

GREG COPELAND BIO/OVERVIEW

Singer-songwriter Greg Copeland is a Southern California native whose depth of feeling for music – and natural ability to conjure it up with spare, graceful melodies and lyrics that are plainspoken poetry – has been in inverse proportion to his body of work. That balance tips with his new album, 2008's *DIANA AND JAMES*, an earthy, folk-flavored collection of 13 original songs produced by acclaimed musician Greg Leisz, a pedal steel master and ace guitarist who plays on every track. The disc follows up his 1982 Jackson Browne-produced debut album *Revenge Will Come* (Geffen), which allmusic.com calls "a first-rate singer-songwriter affair" and was included in *Time Magazine's* 1982 year-end 10 Best list (along with Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska* and Richard & Linda Thompson's *Shoot Out the Lights*).

Copeland and Browne have been friends since they attended high school together in Fullerton, CA, and then entered the L.A. music scene in the late '60s. For a time, they lived in a compound of duplexes and triplexes in Echo Park, near Dodger Stadium, where J.D. Souther and Glenn Frey were also neighbors. In addition to collaborating on *Revenge Will Come*, Copeland co-wrote the song "Candy," which appears on Browne's album *Lives In The Balance*. His credits also include the song "El Salvador," which Joan Baez recorded in 1989, and David Lindley covered "Revenge Will Come" on his 2008 album *Big Twang*.

During Copeland's long hiatus from music-making, he and his wife raised two sons. He started songwriting again in 2000 – "I could feel it coming. The odometer clicked over and it was like I came out of a deep freeze. Songs just started pouring out. It took me a couple of years to really trust it. After a while, I was leaving one job and starting another, and I decided to give myself a hundred days to do nothing but write. Most of the songs on this record appeared in a rush of bits and pieces during that period, and it took me nearly four years to sort them out."

The title characters, Copeland says, "recur throughout the songs. They're the same two people moving through different lives, almost like three-dimensional chess. It's not a concept album, but a lot of little interconnections link the songs together." For example, the character in "I Am The One" was responsible for the death of the woman in "Muddy Water." Listeners might also recognize the character in "The Only Wicked Thing" as Hank Williams on the night he died. Throughout, Copeland's warm, plaintive vocals and lilting melodies come alive against the backdrop of his novelist's gift for narrative and a pragmatist's sense of unadorned emotion.

DIANA AND JAMES was recorded at Groove Masters in Santa Monica and Winslow Ct. Studio in Los Angeles. Copeland is accompanied by a stellar group of musicians that include, in addition to Greg Leisz on guitars: Jennifer Condos and Bob Glaub (bass); David Piltch (upright bass); Jay Bellerose, Danny Frankel and Don Heffington (drums and percussion); Patrick Warren (keyboards); Phil Parlapiano (keyboards and horns); and Gabe Witcher (violin). Carla Kihlstedt – a founding member of groups including Tin Hat, Sleepytime Gorilla Museum and 2 Foot Yard – is also featured on violin and delivers a gorgeous co-lead vocal on "Palace Of Love." Heather Waters and Danny Ott appear on harmony vocals.

Reflecting on his return to songwriting, Copeland says, "It's like that saying, 'if you build it they will come.' If you offer yourself to it, if you show up, the songs will come to you. But first you have to show up. You do your best and hope another one comes, but you never know." As for offering up his first album in 25 years, Copeland says, "it's like putting a baby in a little reed boat and pushing it out into the river."

DIANA AND JAMES sets sail on Inside Recordings on October 7, 2008.