

Karen Dalton – It's So Hard To Tell Who's Going To Love You The Best (1969)

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A1 Little Bit Of Rain A2 Sweet Substitute A3 Ribbon Bow A4 I Love You More Than Words Can Say A5 In The Evening B1 Blues On The Ceiling B2 It Hurts Me Too B3 How Did The Feeling Feel To You B4 Right, Wrong Or Ready B5 Down On The Street
Acoustic Guitar – Dan Hankin Banjo – Karen Dalton Electric Bass – Harvey Brooks Electric Guitar – Gary Chester, Kim King Engineer – Sandy Fisher Guitar – Karen Dalton Percussion – Gary Chester

Some find Karen Dalton's voice difficult to listen to, and despite the Billie Holiday comparisons, it is rougher going than Lady Day. But Dalton's vocals aren't that hard to take, and they are expressive; like Buffy Sainte-Marie, it just does take some getting used to because of their unconventional timbre. Her debut album has a muted folk-rock feel reminiscent of Fred Neil's arrangements in the mid-'60s, unsurprising since Neil's Capitol-era producer, Nick Venet, produced this disc too, and since Dalton, a friend of Neil, covered a couple of Neil songs here ("Little Bit of Rain," "Blues on the Ceiling"). Although clocking in at a mere ten songs, it covers a lot of ground, from Tim Hardin, Jelly Roll Morton, and Leadbelly to the traditional folk song "Ribbon Bow" and the Eddie Floyd/Booker T. Jones-penned soul tune "I Love You More Than Words Can Say." The record is interesting and well done, but would have been far more significant if it had come out five years or so earlier. By 1969 such singers were expected to write much of their own material (Dalton wrote none), and to embrace rock instrumentation less tentatively. ---Richie Unterberger, AllMusic Review

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