

Amy Helm

What the Flood Leaves Behind

RENEW/BMG



Confidence and expressiveness run through all 10 tracks on *What the Flood Leaves Behind*, Amy Helm's third solo album. Whether delivering a moving ballad or a resolute rocker, the unyielding authority of Helm's voice and the raw honesty she brings to each performance stand out. For the sessions, Helm returned to familiar territory, her late father Levon's studio near Woodstock. Simply being present in that room had to have affected the singer's determination to give it her best; the emotions are palpable throughout. She also rounded up an ace team of collaborators. Producer **Josh Kaufman**—whose production, songwriting and playing credits span Bob Weir's *Blue Mountain* to Taylor Swift's *folklore*—had a considerable hand in shaping the content, contributing much of the instrumentation, and the other supporting musicians each bring their A game. But it's ultimately clear that Helm has simply graduated to another level with this release. The promise of her earlier work has now been fulfilled. Helm wrote or co-wrote seven of these tracks; the others are custom fits for her range and style. These are songs that feel highly personal. "Calling Home," one of Helm's two solo compositions, places her dauntless vocal upfront, where it belongs. Over a blues-infused, evocative melody, Helm sings of seeking that which may be beyond reach. And it takes a special kind of artist to take a phrase as seemingly innocuous as "Yeah, we're wild, babe/ But are we free, baby," sung to a stomping, kickass rhythm, and make it the most profound thing you'll hear all day. *Jeff Tamarkin*

