

Connection to God and Culture Makes This CD Special



DISCOURSE

with Bill Polonsky

Time and place are very important for a first impression when listening to music, so for an album of faith-based music I thought Sunday morning would be an auspicious time.

I came to this conclusion when, given this album to write about, realized I had no context to give my words, I have no history with this music other than a passing interest in bluegrass music.

My love of country music is narrowly focused and surprisingly out of date and spiritual music, other than that of historical interest, is foreign to my ears.

So, last Sunday morning, I put *Oh Polished Stone* in my stereo and turned up the volume.

The music that emanated from my speakers was not foreign to my ears; in fact, the tone and instrumentation were quite familiar.

The music itself is lively – toe tapping in fact – and I found myself singing along with the chorus.

As an album of inspirational songs, *Oh Polished Stone* is a truly Yukon album. Witness the references to nature and the spirit, the arrangement of conventional country and bluegrass instrumentation and First Nation singing and drumming.

The use of these indigenous themes and tones flowed together with the bluegrass and old-time country music to create another level of rhythm.

The individual songs have the

stamp of traditional gospel music. These songs herald back to the traditions of The Carter Family or the Louvin Brothers. Close harmony, guitar and fiddle and slide guitar being the hallmarks of this music.

Oh Polished Stone was written and recorded by Jack Pauls and Elaine Jakesta, long-time residents of the Yukon. This father/daughter singing duo has played and sang together for years.

With this album, Jakesta extends the gift of song to her immediate family. Daughters Chelsea, Cassia and Camille sing with

their mother on the songs *Overseeing Eagle* and *Healed Heroes*. These songs caught my ear as they include sections of aboriginal drumming that blend right into the tone and meter of the country music.

Songs of faith and revealed wisdom are subjective and I would find it difficult to critique these closely held beliefs.

Regular poetry, put to music, is fair game. But inspirational music has at its core a personal relationship with one's god that conventional music cannot easily reach.

Imagine reviewing the Bible as

a straight narrative: you see the difficulty?

Yet, the pride in faith, family and culture cannot be overlooked as they come out with each note played and each lyric sung.

Oh Polished Stone was an obvious labour of love and a testament to the faith held by all of those involved.

Oh Polished Stone is available at Rose Music. Or you can contact Elaine Jakesta at ejakesta@hotmail.com for information on how to obtain a copy.

Visit Bill Polonsky's website at www.strangethingsdone.com.



Oh Polished Stone is a labour of love by a Watson Lake family.

Arts in the Park Deals With Best Kind of Complaint

Let's all admit it: When we have friends and family visiting from Outside during the summer, one of the first things we do is take them to LePage Park at noon hour to listen to live music and chat with visual artists under their tent.

Arts in the Park has been so successful each year because it is such a treat after a long winter.

But Marlene Collins, curator of the Yukon Arts Society who oversees the program, says there has been one consistent, yet happy, complaint: Its season ends too soon.

In this, its 10th year, Arts in the Park has been extended an extra two weeks until Aug. 11.

Starting Tuesday, May 23, the program will last 12 weeks with an assortment of entertainers on the round, permanent stage that has been lined up by Steve Slade, a local musician and booster of Yukon music.

Just behind the stage, under a tent, will be visual artists who share their techniques and passion

with passers by.

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Collins says an extended program will be offered on June 30 – "It's a Friday, you see people sneaking off early on Fridays anyway" – when a special art commission will be announced. Money will be raised to pay for this piece of work that will find its home in LePage Park.

Again this year, Wednesdays will be Family Day. Collins says it is more than just popular ... it is now a tradition.

All of the daycares are alerted and activities for the kids are planned.

Indeed, one of the requirements of the student assistant co-ordinator is they must be good with children.

Collins says she is not too concerned about the weather in August, now that Arts in the Park will continue a third of the way through it.

"Last year we had 300 people come out on a rainy day ... it was our best day."

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We are looking forward to the future with pride and thankfulness.

Thank you, Tom and Howie Firth

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