

...the new releases

include in its mix which makes it a better tune as it allows the listener's mind to conjure up all sorts of images throughout its near-four minute duration. *Break My Heart Again* may have a bare beginning to it as with the aforementioned track, but this then evolves into a bluegrass groove performed in the same vein as Bill Monroe in his heyday. It even has slight folk tendencies at times which are supported by some delightful picking on an untold number of instruments, with the fiddling highly admirable throughout.

With an extensive North American gig schedule running up to the end of October, this hectic workload will only benefit the band for the more people who attend their shows and listen to their exquisite material up close and personal will hopefully result in them earning larger legions of fans than they already have. **RH**
www.cadillacsky.net

Dottie Snow HERE WE ARE Self produced CD ★

A contemporary
country gospel
album

This disappointing album containing only nine tracks, sounds to me more like a CD designed for sales at gigs than a serious attempt at a commercial recording. There are a couple of decent songs such as Gary Chapman's *Sincerely Yours* and Dallas Holms' title track, but Dottie's vocals are very weak and the backing, whilst it does feature steel guitar is also rather bland. The singer could be the nicest person in the world and it could well be bought as a souvenir of a pleasant evening but it is simply not an album that I would like to listen to again. **DB**
www.dottiesnow.com

Catriona MaKay and Chris Stout WHITE KNIGHTS McKay Stout Music MSMC01 ★★★★☆

Breathtaking
musical display from two of
Scotland's finest roots musicians

Catriona McKay who plays the Scottish harp and Shetland fiddler Chris Stout have produced an album of stunning beauty comprising nine self-composed tracks that explore their adventurous yet accessible musical landscape. The pair have been playing together for over fifteen years and form one of those musical partnerships where the musical ideas bounce off each other in total harmony while also exploring sounds that will connect and challenge them. *WHITE NIGHTS* is an album that connects the past with the present, summer and winter, lands far and near and a healthy dose of reliability and risk. Standout cuts include title track *White Nights*, a tune inspired by the heightened excitement and energy felt when in Shetland, the long days turn into long clear summer nights and the



stunning opener *Missing You* an Arabesque flavoured track that really does make you just stop and listen, a musical soundscape that takes you on a journey of discovery. It's very difficult to pigeonhole an album such as *WHITE NIGHTS*, folk just doesn't cover it, nor roots or even new age, it covers a multitude of genres and all the better for it I say, excellent.

JSaors
www.chrisstout.co.uk

Catherine Howe & Vo Fletcher ENGLISH TALE Voca Records ★★★☆☆

Howe and
Fletcher cut a duo
album

ENGLISH TALE has been self-released by Howe (vocals) and Fletcher (guitar, mandolin, vocals) on Voca Records—as in Vo and Ca—the sole support player being Ric Sanders (violin). Howe penned ten of the fifteen selections three of which date from her 1970s incarnation as a performing songwriter. There's *Lucy Snowe* a portrait of lost love from *SILENT MOTHER NATURE* (1976), the previously unrecorded *In Return For What I Bring*, and *ENGLISH TALE* closes with *Harry*—Howe's Ivor Novello award winning song—from her 1975 album of the same name. In terms of running order, Fletcher's compositions—two songs/three instrumentals—mingle with Howe's creations.

Halifax-bred, thankfully, Howe doesn't indulge in strangled 'northern vocal vowels' ala Rusby. In fact Catherine's diction is crystal clear while her music, I hesitate to say melodies, could hardly be described as hook-laden. You won't find yourself sub-consciously humming these songs a few days later. The portraits Howe's words paint are characteristically English, but their content consistently failed to engage my curiosity. Howe's web site claims *ENGLISH TALE* is 'a collection of songs filled with melody and story.' As I already said they're portraits, not stories. Fletcher's vocal delivery is intimate and breathy, and his fingerpicked guitar work is highly competent. Here I go again, swimming counter to the flow ...and probably the general consensus. **AW**
http://www.catherinehowe.co.uk/

Dalla CRIBBAR Dalla Records DACD05 ★★★★

A more than
worthy recording
to buy

Sounding not dissimilar to a Klezmer party in full swing courtesy of Hilary Coleman's clarinet the set of tunes *Fly Cellar/Unity/Heva Cornishe* in fact provide the setting for a Schottische dance. Both of the two opening tunes are penned by master multi-instrumentalist Neil Davey who along with Bec Applebee (darabuka/crowdy



Steve Gillette THE MAN Compass Rose Music ★★★★★

Allied to twenty songs and melodies, new and old,
Gillette weaves fact and fiction in a realistic tale about
the early days of the jazz era—a music genre beloved
by his late father



In a recording career that comfortably spans five decades, *THE MAN* is the title of Steve Gillette's latest offering. It features his late father, George C. Gillette (who passed away in February), a lawyer by profession, and an enthusiastic stride piano player and jazz music fan by inclination. George obviously passed on the musical gene to his son, and it's hard to grasp the limitless love and care that Gillette the younger has lavished on this project. Two years ago I was lucky enough to hear *THE MAN* as a work in progress. Back then it possessed merit and possibility, now it's a revelation.

