

Judy Collins Gets it On

Mike Kerman

1969

We all know how lousy Detroit winters are. The snow is gray after an hour, then it turns to slush. It's bitter cold. Your car can't start and when it does it skids. You can't take it anymore and want to split to Florida or California.

And then one nice day comes along. The temperature might only be twenty-five degrees, but it's no longer bitter. There is no wind and the sun is bright and warm. The snow seems white again. You walk (and don't even cut through buildings). The snow sparkles. You feel good and your blood tingles. You feel alive and radiant and for a poetic moment winter's almost worth it.

Judy Collins' latest album "Who Knows Where the Time Goes" (Elektra) feels like that day. It's electric and alive and Judy never sounded better. She finally has a backing that compliments and enhances her sparkling voice.

The album is one of those rare releases where everything feels right. It has a definite country flavor.

Steve Stills, formerly of Buffalo Springfield, Chris Ethridge, now a member of the Flying Burrito Brothers, and Buddy Emmons pedal steel guitar, help create this feeling. Their playing adds a vibrant dimension to Judy's voice.

But it's not only the backing that makes this album my favorite of Judy's. She comes into her own as a songwriter and stylist. Her "My Father" is a touching and delicate song that ranks with the best of her material. She paces songs to meet her own needs and adds a new quality to them.

Dylan's "Poor Immigrant" (from "John Wesley Harding") is speeded up and given added dimension with a swooning country pedal guitar. Robin Williams's (of the Incredible String Band) "First Girl I Loved" becomes a slower, longer and more poignant "First Boy I Loved."

Her renditions of songs by Leonard Cohen, Ian Tyson, the title song and the traditional "Pretty Polly" are all handled well, most with a refreshing country tinge.

Now we have a more electric and alive Judy Collins and an album that will help us pass—the winter months with a little more warmth and musical sunshine.

fifth Estate

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