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TOWER TRIBUNE

FEATURE

Chanteuse extraordinaire, k.d. lang's *Ingénue*

The twang is still there, as is the torch—not to mention a hefty dose of Western European cabaret and South American tango mixed with the passion of Eastern European and Eastern Indian music, among other things. However, Canadian singer k.d. lang carries it all so far into the realm of personal expressions that you have to resist the emotional force of the music to analyze its eclectic inspiration.

Ingénue, lang's new album, travels far beyond the boundaries of *Absolute Torch* and *Twang*, the 1989 release that earned her a grammy for Best Female Country Vocalist. Through the 10 originals on *Ingénue*, lang and cowriter Ben Mink turn the tenets of pop music inside out with well-constructed, often unconventional song forms. Together, they exhibit a compositional prowess and emotional poignancy reminiscent of masters like the late Roy Orbison.

Ingénue is nothing less than a contemporary song cycle dealing with the emotional intricacies of an ill-fated



k. d. lang

romance. "It's about going through a very long process of unrequited, unconsummated love," she reveals. "Writing these songs was a catharsis for me, but it was very difficult."

The tone of the album is set by the lushly slow opener "Save Me," in which lang teeters between wanting to be spared the anguish of love and the desire to dive headfirst into it. By *Ingénue*'s second cut, "The Mind of Love," she's talking to herself, worrying about her own mental health and having wicked thoughts. These feelings of grief and confusion, however, are couched in catchy Burt Bacharach-style grooves, graceful melodic lines and perceptive lyrics that focus on one important question: "Can your heart conceal what the mind of love reveals?"

If lang wasn't destined to realize true love, at least she could take comfort in finding her "musical soulmate," one of many terms she uses to describe Ben Mink. The two met at the 1985 Expo in Japan when they were playing in two bands representing Canada. "We have a very tight, creative marriage," lang explains. "When I called him up about working on this new record, we hadn't talked for literally a year, but he was right with me, totally parallel in our thoughts about where the music should be going."

"Sometimes I think I'm never going to be given true love." She sighs quietly, staring at the floor. "It's a sad thing to say, but maybe that's the way it has to be. I think that if I was really happy and had a secure home life, I wouldn't have any inspiration, that I have to go through these amazing affairs to come up with the music."

—Linda Kohanov

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