

[2024 standard record release / long bio for general use]

Twisted Pine / LOVE YOUR MIND

Twisted Pine was jamming in the studio when lead singer and fiddle player Kathleen Parks took flight with some vocal riffing.

“KP was reading a horoscope aloud and doing this kind of beat poetry thing,” bassist Chris Sartori said. “She went into this verse where she said, ‘We’re Twisted Pine and we love your mind.’ We were very late in the recording process for our new album, we were batting around a lot of ideas for titles, and that stuck out to us: ‘Love your mind.’”

On October 18th, Twisted Pine releases its joyous third LP, *Love Your Mind*, on Signature Sounds. Dubbed “a band to watch” by NPR, the band’s first album in four years is the long-awaited follow-up to *Right Now*, which *No Depression* praised for its “sheer pop glory, funky all-day grooves, and spacecraft sonics.”

The title represents the quartet landing after several years of touring, serious introspection, bouts of self-doubt, glorious bursts of creativity, and many after-hour festival jam sessions that had them pickin’ til dawn.

Love Your Mind kicks off with the almost reggae bounce of opener “Stop/Start” and Parks singing, “You better start and not stop/You better look right at yourself.” It closes with the Latin jazz and bossa nova flavored “Funky People” and Parks’ triumphant cry of, “Life it is better this way/When you let the music move you/Good intentions are at play.” In between, there’s buoyant pop and delicate folk, hootenanny twang and stuff that defies the confines of genre, plus plenty of thoughtful, intense, and playful poetry.

What started as a (semi-)traditional bluegrass band in the trenches of Boston’s storied Americana scene a decade ago has bloomed into an ensemble gleefully ready to race down any artistic detour. They can still pick with the best of them — and do so on barnburner “After Midnight (Nothing Good Happens)” and “Green Flash,” which features dobro legend Jerry Douglas, with whom Twisted Pine has occasionally toured. But even the expansive “progressive bluegrass” label doesn’t come close to capturing the scope of *Love Your Mind*.

“*Love Your Mind* really reflects the scenes that we play in, the Americana and bluegrass festival scenes,” Parks said. “But it also reflects our internal world and all the music we listen to.”

And the band listens to everything.

“The album has all these different genres so when asked what my favorite song on it is I could say ‘Goosebump Feeling’ is my favorite indie song on the record or ‘Lonestar’ is my favorite bluegrass epic,” flute player Anh Phung added. “It’s hard to choose because so many songs have such a different vibe.”

Twisted Pine co-produced the record with longtime-collaborator Dan Cardinal at his studio Dimension Sound in Boston. As the band has increasingly done in the live setting, the four musicians often layer their instruments with effects, and they make full use of the studio environment to sonically augment their acoustic instruments. Dan Bui's rhythmic mandolin chop is thick, crisp, and propulsive. Sartori's upright bass sounds huge, detailed, and is insanely grooving. Parks will step on a whammy pedal to drop her fiddle an octave to get a cello-like moan. Phung's flute gets sampled and manipulated to create a ghostly whisper.

"We've been playing around with these kinds of effects for a few years but this was a chance to intentionally capture them as part of the writing process in the studio environment," mandolin player Bui said.

Love Your Mind is the sound of Twisted Pine now: experimental production touches, fearless songwriting featuring input from each member, finely-crafted collaborative arrangements, layers of vocals, and playing that is sometimes virtuosic, always visceral.

On "Goosebump Feeling," Parks' lyrics explore the power of overwhelming emotions then, in a nice moment of artistic synchronicity, the band overwhelms the listener with vocal harmonies that send a tingle down the spine. With "Chanel Perfume," the quartet transforms into a full-throated r&b band, the groove somewhere between Aretha Franklin's soulful '60s and Marvin Gaye's funky '70s (Parks' cry of "Just because I'll take it/Don't mean I'll keep taking it from you" would fit right in on I Never Loved A Man The Way I Love You).

While Love Your Mind goes so many places, it doesn't meander. The aesthetic thread running through the LP is a band without boundaries but with a single vision.

When asked what song each member is most excited for people to hear, Bui, Sartori, and Phung can't settle on a single track. But Parks offers up a curious candidate in "Knockout Roses," a tune so tight, smart, and sweet, it could be a lost gem from country & western songwriting queen Cindy Walker.

"That one will surprise people because of how straight ahead it is," Parks said. "I think people that don't know us very well think that we're a very complicated band musically, but when they hear this record they're going to be refreshed and energized."

"This record goes down smooth," Bui added with a laugh. Then he summed up the whole Twisted Pine approach: "We don't try to force things when a song doesn't need it. And when a song does seem to want to go somewhere, we let it happen organically. Sometimes that means we do lean into something complex or experimental and then later we look back and go, 'Wow, that got crazy.'"

In other words, embrace your mind, trust your mind, free your mind, Love Your Mind.

Twisted Pine is Kathleen Parks (originally from Newburgh, NY) on fiddle and lead vocals; Dan Bui (originally from Houston, TX) on mandolin and vocals; Chris Sartori (originally from Concord, MA) on bass and vocals; and Anh Phung (originally from Chilliwack, BC) on flute and vocals.#