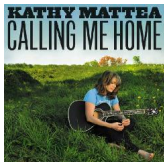


Kathy Mattea - Calling Me Home (2012)

Written by bluelover

Tuesday, 25 September 2012 16:36 - Last Updated Saturday, 04 March 2017 22:37

Kathy Mattea - Calling Me Home (2012)



01 – A Far Cry 02 – Gone, Gonna Rise Again 03 – The Wood Thrush's Song 04 – West Virginia Mine Disaster 05 – The Maple's Lament 06 – Hello, My Name Is Coal 07 – Calling Me Home 08 – Black Waters 09 – West Virginia, My Home 10 – Agate Hill 11 – Now Is the Cool of the Day 12 – Requiem for a Mountain

When Kathy Mattea made a hard roots turn on 2008's *Coal*, a heartfelt examination in classic mining songs of the hard, often dangerous life of coal miners, it sounded like she'd been singing them all her life. On *Calling Me Home*, Mattea delivers a second album of material that has its origins in coal country and/or her native rural West Virginia. With co-producer Gary Paczosa, she chose songs that drew their inspiration from coal-mining communities, and the juxtaposition of the natural environment and its devastation at the hands of an industry that is often the only one that provides a livelihood. These songs were penned by classic topical writers and modern performers. The band is top-flight: Stuart Duncan, Byron House, Bryan Sutton, Tim Lauer, Bill Cooley, and Jim Brock. Guest vocalists include Patty Loveless, Tim & Mollie O'Brien, Alison Krauss, and Emmylou Harris, to mention a few. Paczosa is well-known in acoustic music circles, from bluegrass and newgrass to modern folk, for his manner of capturing warm, pristine, immediate sound. The arrangements by Paczosa and Mattea never lose sight of the traditional -- even if the song is present-day -- while honoring the progressive talents of all the players involved. Atop it all, of course, is Mattea's voice: full, rich, soulful, evocative of both history and mystery. Her husky, smooth delivery and unique phrasing get these songs across with conviction. It's in the haunted backwoods gospel of Si Kahn's "Gone, Gonna Rise Again," a song rich in sociological and environmental metaphors. Catch her reading of Laurie Lewis' "The Wood Thrush's Song," with Aoife O'Donovan's harmony vocal, as Mattea digs deep inside the lyric while mandolins, guitars, accordion, and bass give her a podium. She doesn't need to soar above them; she merely has to assert the authority of the lyric to invite the listener in. This is equally true in the reportorial classic "West Virginia Mine Disaster" by Hazel Dickens. Contrast this with the desolate a cappella lament of Alice Gerrard's "Now Is the Cool of the Day," the nostalgia of Dickens' "West Virginia, My Home," or the depth of historical loss in Jean Ritchie's "Black Waters." The "blues" in bluegrass is resonant in Mattea's declamatory reading of Larry Cordle's dark-tinged, historically ambivalent "Hello, My Name Is Coal." *Calling Me Home* is not

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only a worthy follow-up to Coal, but it presents even the most historic of these songs as timeless and ever present. It's more confident, powerful, and beautiful. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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