Larry Campbell & Teresa Williams-Bio-Jan 10, 2024

Love always. Love forever. Love until the end of time. The Great Cosmic Playlist is testimony to the endurance of an emotion that is easy to conjure but hard to maintain. But for Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams, who have been coupled consciously since 1986, love is more than a pop song; they are the bards of the long term committed relationship.

``As soon as I saw her, I knew she was the one,’’ says Larry. That epiphany occurred in a Manhattan rehearsal studio. Teresa, an actress and vocalist not long removed from Peckerwood Point, TN,  had been pulled into a singing contest.  Larry, the New York City native with a burgeoning reputation for his virtuosity on any instrument with strings, was brought in to play pedal steel guitar. ``For me, it was love at first note,’’ she says. Together they went on to capture a greater prize.

From the beginning, they shared a musical sensibility; Larry courted her with a Louvin Brothers mix tape. The more they played together, the deeper it grew. Whether it was Larry joining in on the music with Teresa’s family and neighbors under the tree where they were married (``Larry melded perfectly,’’ says Teresa), or Teresa belting bluegrass songs on the bus with Larry and the rest of Bob Dylan’s band as they traveled between gigs (``It was very fulfilling,’’ recalls Larry) , the couple’s rapport grew richer. ``I found a connection I had never experienced before,’’ says Larry. When Dylan’s manager, Jeff Kramer, suggested that they make hay with this natural duo, he expressed a thought that had been already brewing in Larry’s head. But Larry wasn’t ready. ``I had to start seeing myself as a singer and songwriter before I could take that step.’’ The couple took another decade, much spent playing with Levon Helm and his band at his legendary Midnight Rambles in Woodstock, before Larry and Teresa elevated their rapport to the next level.

All This Time is the couple’s fourth album since taking that leap, following Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams (2015), Contraband Love (2017), and Live at Levon’s (2023). All This Time , says Larry, ``feels more intuitive to me than the earlier records, less experimental, evidence that we’ve grown more aware of who we are and what we have to offer.’’ What they offer, evidently, is an intensely romantic album. Songs like Desert Island Dreams, Ride With Me, The Way You Make Me Feel, and I Love You fairly burst with the joy of love, while others recognize love’s humbling power. ``All I want, all I need, is right in front of me,’’ testifies one song. ``I still tremble at your name,’’ says another.

It's not hard to recognize All This Time as a post-Covid album. Larry and Teresa had a hard pandemic. Before Teresa left for remote Tennessee to nurse her father through his last illness, Larry came down with a double-barreled blast of Covid, and Teresa was quarantined. Isolated in Woodstock before treatments had been developed, Larry struggled. ``Teresa pulled me through,’’ he says. ``I held his hand over the phone,” she offers. Teresa says Larry’s lyrics often help her decipher what’s on his mind, but it doesn’t always take a codebreaker to recognize the songs on this album as love letters sprouted in a harsh spring. ``When you told me that you need me/ After all we've been through/ I still think about the love we have to give/ I think about you.’’