



KJ Denhert
Girl Like Me
08/12/2003

★★★★

In the '70s, no one did more to bridge the gap between soul and the folk-pop/folk-rock/soft rock world than **Roberta Flack**, who acquired a very interracial following and managed to appeal to **Aretha Franklin** and **Chaka Khan** enthusiasts as well as the **Joni Mitchell/Joan Baez/Judy Collins** crowd. Hits like "Killing Me Softly With His Song" and "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" were played on R&B stations, but they also had enough of a singer/songwriter aesthetic to win over what was essentially a '70s equivalent of today's Lilith Fair audience. It isn't hard to understand why, three decades later, singer/songwriter KJ Denhert was invited to open for **Flack**; **Girl Like Me** is the perfect marriage of neo-soul and folk-rock/adult alternative sensibilities (with hints of jazz at times). **Flack**, in fact, is among **Denhert**'s influences, as are **Khan**, **Mitchell**, **Janis Ian**, and **James Taylor** (**Carly Simon**'s **James Taylor**, not **J.T. Taylor** of Kool & the Gang fame). But while **Denhert** has her musical points of reference, **Girl Like Me** demonstrates that she is a talented, expressive storyteller in her own right -- and she obviously doesn't believe in confining herself to one genre. **Denhert** has a lot to offer fans of **Alicia Keys**, **Macy Gray**, **Jill Scott**, and **Erykah Badu**, but anyone who is seriously into Sarah McLachlan, **Shawn Colvin**, or the **Indigo Girls** also needs to pay close attention to her. While **Girl Like Me** is dominated by **Denhert**'s own songs, she provides a few memorable covers as well (including a slightly bossa nova-ish take on the Police's "Message in a Bottle" and an unlikely remake of the Beatles' "She Loves You"). This very promising effort demonstrates that while **Denhert** isn't easy to pigeonhole, she is very easy to enjoy.

~ Alex Henderson, All Music Guide