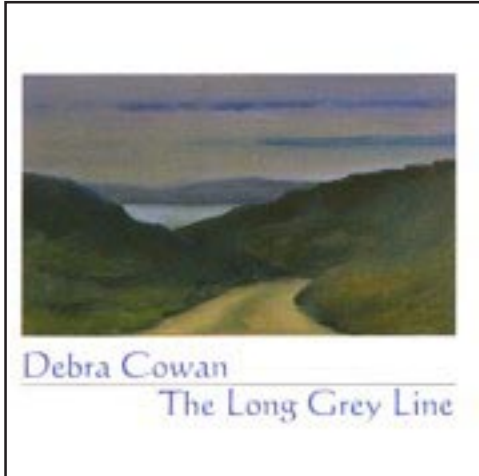




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## The Words of Others

“doesn't rely solely on her beautiful voice when covering traditional ballad stories...Her vocals highlight the beauty of the bare song and her ability to have it come alive....Her overlaid harmonies on "Bay of Biscay" sound similar to Herdman, Hills and Mangsen arrangements, displaying her wide range....A perfect purchase for the ballad or history fan.”

- *Sing Out!*

“Debra's strong, rich alto is the shining star of this Celtic album with undeniably American style and accent. ”

- *The Columbia Gypsy*

# Debra Cowan

## *The Long Grey Line*

FM-1036, CD only  
Produced by Debra Cowan

### About this Title

Debra Cowan's vocals have already made their mark on the folk music scene in North America and abroad. Her first solo release *The Long Grey Line* demonstrates her sensitivity to, and knowledge of, the traditions that are the source of her music. While many of the pieces are traditional, three songs by contemporary writers fit beautifully into the collection. Supported by stellar musicians including Geoff Bartley, Lorraine Hammond, and Hanneke Cassel, Debra gives each song reverent treatment and a timelessness that folk music enthusiasts love and look for in their music. An outstanding booklet accompanies this impressive project, giving interesting background on the songs as well as lyrics.

### About the Artist

With impressive command of a wide range of traditional and contemporary material, Massachusetts balladeer and songstress Debra Cowan draws listeners in to a haunting version of an ancient ballad, transports them to the world of workplaces old and new, and delights them with an outrageous comic song. She also shares the history of her traditional material, which is an integral part of the songs she sings. Her fresh interpretation and carefully selected material make music come alive for audiences of all ages.

Debra is becoming a familiar name in and around folk music. 2004 saw her performing in English folk clubs from Cornwall to Yorkshire as well as the prestigious Lancaster Maritime Festival. In 2003, she appeared on WFMT's nationally-syndicated live radio concert "Folkstage" in Chicago, delighted folk club audiences in England and Scotland with her combination of Anglo and American songs, and was a panelist discussing Woody Guthrie's life and legacy along with Fred Hellerman, Oscar Brand, and journalist Dave Marsh. Debra was a Formal Showcase Artist at the 2002 Northeast Regional Folk Alliance Conference and the 2001 Falcon Ridge Folk Festival. She has been a featured performer at the Greater New Bedford (MA) Summerfest Folk Festival, Champlain Valley Festival, and the internationally renowned Mystic Seaport Sea Music Festival.

Debra developed her signature unaccompanied singing style in Edinburgh, Scotland, where she studied the singing of such notable Scottish traditional singers such as Gordeanna McCulloch, Christine Kydd, and Ray Fisher. She presents her slow songs and ballads with emotive and well-focused vocals that are often compared to Joan Baez, Maddy Prior, and June Tabor.

### Discography

FM-1036     *The Long Grey Line*     2001, CD only

# Debra Cowan

## The Long Grey Line

FM-1036, CD only, Total Time 51:03

For interviews or other artist relations, please visit the artist page at our website, [www.FallingMountain.com](http://www.FallingMountain.com), for email links and contact info.

