

Devil In The Hills: Coal Country Reckoning, a new release by singer/songwriter Mary Hott, is a song cycle that was inspired by the first-person accounts of life deep in West Virginia's southern coalfields. A life that was, at best, tough. At its worst, it was a life dominated by oppression and tragedy.

Born and raised in Paw Paw, WV (current pop. just under 500), Hott was led to these life stories by a chance visit to The Whipple Company Store Museum in Fayette County. The building's owner pointed her to a collection of first-person stories that had been shared by former coal camp residents.

Hott was immediately drawn to the stories, noting many comparisons to her own experiences growing up in the state. What followed was a three-year journey which was, by turns, debilitating and exhilarating. There was a haunting spiritual quality to the tales, reflecting the cultural heritage of the freed slaves and immigrants from dozens of countries who had been lured to the mines with the promise of jobs. Many women spoke out for the first time. Their heart-wrenching stories had been kept secret within their families for decades.

To frame these stories in a compelling musical context, Hott enlisted The Carpenter Ants, a longstanding West Virginia gospel-soul-Americana group that, in addition to its own releases, has backed a number of singer/songwriters on their projects. The result is a collaboration in the truest sense, with the music and songs evolving together.

To bring the project to fruition, Hott called upon Don Dixon who, for more than four decades, has been one of the most prolific and versatile engineers and producers in pop and indie music.

The album is accompanied by a 24-page booklet that invites the listener into the background stories and grim historical context. The music itself ranges from bluesy Americana and roots rock to Celtic and gospel, and the deep groove of the anthemic "Rise Up, WV."

Live and streaming performances are being planned to share the music and the stories. This is an ongoing project, with more songs being written as more stories are discovered.

www.Devilinthehills.com



ARTIST – Mary Hott

**ALBUM – Devil in the Hills:
Coal Country Reckoning**

PRODUCERS – Don Dixon, Michael Lipton

AVAILABLE – November 27, 2020

Mary Hott - vocals, harmonica

Michael Lipton - guitars, guit-banjo, omnichord, sax, vocals

Charlie Tee - vocals

Ted Harrison - bass, vocals

Jupie Little - drums, vocals

Randy Gilkey - keyboards

Ammed Solomon - percussion

Julie Adams - backing vocal

Don Dixon - spoken word

Track Listing:

1. A Miner's Perspective — (0:25)
2. They Built A Railroad — (3:38)
3. Annabelle Lee — (3:15)
4. Room Of Lost Souls — (4:40)
5. Take The Esau — (3:21)
6. The Spot — (4:08)
7. Devil In The Hills — (5:00)
8. Rise Up, WV — (2:57)
9. Blair Mountain Ballad — (0:48)
10. Life's Railway To Heaven — (4:08)
11. Take Me Home, Country Roads — (3:28)

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Available on iTunes, BandCamp, CDBaby, Amazon, and at

www.Devilinthehills.com

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