

CD Reviews

The Good, The Bad & The Ugly.

New Releases & Re-Issues

Editor's Top Picks:

A Guide To The Star
Ratings In Maverick:

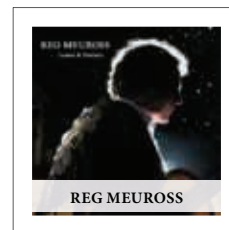
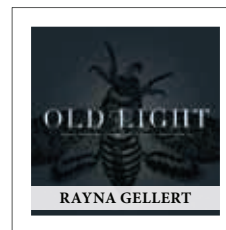
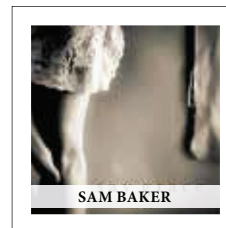
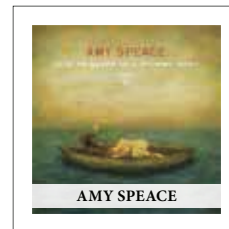
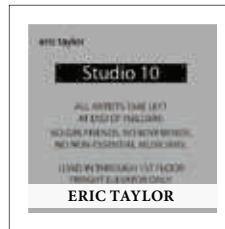
★ Avoid

★★ Poor

★★★ Good

★★★★ Very Good

★★★★★ Excellent



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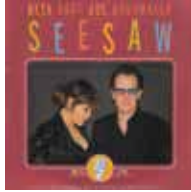
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Beth Hart & Joe Bonamassa SEESAW

Provogue Records

★★★★☆

Another scorching duet album from this musical dream team



Beth Hart has an unmistakable voice; raw and gritty but with masses of power and passion. Joe Bonamassa leaves the singing to Beth and concentrates on playing some of the greatest guitar support and solos that any singer would ever want alongside them. Thus making this a phenomenal duet partnership. At times, though, Beth can go a bit over the top vocally and the songs can become too rowdy and raunchy. But in the main this is a great CD.

Beth matches Tina Turner's version of *Nutbush City Limits* vocally and Joe's superb guitar playing is the winning ingredient on this classic song. The horn section alongside Joe's polished guitar style are a perfect foil to Beth's swinging vocals on Billie Holiday's *Them There Eyes* and Bonamassa's scorching guitar sets light to Beth's vocal fuse as she smoulders and burns on the excellent blues ballad *I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know* from Donnie Hathaway. They include a terrific version of Melody Gardot's *If I Tell You I Love You* as well as two Etta James covers: *Rhymes* and *A Sunday Kind Of Love*. Great album, but not quite as good as their first.

David Knowles

www.hartandbonamassa.com

Eric Taylor STUDIO 10

Blue Ruby Music

★★★★☆

Death and dark deeds, eulogies and wanderlust ...and much more permeate STUDIO 10



Enveloped as we have been in the majesty of this Georgia Texan's songs I guess we haven't consciously observed the passage of the decades. Eric released his debut album at the age of 32. Almost a decade and a half of silence was broken by his 1995 self-titled sophomore set, and including this new collection seven live and studio albums have followed in its wake. Produced by Eric (vocals, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, electric bass) and his wife Susan Lindfors (supporting vocals), *STUDIO 10* was recorded in Houston's Red Shack Studio and also features David Webb (keyboards),

James Gilmer (percussion) and owner Rock Romano (supporting vocals, electric bass).

A repeating reference point, the words: 'Stolen kisses, somebody's got to pay' launch album opener *Molly's Painted Pony*. When the girl with the 'Mona Lisa grin' fired a gun twice, two bodies '...fell in harmony.' Just picture that! Gilmer's conga underpins *Reno*, wherein the rough-hewn lead character speculates and accumulates. Four months short of completing his 60th year, New Hampshire-based singer-songwriter Bill Morrissey passed away during late July 2011. Melodically slow, almost deliberate, *Bill* recalls the songwriter's penchant for blues 'n' booze, his portraits of down-at-heel mills towns once the jobs went someplace else and that Morrissey passed in Dalton, Georgia while on tour.

Actor/singer/songwriter/farmer Tim Grimm's *Cover These Bones* appeared on his 2011 album *WILDERNESS SONGS AND BAD MAN BALLADS*, a song collection inspired by Scott Russell Sanders' books *Wilderness Plots* (1983) and *Bad Man Ballad* (1986). The former was a collection of folklore tales, the latter recalled an infamous 1813 murder in Portage County, Ohio where Sanders grew up. According to Tim, the latter inspired *Cover These Bones*, wherein the narrator observes mankind's footprint. *Dark Corner Ice Water*, is a murderous tale, awash with alcohol and bad blood, that closes with mention of Harlon Joye, founder and broadcaster on Atlanta's Radio Free Georgia. Whimsy is woven into the fabric of *Franchestown*—'Dance the boogie woogie with your pants down,' while the narrator of *Adios* is hell bent on leaving. Jim Tully (1886-1947) passed away a matter of weeks into his 62nd year. Taylor's short and gory *Tully's Titles* is followed by the almost seven-minute long biographical *Tully*. They'll feature in an upcoming documentary about this vagabond, pugilist, journalist and author. Though not blessed by all their artistic attributes, Tully's life paralleled that of Woody Guthrie and Jack Kerouac—for Eric that's magnetic appeal. *STUDIO 10* draws to a close with the sweet melancholy of *String Of Pearls*, wherein the narrator acknowledges that it's: 'Another hell of a thing to put a friend to rest.'

32 years post *SHAMELESS LOVE*, Taylor's lyrical focus—whether factual or fictional—remains a cinematic constant. His voice may have weathered with time, does that matter? The songs remain majestic ...

Arthur Wood

Jefferson Ross ISLE OF HOPE

Deep Fried Discs

★★★★★

A gently, understated masterpiece



Against all the odds Jefferson Ross continues to create inspiring and thoughtful songs that explore the human psyche with rare insight and total sensitivity. For this latest collection it is just Ross and ace producer/guitarist Thomm Jutz. Within their basically acoustic framework the pair fuse the hardest strands of folk, country, blues and bluegrass. Underlying their sound are lyrics that pluck all the nerve centre of emotional experiences. I come from a large family and I immediately connected with *Take The Picture*; when I look back at old family photos I can recall instantly the hassle of getting everyone together for that one important shot. Ross has captured that whole scenario in four short verses and a singalong chorus. The story of *Blind Willie Comes Home* has you on the edge of your seat, the softly played acoustics and Ross' richly melodic vocal keeping you hooked in. Here's a master at work ... a singer-songwriter in the Guy Clark and John Prine league.

The gently hypnotic rhythm of *High Times In The Low Country* washes over you, the guitar work simple but oh so effective, the harmonies right on the mark, the whole thing so understated that the sheer genius at work almost slips by unnoticeably. Musically *Daddy Loves To Rock* proves Jutz a mean guitar picker. The gospel-styled *The Branch And The Vine* is nicely enhanced by slick and soulful vocals. On the *77 Lime Green Cadillac Hearse* yarn, their instrumental talents frame the vocals tastefully, with Jutz's guitar enhancing an atmosphere that's immediate yet grounded in tradition. Though it's only two players here, they generate enough passion and energy on all 16 numbers that the introduction of any other musicians would not only be unnecessary, it would be intrusive. While they might utilise classic instruments such as a 1951 Gibson LG1 and 1970 Martin D-18, Jefferson Ross and Thomm Jutz create sounds that are memorable and totally contemporary. The whole album has a light swing feel with varied tempo and intensity; it is sophisticated and laid back but consistently sincere and with insistent soul. **Alan Cackett**

www.jeffersonross.com