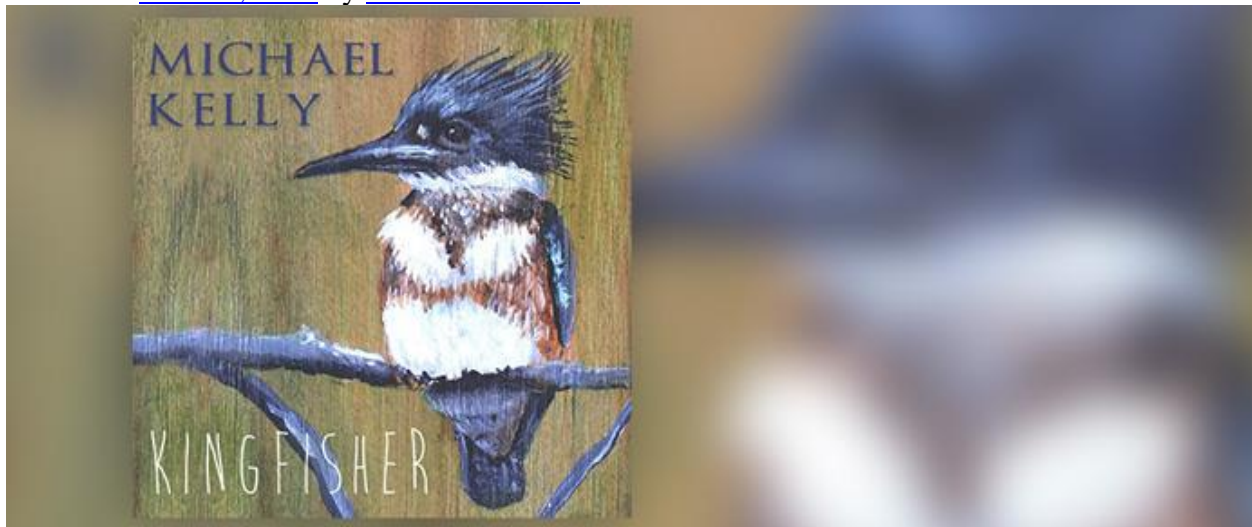


Kingfisher – Michael Kelly

Posted on [June 29, 2021](#) by [Lee Zimmerman](#)



[Michael Kelly](#) is a singer and songwriter. There's nothing unusual about that, of course. The music biz is littered with singer/songwriters, most of whom are desperately vying for public attention. What separates folks like Kelly from the competition is not necessarily the amount of acclaim they achieve — that's a long hard road that often depends on luck and having the right connections — but the skills they share along the way.

That's why Kelly stands out for all the right reasons — namely, a cache of good material and the ability to purvey his songs with honesty, humility, and a genuine sense of purpose. His new album, [Kingfisher](#) — his third to date — reflects a decidedly unassuming attitude, and a delivery that seems to draw from various homeland homilies. And while his vocals sometimes seem tinged with weariness and resignation, they're also fueled with diligence and determination.

Kelly's backstory is similar to many other likeminded musicians. He started his career working Washington DC's club circuit before graduating to opening act status for various national acts. Along the way, he managed to accrue several songwriting awards, including outstanding honors in the vocal category at the Deer Creek Fiddler's Convention. *Kingfisher* reflects the confidence that comes with that recognition, but its songs tend to lean towards his own personal perspective, as drawn from everyday happenstance. *Blue Mountain*, *Maryland Avenue*, and *California Sky* are, like many of the songs on the album, inspired by certain situations that tended to trigger his imagination and subsequently set to song.

As a result, the music tends to easily engage the listener, whether its the easy fiddle and mandolin-fueled ramble shared in *Daffodils*, the sprightly sound of *Cornbread*, or the upbeat attitude found in *Chickaw Road*. The songs are fresh and exuberant, but they also possess a certain familiarity factor that makes each offering that much easier to readily embrace.

Ultimately, that's the thing that puts Kelly ahead of the game, and makes *Kingfisher* such a genuinely enticing entry. Hopefully he'll get the recognition he so rightfully deserves, but in the meantime, he warrants all the appreciation his admirers might offer.

He is supported on this Patuxent Music release by Rob Benzing on banjo, Danny Knicely on mandolin, Mark Schatz on bass, and Rickie Simpkins on fiddle and harmony vocals.