

CABARETSCENES

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In a world of cookie-cutter albums, it's refreshing to find a major surprise with the potential to break the mold. Vancouver's Robyn McCorquodale has released her fourth album, *Sleep with Angels*, with all original songs. The songs are an amalgam of experiences about life, love and all points in between. It's also a mini-travelogue of her life—literally and figuratively. And she does it superbly using her lyrical vocals with a crystal clear timbre that, at times, echoes Sarah MacLachlan. With such personalized lyrics, she draws on talks she's shared with people she has met in her forays about the world. This montage encompasses many things, from being concealed behind a veil in Iran to majestic visions of sand dunes in Africa, as well as experiences in Egypt, Israel and even glaciers in Antarctica. Her visionary experiences meshed with her poetry have fueled a unique album from this award-winning songwriter.



With her picturesque stories, she weaves riveting tales of optimism and the wonders all around from her perspective. At times, it is as powerful and uplifting as it is engaging. At times, it's almost religious. Her bucolic passions shine through repeatedly, making for an ethereal listening experience. McCorquodale has a journeyman's gift for songwriting and expressing the human heart that sets her apart from most songwriters today, who drown in self-pity or click their heels with jingles on. This, fueled by an enchanted voice that almost sounds like it's from a Disney soundtrack, makes this album a winner on every level. It is a disc listeners will want to play over and over as this sea of beauty gently unfolds like the circling ripples in a calm river. Perhaps it is all summed up best in the album's driving title cut in which she proclaims "...I still got the dream ... I'm a free spirit soaring through the wild...I'm gonna touch the stars...I've got my mark to make." Other highlights include beauties like "Take My Hand" and "Dance in the Sun."

This is a deeply profound album filled with the joys of living beautifully expressed by a free spirit worthy of more attention. With this stunning new album, let's hope Robyn McCorquodale reaches a wider audience and gains the popularity and recognition she is so worthy of. This is one of the most special independent albums to come along in a long time. And the poetry and songs are in a league with some legendary singer/writers—including Judy Collins. That ain't bad.

By John Hoglund, Cabaret Scenes, NYC

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