

Seduction Goes Global on Lisa McCormick's New CD, "Talisman Groove" Affirmation in a Sultry, Worldly and Well-Wrought Package

By Jon Potter, Brattleboro Reformer, September 13, 2007

When I asked Lisa McCormick why she named her new CD "Talisman Groove", she said, I liked the idea of groove. I felt like I wanted the album to have that feeling. And the idea of a talisman...the idea that having something that to you has tremendous positive power."

Not unwittingly, McCormick found a name for her newest album that reveals much about its character. What's in a name, you ask? In "Talisman Groove", quite a bit.

Like her previous release, "Mystery Girl", "Talisman Groove" has smart sexiness to it, but it's wrapped up a more musically adventurous sound. The result is seductive and celebratory, simultaneously intimate and inclusive, an affirming embrace of love, sensuality and simply living life happily. But it's not superficial. McCormick's lyrics are well-wrought, lyrical and utterly honest; they come from a place of maturity but they're not afraid to kick off their shoes and stomp in puddles. There's an irrepressible sexuality here, too, but it's not raw and hormonal, it's grown-up and seductive.

All that positive power is complimented by music that is rich, worldly, and eminently listenable. McCormick's songwriting got a passport, and it's been well-stamped. In "Talisman Groove" you'll hear elements of salsa, tango, Latin, reggae and many other styles, and instrumentation that includes cello, accordion, sax, trombone and slide guitar, in addition to the standard guitar, bass, drums, and keyboards. Many of the songs favor minor keys, which merely adds to their allure. This album extends a seductive finger and beckons you into it.

To the credit of McCormick and co-producer Julian McBrowne, these elements are blended well and play nicely with McCormick's voice, which is in fine form.

The first song, "Desire", sets the tone, both musically and lyrically. It opens with a declarative statement – a woman seeking to know something more about desire – and then kicks into a propulsive salsa beat. By the end of the song, much of what "Talisman Groove" is all about has been established. It's an invitation to live, love and have fun, delivered in an ear-catching worldly envelope.

Other highlights for me include the minor key "This is a Kiss", a sultry disarmingly honest song that features Sabine Rhyne on cello; the loungy, Tin Pan Alley-ish "My Little Peace," with a nice solo by Draa Hobbs; the stark plaintive cello opening of "Love Above Complexity"; McCormick's soaring vocals on "Something About Me and You"; the wonderful reggae pulse on "Wing & a Prayer", a song which also features guest harmony vocals by Jonathan Edwards; the wonderful minor key Latin dance of "Fool Me Once"; and the utterly fun, completely honest lyrics of "Sex & Consequences".

The end result is an album that stands as polished art, a well-formed blend of songs, musicianship, lyrics and production. While worldly and affirming in its reach, its seductive, personal and intimate touch make it what I would call an ideal "date CD".

Make a date with "Talisman Groove".