

Mp3 Grant-lee Phillips - Virginia Creeper

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Phillips' latest album, Virginia Creeper, is a stunning collection of resonant story-songs that take the listener to new interior ports of entry. 11 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Pop, ROCK: Americana Details: Grant-Lee Phillips is a consummate storyteller, a chronicler of personal and political history and mythology, whose work has been showcased both with his popular band Grant Lee Buffalo and on his own critically acclaimed solo recordings. Phillips' latest album, Virginia Creeper, is a stunning collection of resonant story-songs that take the listener to new interior ports of entry. As with the best of Grant Lee Buffalo, Phillips new solo album mines a mother lode of mythic Americana, indelibly chiseled characters, haunting balladry and a stark kind of instrumentation that seems to both define and defy it's place in time. Where his previous outing, Mobilize, was a one-man show with Phillips playing all the instruments, Virginia Creeper is an ensemble piece, hinging on the high voltage charge of the moment. The old world strains of "Mona Lisa," the resplendent "Lily-a-Passion" and the emotionally torn "Always Friends" are snapshots of the soul. Other songs like the enchanting delta tale "Josephine of the Swamps" and "Susanna Little" are historical epics that travel back in time to the dark crossroads of the early to mid-twentieth century. While "Susanna Little" captures the tearfully moving odyssey of the Native American begging the question "How far have we come?", the looming "Far End of the Night" casts a dashboard glow on a midnight journey, "with no savior there beside," when "time hangs like a noose." Once voted best male vocalist by Rolling Stone, Phillips has often taken his words to soaring heights. The songs on Virginia Creeper are no exception, full of visionary cinematic lyrics of both triumph and tragedy. From the heart stricken lover in "Dirty Secret" to the romantic wild abandon of "Wish I knew" the songs are painted by stark minimal gestures -- a lone guitar, an occasional fiddle, a tinge of parlor piano, brushed drums, upright bass, Cindy Wasserman's smoky harmonies weaving with Phillips mellifluous voice. " We found this blend in our voices, I never had to say a word, we just sang..." recalls Phillips. "...there's a shared love of Merle Haggard, Ray Price, Gram Parsons. We could sing that stuff for hours, did and still do..." This pairing led Phillips to include a gorgeous cover of Parsons' "Hickory Wind". The new album was recorded quickly, one week of tracking and another mixing at Hollywood's famed Sunset

Sound Factory with Grammy Award winning recording engineer S. Husky Hskulds. "I didn't want to approach it with excessive overdubs and I couldn't have made this album alone, by myself," explains Phillips. "I'd done that with my last record, Mobilize. This time, the songs had a simplicity that would best be served by taking them into a studio with feeling, responsive musicians." Those musicians included violinist and touring veteran Eric Gorfain, pianist Zac Rae, upright bassists Sheldon Gomberg and ex-Soul Coughing member Sebastian Steinberg, along with drummer Kevin Jarvis, with whom Phillips toured to support Mobilize. Along with vocalist Cindy Wasserman and the Section Quartet, this would comprise the live in-studio group, dubbed "The Virginia Creepers." Other friends and L.A. notables such as Jon Brion (ukulele), Bill Bonk (accordion), Greg Leisz (Dobro, pedal steel mandolin) and Danny Frankel (percussion) added brilliant finishing touches as the session approached completion. Since parting ways in 1999 with Grant Lee Buffalo, Phillips has carved out an impressive solo career. Newsweek called Mobilize "a triumph," while The Boston Globe noted that "Phillips, like genre peers R.E.M. and U2, can still reach great heights." Those heights are achieved once again with the aptly named Virginia Creeper, an album that grows on the listener with repeated listening. "I liked the metaphor," concludes Phillips, "a slow but persistent vine, ever weaving, ever climbing-like a melody." He adds: "I also like the idea of words as vines, songs as vines and as a symbol for my life, weaving persistently. It may not appear that there's any movement going on, but nevertheless there is. There's also something vaguely antique-ish about the title, which suits my obsession with all things decaying and the ghosts that have come to dwell in my songs."

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