

Folk World

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April Verch "The Anthology"

Slab Town Records, 2017

This diminutive high-voiced Canadian fiddler/singer/dancer has been wowing audiences for a good twenty years, pushing out around a dozen albums in the process, of which ten are featured here. *The Anthology* includes two new tracks, plus favourites from 1998 to 2016. I first encountered April Verch on her 2001 Rounder release *Verchusosity*, which opens this collection with a medley of reels showing how extremely appropriate that album title was. As well as her fiddling skills, which feature on every track here, April sings songs from swing to gospel, new country to oldtime. And she step-dances, of course, while playing the fiddle. Well why not? April's Ottawa Valley roots are evident in her stepping and in her choice of tunes, but she has a trans-Canada repertoire too. From Alberta to Cape Breton, Quebec to Vancouver, and even further south at times, this is Canadian music at heart. Sometimes it's solo fiddle, backed up by piano or guitar as on Verch's own beautiful country waltz *Waiting for Home*. Other tracks are richly arranged for a big stage band, folk or bluegrass ballads like *He's Holding On To Me* or *Cruel Moon* with its slack guitar riffs. About half the material on this CD was written by April with various collaborators: the other half is split between new and old: French dance tunes from 1920s recordings, or songs by the likes of Hayes Carll who wrote the wonderful *She Left Me for Jesus* which is unfortunately not on this recording.

www.aprilverch.com

The eighteen tracks which Ms Verch has chosen are a broad selection of her music, half instrumental and half vocal, although that's an artificial distinction as April's fiddle works its way into each song, and her tapping feet take every opportunity to dance up a storm. An hour of April Verch is not to be sneezed at by any folk fan: if you haven't seen her on stage, this collection is the next best thing. Don't miss the videos on her website too!

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