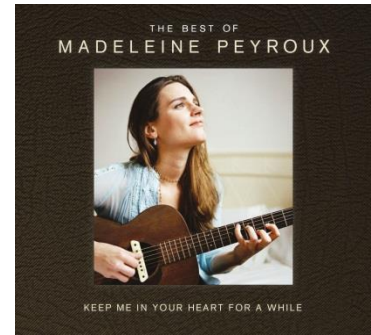


Interview with Madeleine Peyroux

Keep Me in Your Heart for a While: The Best of Madeleine Peyroux



How did you select the tracks for Keep Me in Your Heart for a While: The Best of Madeleine Peyroux?

This is an attempt to show off my best work. If I'd had my way, I'd have narrowed the list down to ten songs, or maybe three, because it's harder to summarize one's life when given too much space in which to do it. These are the songs that I've loved most or have been loved most by the listeners I've encountered over the years. They sum up a great deal of what I've done, and perhaps what I'll ever do, though I remain hopeful!

What is your personal favorite recording in this collection?

This is Heaven to Me

Please describe your favorite musical memory that surfaced while you were working on this collection.

I remembered my first tour, on the west coast, with Kenny Wollesen and Yves Beauvais driving, buying used records, walking through a giant redwood, hearing Cesaria Evora play live, and hearing someone yell "We love you!" from the audience during a moment of shy hesitation. A really fantastic memory.

This collection features some of your own songs. What does the Madeleine Peyroux songwriting process look like? And how does it work when you're collaborating with a co-writer?

I live with an idea for a song for several weeks, and try to flesh out the idea so that the picture can come to life for the listener. Co-writing comes in at this point when it does, and looks like two toddlers in a sandbox marveling at a medieval castle on a nearby cliff.

Tell us about some of your musical influences. What is it about them that you find so appealing and influential?

Billie Holiday, Miles Davis, Dionne Warwick, Ray Charles, James Brown, Carole King, Bob Dylan... Tough people that channeled the world into tenderness.

This is the first compilation in nearly 20-years that you've been a recording artist. Certainly worth the wait, but why didn't this happen sooner?

It is frankly more of a concern that this compilation is coming out too soon in my young career. I am certainly very grateful for what I've been able to do and experience till now. But there is no telling what someone's greatest work really is, perhaps ever, because that is such a difficult question. Still, it is really only thanks to Nick Phillips at Concord that this project was to come about: thanks both to his persistence and patience.

How do you select your repertoire for your live performance dates?

It takes much effort for me to feel that I can build a show without losing sight of the spontaneity that I find at the heart of great music. So the set list changes constantly, and the repertoire can only get bigger and better, all the time.

Do you intentionally change the arrangements of various songs to help keep them fresh for not only you but for the fans as well and/or do the arrangements naturally morph and change over time?

I'd have to say both. Some arrangements seem to beg for an obvious improvement and that happens organically with the suggestions and process that happens with the band while on tour or in rehearsals. And some arrangements have changed only because we do get tired of them, and we all know that the excitement we feel when playing is the most infectious kind, so that has to have priority over the older arrangements, unless there is nothing wrong. If it ain't broke...

What are some of your favorite countries and/or international cities to perform in and why?

I love to play wherever people will have me, and will listen, and share. It's so simple that it's complicated, but that's really the bottom line in music: the willingness to take part in it.

Are there big differences between audiences in the US vs Europe, Asia and South America?

Yes I think there are differences in reaction to music just as there are differences in other aspects of culture. The meanings are always in context, and the context has the upper hand. But the one thing that does not change is the power of looking someone in the eye as you speak, or sing.