

In the Still of Winter

Dee Dee Tibbits

A review by Bob Hubbach

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On reviewing Dee Dee's new album, *In the Still of Winter*, my approach was to sit, relax and listen with eyes closed a few times to absorb the essence and spirit of the music. It was a rewarding experience.

Dee Dee's beautiful hammered dulcimer resounds brightly in her opening piece with the joyous chimes of *Carol of the Bells*.

I felt as if I was transported along a path bathed with light and contentment. The second selection: *In the Bleak of Winter* is special to me personally and really drew me into the season.

Then, each of the subsequent selections unfolded like beautifully wrapped gifts being opened and enjoyed, one by one.

The time and consideration Dee Dee invested in crafting the arrangement of each piece is evident and I commend her. It was well worth the effort.

Her husband, Russ, and her other backup musicians were also fine assets.

Among Dee Dee's notable dulcimer playing skills is her special gift of playing from her heart, projecting a certain delicacy and sensitivity that is clearly portrayed in her slower more meditative pieces.

However, she is not shy with her abilities in dynamics, and plays the more spirited pieces with passion and verve.

Dee Dee has also developed excellent skills with a variety of other folk instruments, tastefully selecting, combining and blending them into her arrangements. I especially enjoy her harp and whistle playing.

Away in a Manager, sung with her two daughters when they were small children, was especially moving.

It is hard to pick favorites from this album as each selection has its own beauty and merit, but if I must choose one then it would be Dee Dee's title composition, *In the Still of Winter*.

This superb CD brings delight and captures the innate spirit of the winter season; reflections of times past, gatherings of family and friends, the joys of watching falling snowflakes, and other numerous simple pleasures.