940s. Likewise, the title track, a classic standard by W.C. Handy, is turned inside out and made a gospel-flavored R&B tune, driven by Goldings on the organ and a Rhodes piano -- an instrument that makes a frequent appearance here. Parks' subtle yet dirty guitar gives the singer a platform and she swims inside the lyric, letting it fall from her mouth. The tune's swing quotient is formidable. In all, this is a stronger record than Dreamland, in part because Klein is obviously sympathetic to singers and because Peyroux is a more confident and commanding singer. It's a welcome addition to the shelf, but if she waits another eight years, that space reserved for her may disappear. --- Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

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