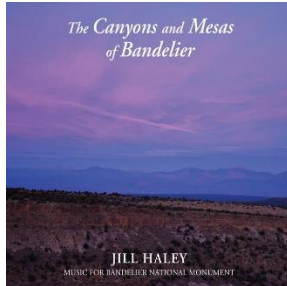


Jill Haley

## The Canyons and Mesas of Bandelier



Why is that whenever I hear a **Jill Haley** album I immediately venture into this earthy, sensory driven fantasy world where the mountains tower over me, the cerulean sky is clear, and the wind rushes by me eroding my very thoughts? Her latest release **The Canyons and Mesas of Bandelier** is a twelve track acoustic journey across ancient volcanoes, the craggy highlands, the rocky escarpments of Bandelier National Monument. It is also a tribute to a race of hardy people that made a demanding, inhospitable land their home for centuries. Woodwind player, composer, and artist in residence, Jill Haley joins with her own tribe and creates that melodic chronicle of the Puebloans living in what is now Los Alamos County in the state of New Mexico. Her light ensemble consists of David Cullen on guitars, Graham Cullen on cello, Tony Deangelis on percussion and herself on various woodwinds, horns and piano.

The musical trek opens with the tune **Plaintive Cavate Melody**. A cavate is a place carved out of rock, a dwelling. The architecture of these ancient peoples are marvels to the modern mind, but perseverance seems to have been their solution. Jill's mournful tune murmurs over the rocks, getting in the crevices and filling the voids with a melancholy whisper. The music is awesome in the original sense. Breathtakingly beautiful.

A simple piano phrase invites us along the trail as **Frijoles Canyon Awakens**. We descend into the canyon bottom and follow the creek for a spell. The canyon is still at the mercy of the flooding rains and changes with each new day, but its majesty remains. Jill's solo piano tune flows slowly along with that creek, touching everything and making unseen changes.

Pulsating cello wavers and Jill's English horn proclaims the complex and varied life of Bandelier in the song **Ecotone**. Haley presents us with a musical snapshot of the flora, fauna and biome of the park. Albert's squirrels jitter about on the rocks and further along the Main Loop Trail we see the mule deer, stately and protective. Wind swept outcropping vividly display their eons of wear and radiate the heat of those chalky cliffs. Let's go exploring up this trail.

Do we know what the ancient people saw so long ago? The Alcove House is a hard to reach niche where more than two dozen people lived on the tan, sandstone cliff face. Haley's tune **Alcove House Descent** describes the trace of dusty footsteps on the crumbling path, the gnarled hands on the weathered rungs of the tall ladders, and the splendor of the view from that lofty place above the desert floor.

Trying to provide jobs for those that suffered the Great Depression, President Roosevelt formed the Civilian Conservation Corps. Jill pays tribute to those willing volunteers looking for work and dignity that were instrumental in building the roads and structures in Bandelier on the tune **Gratitude for the CCC**. Her horn echoes off the canyon walls and reflects the strength and determination of those that gave so much and whose work has endured through the years.

I can attest that every Haley album I have ever heard imparts a sense (I have to mix cultures here a little bit) of fernweh. It is the longing for a far off place you've never been to. I want to go to New Mexico. I want to walk at the foothills of the Jemez Mountains. I want to know the secrets of the Puebloans. After listening to Jill's music, I know a little more about what to expect. The magic and mystery are there for me to discover. I just need to play this album one more time. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews