

BAYOU SECO

Bayou Seco's Bouquet Zerx ZERX080

What are people's expectations from a Bayou Seco album? Mine are that there will be a wide range of musical traditions from the southern states of the USA presented with great skill, enthusiasm and with a deep understanding and empathy with the musics: Nothing to disappoint me here, then.

Jeanie McClerie has one of those voices that manages to augment and bring out the magic of all the songs in her vast repertoire whether she is singing in French, Spanish or, more frequently, in English. Her fiddle playing is a delight, never flashy but always bringing out beauty in melody, and there is a rare sympathy and close understanding in the way she plays alongside the multi-instrumental talents of Ken Keppeler – well, there ought to be by now; this album marks 30 years of their playing together. The fiddle and banjo playing on *Texas* is but one good example of this.

Ken and Jeanie's extensive work in collecting from and playing alongside a wide range of traditional musicians from varied backgrounds is reflected in the songs and music heard here. They have delved into Cajun, fiddle tunes from Native Americans, songs and tunes from Spanish-speaking communities in and around New Mexico and cowboy songs. It is Ken that sings most of the items in this last-named category. His unaccompanied singing of *Gol' Darned Wheel* really hits the mark and is much preferable to the growly voice that he adopts in a couple of other places.

There are few artists who bring such an understanding of and passion for the music they perform as this utterly admirable duo.

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Vic Smith