

label, with eleven classic songs that were originally recorded in the historic RCA Studio B in Nashville back in the 1950s and 1960s. These new recordings were also made in Studio B utilising much of the original equipment with Graves (resophonic guitar, vocals), Scruggs (vocals) and Mosley (bass, vocals) joined by Jeff Hardin (fiddle), Jody Elmore (acoustic guitar), Benny Bowling (banjo) and 'Cotton' Payne (percussion).

Most of the songs will be instantly familiar to long-time country fans, though to younger listeners, there will be some here like *Give Myself A Party, I'm Counting On You* and *Another Day, Another Dollar* that they will be hearing for the first time. Generally speaking I avoid cover versions unless something new is brought to bear to the song. Occasionally they do succeed in this, mainly because of the bluegrass-styled accompaniment. This is the case with *Katy Did*, a song originally recorded by Porter Wagoner which features Mosley on lead vocals. Stacy takes the vocal honours on a plaintive *How's The World Treating You* and folksy *Gentle On My Mind* and joins Mosley for a pleasant duet performance of *Just Someone I Used To Know*. In fact, pleasant really sums up this whole album, which lacks the bite and earthy soulfulness that should mark classic bluegrass—more Las Vegas than Kentucky.

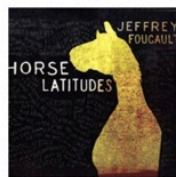
Alan Cackett
www.farmcountry.com

Jeffrey Foucault
HORSE LATITUDES
Signature Sounds Recordings
★★★★☆

Thirty-something Foucault reflects on the past, wrestles with the present

The last couple of years have been pretty fertile as far as Jeffrey Foucault CD 'side trips' have been concerned, commencing with the John Prine tribute *SHOOT THE MOON* (2009), followed by *SEVEN CURSES* (2010) the murder ballad collection shared with Mark Erelli, the musical exploration of Lisa Olstein's poems *COLD SATELLITE* (2010) and, finally, *Redbird's* in-concert *LIVE* (2011) recorded at Café Carpe the Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin venue that was his performing career launching pad. That makes *HORSE LATITUDES* Foucault's first solo collection of original self-penned material for five years, and only his fourth such career release. Songwriters have a 'lifetime' to pen material for their debut disc, and (roughly) two years to prepare for the follow-up...on this go round Jeffrey has allowed himself oceans of latitude. Now that's what I call a well-measured pace.

Horse latitude is the name given to planet Earth's sub-tropical regions, between thirty/thirty-five degrees, north and south of the equator. On land, they're temperate deserts due to the consistently warm, dry weather conditions. On the ocean, in bygone times, seamen would indulge in the 'dead horse' ritual, hence the name. *GHOST REPEATER* (2006) marked the first occasion that Jeffrey collaborated with pedal steel/electric guitarist Eric Heywood (Ray LaMontagne) and he contributes handsomely to *HORSE LATITUDES*, as does bassist Jennifer Condos (Ray LaMontagne), drummer Billy Conway (Morphine) and keyboard/accordion whizz and all-round musical genius Mr. Van Dyke Parks. Finally, there's vocal support and



cello c/o Jeff's wife, Kris Delmhurst. Production of this ten-song collection, recorded in three days in Los Angeles, is credited to Jeffrey Foucault and the band.

Opening with *Horse Latitudes*, therein Jeffrey references the aforementioned temperate regions, watery and earthbound. A dark, unspoken undercurrent suffuses *Pretty Girl In A Small Town*, while the melancholic *Starlight And Static* references sighting the 'ghost of James Dean.' The title, *Heart To Husk*, poetically embraces the emotional rainbow that is love, leaving the narrator to enquire: 'Where does love go?' As for the *Husk*, all tangible evidence is expunged in a conflagration—'Let the blue meet that black, Let my words become fire.' The second verse of *Last Night I Dreamed Of Television* opens with: 'Last night I drank the breath of horses, Falling underneath the waves'—another equine sub-tropical allusion. Although the word 'static' reappears in the image-filled lyric, subjectively it explores emotional release...and tears count.

