

After over twenty-five years of performing with her siblings Heather Rankin comes into her own with *A Fine Line*, her debut solo record. This is Heather Rankin like you have never heard her before, breaking away from The Rankin Family's signature sound, and forging her own musical legacy with her poetic, intimate original songs, and an eclectic mix of others. *A Fine Line* is an exploration of the balance between grief and joy, love and loss, and life and death. While the sound is distinctively Heather's own, songs like "We Walk As One" conjure evocative imagery from the past she shared with her siblings, and with fans all over the world. Other songs showcase a more upbeat and contemporary side of Rankin, like her rendition of Tears for Fears' 1985 hit "Everybody Wants To Rule The World," which features Hip Hop Artist Quake Matthews. It is a social commentary with a Dance Club vibe. A song like David Tyson's "Valentine" is a heart-felt love song, poignant in its simplicity, where Rankin's soaring, angelic voice is all that is needed to hit straight to the heart.

It is clear that *A Fine Line* is a personal record for Rankin, who co-wrote seven of the eleven tracks with David Tyson. "We Walk As One," the song that her siblings, Cookie and Jimmy, sing backup vocals for, is the album's most obviously autobiographical track. It speaks to the idea that, although physically separate, those who love and care about one another, continue to move forward together in spirit. Similarly, "I've Got Your Back" expresses a sense of unconditional love and support amid a cold and tumultuous world. "Titantically" is the record's most poetic and ephemeral, the personification of a violin that is rescued from the wreckage of the *Titanic*, and ripped from the grasp of the person who loved it most in the world. There is a deeply emotional acknowledgement of an inherent sadness to life in *A Fine Line*, but what is most prominent is Rankin's resolve to continue to move forward in spite of it.

It's an impressive feat that one album can include a myriad of songs that are individually so different from one another and yet, they come together to create deeply affecting variations on a common theme. When played separately, each track stands assuredly on its own, revealing different aspects of Rankin's immense talent and her vibrant, complex perspective on life and music. Taken together, one begins to see rich thematic and lyrical intersections, often between the most disparate songs. She begins with laying out the struggle of the human condition, our quest toward finding, and then living as our authentic selves, and then as the album progresses we are plunged into the depths of that struggle. She leaves us, undeniably, with a pure testament of hope and gratitude.

This is an exciting record and an exciting musical departure for Heather Rankin, who sold more than a million records as part of The Rankin Family, sang backup vocals on Carly Simon's album *The Bedroom Tapes* and has been featured on the recordings of such artists as The Chieftains, Johnny Reid and Will Ackerman. Perhaps the most dramatic sense of balance in *A Fine Line* is Rankin's own graceful sense of balance between her own musical past, present and future. She harkens back to her childhood in Mabou, Nova Scotia and honours her roots in that community, and in her family, but she does so in her own authentic voice. This voice has been shaped by the Gaelic traditions of her home, and by the years she spent singing the songs of her brothers and sisters, but her voice is set free here, and often euphorically so, in a way previously unheard. Proving eloquent songwriting runs in the family, Rankin takes us to more private places in her lyrics, and this mixture of vulnerability and exhilaration makes for a powerfully compelling record. After more than twenty-five years in the business, *A Fine Line* suggests that we are only just now getting to know Heather Rankin. She has always been known as the

youngest of The Rankin Family, but now, as a solo artist, in some ways, she sounds younger, and more timely, than ever.