To the DJs: These program notes are designed to make it easier to quickly navigate the track information on this CD. We at Falling Mountain Music appreciate you taking the time to review new material and add it to your library, and we hope you enjoy the music.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### 1. Edward Boyle 5:40 (trad. arr. Cowan)

*A song of emigration learned from Cathal McConnell*

Vocals: Debra Cowan, Guitar: Gaston Bernard, Celtic Harp: Lorraine Hammond

### 2. McGinnis Gets A Job 3:06 (trad. arr. Cowan)

*Learned from the singing of Joe Hickerson, this is also known as "Last Winter Was a Hard One", and is a song about the competition for employment in the cities between two immigrant groups, the Irish and the Italians.*

Vocals: Debra Cowan, Guitar: Gaston Bernard, Fiddle: Hanneke Cassel, Cheap Anglo Concertina: Jim Williams

### 3. The Rose You Wore For Me 4:45 (Danny Carnahan)

*Danny wrote this song for his great-great-grandfather who made it all the way to California from Ireland in the early 1840s working as a blacksmith.*

Vocal and guitar: Debra Cowan, English concertina: Ron Lister

### 4. Bold Archer (4:00) (trad. arr. Cowan/Bartley)

*From the singing of the late Tony Rose and is known as "Archie O'Cawfield" in Scotland and "Billy Broke Locks" in America.*

Vocal: Debra Cowan, Guitar: Geoff Bartley, English Concertina: Jim Williams

### 5. The Dreadful Ghost 5:29 (trad. arr. Cowan)

*From the singing of Tony Barrand. This Jonah Ballad comes from Canada, collected by Helen Creighton. A jonah is someone who is blamed for any misfortune that might befall a ship in the course of a voyage. Usually this person is sacrificed so that the voyage may proceed.*

Vocal: Debra Cowan

### 6. Blackwaterside (2:16) (trad. arr. Cowan)

*A song comes from the Irish tradition and has a "young girl is made promises that aren't kept" theme. I like the strength of character this young lass shows, thus, the upbeat arrangement.*

Vocal and guitar: Debra Cowan

### 7. The Long Grey Line 3:08 (Alan Hunter)

*I met Alan Hunter while I lived in Edinburgh in 1997 and was impressed by this man's passion for his politics and his music. Tinkers are looked upon with a mixture of envy and disdain, yet the lure of the travelling life is a romantic albeit a difficult one.*

Vocals: Debra Cowan, Guitar: Gaston Bernard, Fiddle: Hanneke Cassel, Mandolin: Steve Sadler

### 8. Bay of Biscay-O 3:03 (trad. arr. Cowan)

*There are many songs about the Bay of Biscay, which is located in southwestern Europe, bounded by France and Spain. The coastline varies from rocky cliffs to sandy beaches, thus winds and currents make navigation difficult.*

Vocals: Debra Cowan

### 9. Across the Water 4:17 (Ken Batts)

*Based on a story about a couple who met on the island Korkeasaari, Finland. Connected to the mainland by a footbridge, the island is home to a zoo, where the man worked, and a fishing village. Ken decided that a fisherman was more romantic than a zookeeper and "Across the Water" was born.*

Vocals: Debra Cowan, Guitar: Ken Batts, English Concertina: Jim Williams

### 10. The Verdant Braes Of Skreen 4:40 (trad. arr. Cowan)

*Another "False Young Man" ballad, this one comes from Ireland and credits Frank and Francis McPeake of Belfast as the source singers of this version. From the singing of Steve Tilston and Maggie Boyle*

Vocals: Debra Cowan, Guitar: Geoff Bartley, Fiddle: Hanneke Cassel

### 11. The Bold Princess Royal/Old Favourite 5:08 (trad. arr. Cowan/Bartley)

*From the singing of The Copper Family, East Sussex, UK. In my opinion, one cannot sing traditional songs without paying tribute to The Coppers. The jig comes from West Clare in County Clare, Ireland*

Vocals: Debra Cowan, Guitar: Geoff Bartley, English Concertina: Jim Williams, Anglo Concertina: Ron Lister (Old Favourite), English Concertina Drone: Debra Cowan (Old Favourite)

### 12. Darlin, Corey 4:00 (trad. arr. Cowan/Bartley)

*This was a favourite song when I was about 6 or 7 years old. My mom had purchased a recording by a folksinger named June Bugg, and I immediately fell in love with this song.*

Vocal: Debra Cowan, National Style-O resonator Guitar: Geoff Bartley

### 13. Johnny Be Fair 1:08 (trad. arr. Cowan)

*This is an old Irish joke that somehow found its way into a song. Buffy Saint Marie recorded a version of this long ago with a few more verses. This version gets right to the point.*

Vocal: Debra Cowan