First off, *THE MAN* is a story that places the fictional hero and guitarist, Danny Murrow, in real-life musical settings through the opening half of the twentieth century. The main events take place during the 1920s and 1930s, a period that witnessed the birth of American jazz music so beloved by Steve's late father. Next, there is the music—twenty selections—a marriage of Steve Gillette penned originals with cover songs and traditional melodies. Having revealed the foregoing background details, this is no whimsical enterprise but rather a creation that stands up to repeated hearing. In the role of Danny's great-nephew, Steve prefaces each song with an episodic narrative wherein, allied to historical events in jazz and the arts, Murrow's life story unfolds. In addition to Steve and George Gillette, the contributing roots music players include Kim & Reggie Harris (vocals), Cindy Mangsen (vocals), Jack Williams (guitar), Paul Pearcy (drums), Glenn Fukunaga (bass) and Randy Wolchek (piano).

Musically speaking songbook standards such as *Your Feet's Too Big*, *Whispering* and *Sheik Of Araby*, rub shoulders with Steve Gillette originals *Old Jim Crow*—a racial prejudice expose—and *The Man Who Loves A Train*—a song about 'vibrations'. Standout selections include Harburg/Gorney's Great Depression era classic *Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?*, while the collection's 'diamonds in the rough' reside in Steve's *Let The Rain Decide* and his gospel song *God Is Love*. The musical content closes with a stride piano rendition by George C. Gillette of *On The Sunny Side Of The Street*. Forget the endless stream of conveyor belt music that's peddled as Americana, *THE MAN* is the real deal.

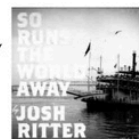
In the style of a broadsheet newspaper, Steve Gillette has constructed a wonderfully detailed web site that supports every aspect of this recording project. While the hours away at <http://abouttheman.com/wp/>.

As much as Danny Murrow is 'the man', the same could be said of the late George C. Gillette and his talented son. **AW**
<http://www.compassrosemusic.com/>

crawn) and Steve Hunt (guitar) make up the rest of this resolutely Cornish band. The second track, *Ann Tremellan* a variant of the more established *Barbara Allan* is a sumptuous banquet of layered vocals courtesy of Coleman and Applebee interlaced with a gently rolling, hypnotic mandolin/bouzouki riff topped-off by guest Will Coleman's gaita bagpipes. So, here we have the opening gambit for what proves a real box of delights in both musicality and technique and one that I hope any self-respecting 'folk' musician should aspire to. Meanwhile, in another moment of quiet reflection the Padstow via America song *Maggie May* (not the rousing Liverpool chant) performed with the subtlety it deserves by Steve Hunt will I'm sure be soaked sponge-like into the folk tradition (much like Roger Bryant's *Cornish Lads*) and work its way into many sessions throughout the UK. On the other hand if it's dazzling displays of digital dexterity you're looking for check out Davey's tour de force on the triplet frenzied *Bishop's Jig/No Song No Supper*...astounding or what? There's no need for a corny pastiche (sorry, I had to get that in somewhere!) when you can get the 'real' thing right here and I just hope that I've persuaded you, the great record buying public into dipping into your hard earned savings to purchase a more than worthy recording. **PF**
www.dalla.co.uk

Josh Ritter SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY Pytheas Records ★★★★☆

Ritter turns in
another home
run



In conversation with Horatio during Act 3, Scene II of *HAMLET*, the Prince of Denmark utters: 'For some must watch, while some must sleep: So runs the world away.' And so the journey begins with *Curtains* a one-minute long instrumental. As the final chords fade, a finger-picked acoustic guitar introduces *Change In Time*. The immersion of mankind as well as vessels in water forms a central theme in *SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY*, all the way from the bow of a riverboat that protrudes into the black and white album cover picture, to the swimming dreamer who narrates *Change In Time*. Sonically the latter title gradually builds to a full band sound coupled with a female chorus that includes Ritter's wife Dawn Landes. *The Curse*, which follows, is waltz-paced, while the lyric, a surreal marriage of world's ancient and modern, focuses upon reincarnation and love at first sight. Sadly that love subsequently withers. In the past decade the public have scrutinised Ritter's every breath and doubtless living in such a bubble—aka the curse—informed the latter.

Folk Bloodbath is rather aptly