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Earth Mama Builds Bridges and Brings Healing With ‘LovingKindness’

INDEPENDENCE, Va. — Joyce Rouse is bringing ‘LovingKindness’ to an aching, disconnected world with a new easy listening interfaith album for Christian, Buddhist, Jewish and indigenous peoples.

Earth Mama’s 11-song effort, “LovingKindness,” comes at a crucial time when Americans are working for racial justice and peoples of the world are facing one of the most serious pandemics in recent times.

“These songs are all part of the deepening of my own spiritual journey,” says Rouse, who began writing and recording songs for the project in 2015. “The origins of their words spring from the ancient wisdom of many faith traditions. Those traditions all spring from the ever-folding Universe visible in the light of sky.”

The uplifting, soothing and diverse collection of gentle recordings include 10 original songs with lyrical contributions from Scottish poet Ann Palmer. Christian church-goers will recognize a breathtaking version of “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” Others will be deeply touched by songs that reflect the universal concepts of many of the world’s religious traditions.

Music lovers, faith leaders, and others can download or order the “LovingKindness” album at www.EarthMama.org, www.Amazon.com, and a host of other online retailers. The project was recorded at Nashville’s County Q, with session performances by guitarist Rob Matson, keyboardist/multi-instrumentalist Catherine Marx, percussionist Paul Scholten, bassist Kyle Scholten, harmonicist Richard Rouse, and background vocalists Dee Moeller, Lisa Silver and Kim Parent. Rouse contributes lead vocals and acoustic piano.

“This is music created for feeding the heart and soul — a spiritual journey,” Rouse adds. “The songs were written and recorded to reach the listener with integrity, joy and beauty.”

Like her other music and stage projects, Earth Mama is using “LovingKindness” to help heal planet Earth one song at a time. But in this case, it’s a wonderful vehicle for spiritual growth, building bridges between cultures, and bringing healing during a very fragile time in the planet’s history.

The title track, “LovingKindness,” was inspired by an ancient Buddhist prayer.

“I began with a version from Joyce Rupp’s Boundless Compassion program, which I rewrote some and adapted to fit a musical form,” the artist continues. “I also was inspired over the years from interpretations by Fr. Richard Rohr and others.”

Gently, Rouse sings, “May I abide in Lovingkindness... May I (you/we) be free from suffering... May I receive what I need... May I be at peace...”

One listener, Spiritual Director Cindy Chicoine of Iowa, says she returned to the track again and again. “I feel the energy of the blessing beyond the structure of the words. This is a

living word prayer. It seems to come alive in the mouth and ear, emanating beyond and beyond and beyond, the sound vibration reaching all. I easily trust its power.”

Rouse says she has walked many different labyrinths in North America. Her song, “Labyrinth,” reflects her sense of hope and joy during those walks.

“The labyrinth is an ancient art form for contemplation and meditation,” Earth Mama notes. “The photo of the beach labyrinth on the CD inner sleeve was taken by Scottie Pritchard, whose family labyrinth is listed on the World Labyrinth website at www.labyrinthlocator.com.”

“Life is like a Labyrinth spiraled on the ground,” Rouse sings in a lovely, down-to-earth, reassuring manner. “Circling to find new lessons each time around... A Circle! Ever widening the circle!... Spiral! Expanding compassion in a spiral!... Call it LOVE... Just call it LOVE... The Universe is unfathomable love...”

The Rev. Laura M. George of The Oracle Institute proclaims: “The ‘Labyrinth’ song is amazing! This is one of the most beautiful songs I have ever heard. It truly brought tears to my eyes.”

Part of the album centers on helping build bridges between peoples on local, regional, national and international levels. Rouse calls her song, “One Stone,” a musical “palate cleanser” between courses.

“It is a reminder that instead of walls, we would be wise to build bridges,” Earth Mama says in a delicate tone. “Each stone of kindness brings us closer to fixing a rough patch or relationship.”

Other heartfelt songs or musical prayers on the album are ideal for spirituality centers, classrooms, personal meditation, yoga, and healing work. They include other originals such as “All In All,” “The Great Vision,” “Breathing Beauty,” “Children of the World,” “Welcome Angels,” and “What Is Mine to Do?” The track “Blissed” was written and recorded in memory of Karen Hirschowitz Engel, a noted Nashville artist who passed away in 2016.

Author Joyce Rupp sums up praise for Earth Mama’s “LovingKindness” CD this way: “Our planet and people are so in need of this compassionate energy. Joyce Rouse’s meaningful messages and comforting melodies encourage our hearts. Her songs remind us to believe in love and to keep hope alive.”

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