

...the new releases

produced sophomore effort. Thereon Melissa (acoustic guitar, vocals) is supported by the compact trio of Jennings (guitars, bouzouki jr., piano, keyboards, basses, drums, vocal harmonies), Inner Rhythm's leader Robert Jospe (drums, percussion) and the redoubtable Oliver Steck (accordion, trumpet). Via tightly edited lyrics that occasionally appear to be a disjointed series of flash cards, Greener succeeds in painting superb portraits of the human condition—hers and ours. The latter being no mean feat, I would advise listeners to approach this recording with an open mind and very alert ears.

Greener's *Bullets To Bite* won First Prize in the folk category of the 2009 USA Songwriting Competition, and opens the album. In the chorus Melissa examines her experiences

by Jonathan Byrd while flying home from the Lone Star state to North Carolina, *It Gets Harder To Leave Texas Every Time* is, no holds barred, one of the diamonds in this collection. In its own way, it's another song about that dwelling place—'home'. Enough said.

Perched between the foregoing covers is Greener's *Paris*, a sensual ode to love and art. Steck's low-key accordion support simply adds the finishing touch to the latter. With mention of *Serotonin*, the lyrical wild card in this particular pack is undoubtedly *Crazy*. If you possess a modicum of sailing knowledge relative to manoeuvring to port (left) and starboard (right), then the full glory and beauty of *Tack & Jibe* will become apparent. Melissa closes the album with a laid back rendering of Neil Young's soothing *Harvest Moon*.

Nash Street BETWEEN HOPE & HEARTACHE

Self-released

★★★★☆

Be sure to remember this name for Nash Street is a band many will be talking about and celebrating in the not too distant future

Winners of the 2008 Colgate Country Showdown at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, this third album shows why Nash Street won that respected accolade. It was there that they were also awarded the title Best New Act in Country Music. The band consists of sisters Hannah and Caroline Melby, Clay Lezon, Ben Mathis and Daniel Hare and between them they play a whole host of instruments such as fiddle, mandolin, guitar and bass. Their music is a very home grown and organic sound which harks back to the days of Nickel Creek with the vocals reminiscent of our very own, the Haley Sisters.

The album consists of ten songs, and what accomplishments they are. *Mississippi Queen* has an extremely powerful beginning to it, and the lead vocals provided by the siblings are sublime to say the least with the instruments, such as Hannah's fiddling, doing an extremely fine job of trying to keep up with hers and Caroline's duel efforts. *Without You* is executed that sensitively it seems the slightest touch may cause a tear in it. The harmonies demonstrate that you do not have to pile a song high with instruments to make it a great one which helps towards this song's very seductive sound.

Originally from Starkville in Mississippi, they are due to relocate to Music City this summer. They have already proven to be a big hit there already, and whether or not they'll build on this popularity is anybody's guess but when they create music like this, the likelihood of this success is pretty much a certainty. **RH**
www.nashstreet.com



with the human condition—I'm awakening, forsaking, the flaming pieces left behind me. It's just growing pains, this regret and shame. But looking back it just reminds me; I've got bullets to bite.' She subsequently alludes to: 'Getting stronger stripping armor. Fitting in my skin' and, the life lesson nearing completion, concludes with the hopeful: 'Stay with me babe. Teach me to make gold from dust.' An exploration of the meaning of 'home' the narrator in the ensuing *On My Way Back Home* relates her life story, so far.

The ten song DWELLING features three astutely selected covers, and the first, David Rodriguez's *Ballad Of The Snow Leopard & The Tanqueray Cowboy* was a classic when he brought it to the public domain two decades on his MAN AGAINST BEAST (cassette) album. The years haven't altered my assertion, and here Melissa delivers a beautifully wistful rendition. Yet to be recorded by its writer, and probably penned

Absent from the three-way, fold out card liner, the lyrics to Greener's songs can be downloaded via the music button at <http://www.melissagreener.com/>.

I'm certain that further explorations of DWELLING will reveal even more delights and insights.