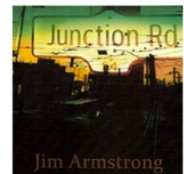
The line: 'For ashes ashes for dust dust' in *Goners Most*—a melancholic paean to love lost—recalls *Heart To Husk*, while the penultimate selection *Passerines* transfers the lyrical focus from earthbound hooves to avian flight. In *Everybody's Famous* the line: 'Everybody's broken heart, Is shining like a new TV' Foucault further propagates his web of lyrical inter-song links. Modern technology's eradication of personal privacy could be the target, but that's mere personal conjecture. Further web-like word associations abound in *Idaho*, and featuring (only) Jeffrey's voice and acoustic guitar, the mostly electric *HORSE LATITUDES* draws gently to a close with *Tea And Tobacco*.

Should you happen to purchase this recording as a download direct from the Signature Sounds web site, you'll score a copy of the bonus track *Real Love*. **Arthur Wood**
<http://www.jeffreyfoucault.com/>

Jim Armstrong
JUNCTION RD
Sonic Deli Records DEL003
★★★★☆

Utterly exhilarating that literally stops you in your tracks

Recovery for Toronto-based Jim Armstrong has been a long and winding one. Having released his debut album *MUDTOWN* in 2007 Jim had planned on releasing a follow-up two years later but an unfortunate accident happened after a co-worker brandished a manual forklift at him therefore leaving him with horrific injuries that require Jim to wear metal ring splints on his fretting hand. This has not ceased Jim's musical plans as this record proves with all the energy and talent of someone with wisdom beyond his years. Consisting of fourteen songs, there are many wonderful tunes to choose from but if one had to be selected above the others it would be *Sanctify*. With a tender gospel opening, this then opens up into an explosive track of pure ecstasy. The roaring vocals are stonking and give the song that extra special something that sees you yearning for more. A follow up to this excellent album? I hope so. **Russell Hill**
www.myspace.com/jimarmstrongsonicdeliband



Eliza Gilkyson
ROSES AT THE END OF TIME
Red House Records
★★★★☆

With love...til the end of time, Gilkyson delivers another memorable song collection

Gilkyson waltzes her way into *ROSES AT THE END OF TIME* with the hook laden, lyrically dreamy wake-up call *Blue Moon Night*—'We turn off the iTunes, Step out into the hood, We notice what's happening.' Portraits of distant simpler times vie with contemporaneous ones in the ensuing and traditional sounding *Death In Arkansas*. Prominently featuring Warren Hood's fiddle and Rich Brotherton's banjo, with vocal support from her Red Horse associates John Gorka and Lucy Kaplansky, the song was penned by Eliza's younger brother Tony. On *Looking For A Place* her son Cisko drives his drum kit like a careering coach and team of horses, while, next up, the mature in years narrator of the gently paced album title track—'Winding down to the end of the line, And the falling of the curtain'—pledges true love...til the end of time.

Based on the closing line of W.B. Yeats' 1919 poem *The Second Coming*, Joni Mitchell's album *NIGHT RIDE HOME* (1991) included a song titled *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, and two decades later Gilkyson follows in the Canadian's wake. In the spirit of her 2008 creation *Great Correction*, Eliza's *Slouching Toward Bethlehem* proceeds to divide the good from the evil clearly delineating those who will perish in the flames of the apocalypse. A recollection of her mother, seemingly surreal images and occurrences permeate the *Belle Of The Ball* lyric.

Sung partly in English and Spanish *Vayan al Norte* (it translates as *Go To The North*) turns the focus on the plight of America's immigrant work force from south of the border. The wryly and slyly worded *2153* predicts mankind's imminent demise, while prior to performing *Midnight On Raton* during a concert I attended at Blue Rock midway through last year Eliza offered the insight that she penned the song in a mere twenty minutes. Sat in her Raton hotel room post a gig, she conjured up magical images such as 'Out there on the interstate the hurlyin' of the cars, High above room 28 the swirling of the stars' and closed with—'Come morning I'll be through these hills and gone'—thereby paraphrasing the late Townes Van Zandt's famous *Snowin' On Raton*. Gilkyson closes *ROSES AT THE END OF TIME* with *Once I Had A Home* a powerful peace prayer for 'the nameless, the fallen, The faceless forgotten' whose homes have been destroyed in recent foreign conflicts.

The past dozen years have been artistically fruitful ones for this California bred, Texas based troubadour and *ROSES AT THE END OF TIME*, her sixth studio recording for Red House Records, reaffirms her commitment to effective commentary on present day social and political issues. The power and beauty of her razor-edged songwriting remains a shining beacon in these troubled times. **Arthur Wood**
<http://www.elizagilkyson.com/>

