

- **CD Review**
- **Tracy K**
- Welcome To My Fantasy
- (Independent Release - No Catalog #)
- by [John Taylor](#)
- Review date: April 2002



- **Keeping the Blues Alive Award Winner: Achievement for Blues on the Internet.** Presented by the **Blues Foundation**



- Winnipeg's Tracy K bills herself as both "Mojo Mama" and "Canada's First Lady Of The Blues Harp." While there's relatively little evidence of the latter on her debut, "Welcome To My Fantasy" - this outing is more a showcase for her songwriting - she sure does seem to have some mojo goin' on. Tracy wrote and produced (with some help) everything on the disc. It's an ambitious undertaking; in addition to harp she contributes guitar and scorching vocals. But she's recruited some fine players, among them guitarist Tim Butler, Craig Fotheringham on keys, and bassist Nenad (Keza) Zdjelar; Tim Sutton, Greg Black, and George Demeduk alternate on drums, and all play like seasoned veterans, offering solid, unobtrusive support throughout. Tracy takes an eclectic approach; from the breezy bounce of "I'd Do Anything" to the moody, gothic soul of "Honky Tonk Man," from the minor key late night lament of "Slow Dance" to the lazy swing of "Yellow Moon." "Mojo Mama" rides the traditional 'Hoochie Coochie' riff to great effect, Tracy pulling out the harp again while giving the lyrics a highly personal slant. The title track, however, is pure seventies rawk, sounding dated and irrelevant among what's otherwise a strong set. The one cut where production was handled by others, it serves to show that Tracy herself has by far the surest hand at the controls; indeed, she wasn't happy with it and considered leaving it off the disc altogether. Things are quickly back on track, though, with the gently aching, stone country of "No Peace Of Mind." Its heartfelt simplicity is a perfect match for Tracy's honest, unadorned vocals. "Austin Shuffle" shows her sassy side, treading the fence between country swing and blues, Tracy sounding sultry and sexy. "Workin' On Lovin' You," too, is stylistically out of place. All softly strummed acoustic guitars with bowed bass weaving in and out among the multi-track vocals, as lovely as the song is, it and the title track just don't highlight Tracy's voice for the marvelous wonder it is; rootsy, with a whiskey-soaked rasp around the edges, it's best in uncomplicated simplicity, with arrangements sparse enough to highlight her emotional palette. Tracy and her acoustic guitar close with an earthy "Mel's Diner," the disc's 'hidden' bonus track. Again done with sass and style, it's a great finish. While this is by no means a blues outing, there's much to like here for any roots fan. Tracy's blessed with a magnificent voice, raw power and passion tempered by a tender fragility. Whether it's blues or country or jazzy swing, if there's emotional depth to the material she plumbs it; and given the chance to reveal something of herself, she's mesmerizing; there are moments here approaching the sublime. I'm already looking forward to a follow-up on which she promises more harp. 'Til then, Tracy's "Fantasy" is a lovely place to be.