

Peak at country through Lace Curtains

If you find yourself getting tired of the high-power, mind-numbing sounds of pop radio, grab a copy of Clela Errington's debut CD *Lace Curtains*, kick back, close your eyes and let her music carry you off to another, more laid back time and space.

Clela, who has been living in the Beach since 1984, has surrounded herself with a collection of some of Toronto's finest folk musicians, but she uses them sparingly on this recording. Most often it's just her, her guitar and her harmonica, making some of the most gentle country music around.



The opening track, 'Klezmer Blues', could be a touch misleading with its mournful harmonica conjuring up memories of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Starting off with an instrumental is risky, especially one that is so different in tone and feel from the rest of the CD. But hey, I'm patient. I read the list of tunes and am waiting for a favourite of mine which comes next.

Errington's take on Willie P. Bennett's 'Country Squall' is carefully measured with the same lazy feel that Margo Timmins of the Cowboy Junkies has made her signature. Errington's voice is clear and precise without any affectations. It shows well on the tune 'Sidewalks of the City' by Lucinda Williams. She's allowed more vocal 'space' here and with the simple arrangement, she makes this a credible folk song.

'Chocolate Jesus' is a typically bizarre Tom Waits song about a candy Christian, and it demonstrates that Errington can handle the blues as well as she does folk and country. Jamie Snider plays some cool mandolin riffs here as well.

There are three more instrumentals on this collection that show just how well Errington plays the harmonica. No Dylanesque squawking here. 'Wedding Waltz', 'P.E.I. Song' and the title track, 'Lace Curtains', are all wonderful tunes conjuring up hazy afternoons on the farm, a summer's campfire or a fishing port. There's something about the harmonica which can do that - when it's played well.

'Weary From Waitin' Blues' is a real country twanger from the legendary Hank Williams. Errington milks it for all it's worth, and Frank Barth completes the package with a little dobro sliding. Finally Errington performs her own version of the Gershwin classic 'Summertime'. With Rick Fielding picking softly on the banjo and Ed Hutchison adding extra guitar and dobro licks, this 'Summertime' evokes a southern plantation in the heat of a sweaty summer sun.

Lace Curtains is an independently released CD available at Sound City, Scarboro Music, Wholesome Foods and Honey n' Spice. Errington will be performing in Dan Kershaw's Country Sundays series at the Cadillac Lounge March 18 and April 15.