That, surely, says it all. **AW**
<http://www.myspace.com/melissagreener>

The Old Dance School FORECAST

Transition Records
TRANSCD04

★★★★★

An album that proves an irresistible package that any self-respecting 'folk' enthusiast should be proud to feature in their CD collection

If you could sell the word 'enigma' as a product then this would be the band to display their wares accordingly. The Old Dance School don't take any prisoners in their



pursuit of enjoying themselves whilst liberating that music we tenuously label 'folk'. As a journalist, you get a gut feeling that this is one of those albums that will constantly be on whilst you're slaving over a hot computer extolling the band's virtues to anyone who'll care to listen. Throwing the listener every which way in order to bring a comfortably settled audience out of its complacent slumber, Helen Lancaster (violin), Samantha Norman (violin), Robin Beatty (guitar, vocals), Tom Chapman (cajon, vocals), Laura Carter (woodwind, vocals), Aaron Diaz (trumpet) and Adam Jarvis (double bass) succeed spectacularly in their endeavours. From the beautifully crafted opening instrumental track *The Enlli Light* the joy that emits from the speakers is enough to rejuvenate the soul of any tarnished 'hack' who's become jaded with the tried and tested. It's like the first time I heard a young Capercaille, you know there's something special and that, apart from anything else this is a band that deserves to break free from the confines of music pigeon-holing. The music is magic in their hands and the classy way in which the members combine their arrangements under the watchful eye of producer Calum Malcolm shows they have plenty left to offer. Beatty's way with words and Norman/Lancaster's nimble compositions are a mighty combination and coupled with the arty photography by John Beatty (Robin's dad!) this album proves an irresistible package that any self-respecting 'folk' enthusiast should be proud to feature in their CD collection. **PF**
www.theolddanceschool.com

Rex Foster THAT EXTRA MILE

Agarita Records

★★★★☆

Wonderful laid back collection, his sixth, from this Hill Country artisan



Five years on from, the recorded in a matter of hours, TRIO SESSION and almost a decade since his last studio outing, BUFFALO ZEN, Rex returns with THAT EXTRA MILE recorded at The Zone in Dripping Springs, Texas and like its 2001 predecessor produced by Peter Rowan (high string guitar, electric guitar, backing vocals). The support players on this go round being Cindy Cashdollar (Weissenborn, steel guitar, Dobro), former Dillard Jeff Gilkinson (cello, harmonica), Jeff Hogan and Paul Pearcy (percussion), Kevin Smith and Glen Fukunaga (stand-up bass, electric bass), Karen Mal and Tamara Haasen (backing vocals).

THAT EXTRA MILE features a dozen Foster penned originals, some co-written with others. In the case of the light-hearted, folk-pop opening number *Slow Down* that collaborator is Nashville-based hit songwriter Jon Ims. *When I Was Young*, co-written with Rowan, finds Foster muse about subjects and incidents that dogged his youthful thoughts—the vast universe, learning to swim, love's first sting, and a shooting accident that

almost ended his life.

The album title song focuses on love, there's a *Frankie & Johnnie* feel to the storyline of the ensuing Rowan co-write *Kingdom Come*, while *Gone To Town*—also penned with Rowan—features a wayward and unfaithful wife. Foster addresses a musician named Michael in *The Streets Of Austin*—while the storyline doesn't quite fit, the thought occurs that it could be Michael Elwood who has been silent for too many years. *To Say Good-bye* takes the form of a tender eulogy for his beloved late father, a Hill Country entrepreneur and one-time cinema owner. Two instrumentals, respectively *Country Road 473* and *Kendallala Moonrise*, both arranged by Rowan, close THAT EXTRA MILE. **AW**
<http://www.rexfoster.com/>

Ange Hardy WINDMILLS AND WISHES

Story Records

★★★★

A bit of a mixed bag between songs you can connect with and songs you fail to remember...

I wish the opening to this album, is a bit slow and melancholy, although it communicates, the vocals seem to be lacking power and the song, any true direction. Resembling a lullaby, I just hoped this simplicity was a part of the style for the song and not her overall styling for the album. *Missing Dialogue*, however, soon had me changing my mind, opening with piano and soon filtering in vocals that are this time less wistful and sweeping and more grounded and power-laden. As we reach the centre section of this song therefore, I am captivated. Her vocals grow in mission, in stance and in tone. *On Your Own* has this character of its own that really embodies a new personality in Ange's music and by the time you've heard the first three songs, you've heard three different dimensions of her music. This continues throughout the album, offering variety, personality, charisma and passion and embodying a myriad of issues, it feels just like opening another person's diary and entering their world. This is Ange Hardy's debut studio album and it's a real delight, if somewhat mixed bag between songs you connect with and songs that you just fail to remember. However, they all create this soft landscape full of clouds and cotton wool, and the music reduces you to a softened soul, whilst some of the songs just simply transgress into this electric and on *Refuse Sack* raggaie styled vocal styling. **LB**
www.angehardy.com



BabaJack EXERCISING DEMONS

Self-released

★★★★

This album will leave you in awe of the deep southern sound which effortlessly is played to perfection

Listening to the rich country-style

