



Joyce ANDERSEN



SINGER ♪ FIDDLER ♪ SONGWRITER

After nearly 20 years as a fiddle sideman and a singer-songwriter, playing in bluegrass, country, rock, celtic, jazz and folk ensembles, Joyce Andersen has boldly created a new body of music and a new musical standard for the unaccompanied fiddle troubadour. Her 5th solo CD, *Swerve*, features her new sound in 8 extended improvisational songs that embrace a dizzying range of musical styles, from jazz standards to fiddle tunes, gospel, ballads and blistering rock & roll. All the tracks were recorded in live performance.

Andersen has always shown an uncanny ability to play violin and sing at the same time, often with the instrument and vocal in counter-rhythms, complex harmony and even diverging lines. In *Swerve* she takes this to a new level and combines it with a new set of plucked and strummed violin techniques she has developed. Add to this an array of hi-tech stage gear that would make a rock star drool, and Andersen now commands a staggering wall of sound emanating from her violin, viola, Norwegian *Hardinger* fiddle, and foot percussion. Without any computerized, MIDI or pre-recorded sounds, she literally dances with all four limbs as she weaves intricate rhythms, melodies, and harmonies into extraordinary musical sonic collages, built from a large palette of strummed, plucked and bowed sounds. She deftly combines and juxtaposes lush acoustic violin tones with antiphonal bass lines, harmonic textures, and even swirling electro-acoustic explorations and crunching rock distortion.

Swerve marks the emergence of a unique, urgent and powerful new sound for the solo violin player: expressive, complex, and distinctively her own. Showcasing her impressive musical skills and vocals, *Swerve* also shines the spotlight on her composing, arranging and brilliant improvising. With her powerful voice at the center, her concerts run seamlessly through traditional bluegrass songs, anthemic power ballads, Billie Holiday torch songs, and house-rocking re-workings of classics from the likes of Marvin Gaye, Big Mama Thornton, Steppenwolf, Steve Winwood and Jimi Hendrix.

"I've always envied guitarists their ability to play gigs alone, and

especially I have always been in awe of the expressive power of the electric guitar," says Andersen. "I'm excited to have found a way to make a complete solo troubadour sound with just my violin that feels right to me musically. Violinists really haven't gone down that road like the guitarists have, so I am finding my own sounds." Guitarists have always been able to play solo, and it's taken over two years of work for Andersen to develop the new tools and techniques she needs to fulfill her musical vision of expanding the violin's capabilities. Following in the footsteps of electric guitar pioneers like Hendrix, Les Paul and Michael Hedges, Andersen is sculpting a new set of sounds to add to the sonic landscape of an instrument that was considered to have been perfected 400 years ago. "A vital part of my sound is that in no way am I abandoning the acoustic tone of the violin & viola in favor of an electronic replacement.," she says. "Electric violinists have plugged in for decades, but they seem to have sacrificed the acoustic tone they started with. I am trying to use both sets of sounds in my music."

Indeed, for over half a century guitarists and listeners have accepted the electronically generated sounds of echo, phasing, tremolo, delays, distortion, and even wah-wah as an extension of the sound of the guitar. There is no reason why the violin cannot go on a similar sonic journey without being viewed as compromise or degradation. A number of violin players are already experimenting with electro-acoustic sounds, but Joyce Andersen is taking this idea to a whole new musical level and opening a new set of doors for modern-day violin troubadours, while still remaining true to her deep roots in traditional fiddling and musical Americana.

Her music has brought her from the coffeehouses and taverns of her native New England to national & international touring with folk virtuoso (and husband) *Harvey Reid*, the stage of *Carnegie Hall*, the *Conan O'Brien* show and country music in Japan.