

## ...the new releases

and pretty melody. *I Promise You* is a gorgeous and delicate ballad that is well orchestrated and delivered. The soul-blended pop song *She's Alright* shows her describing what it's like to be woman standing up for her self. The heartbreaking *The Wide Road* with its mix of delicate piano playing and soulful vocals makes the beautiful end of an enchanting but at times hard journey for Judith Owen. This songstress has an extraordinary voice and appears it seems to be an expert on the female mind. It's great that these songs have finally been released in their true glory. **CN** [www.judithowen.net](http://www.judithowen.net)

### Kacey Jones DONALD TRUMP'S HAIR

IGO Records-  
IGO41247  
★★★★☆

This extremely  
funny lady keeps  
producing the goods

San Francisco Bay born and bred, Kacey Jones has proved herself one of the best country comedy singers in America, and one of the few whose style of comedy can cross the water to the UK and still hold its appeal. Her last comedy album *EVERY MAN I LOVE IS EITHER MARRIED, GAY OR DEAD...LIVE* was a great laugh, but Kacey also proved that she is a classy country singer when she released her tribute to one of the greats with *KACEY JONES SINGS MICKEY NEWBURY*.

Although not all the songs here are to the standard of her last release there are still some hilarious tracks such as the excellent *Christmas In Rehab* that name checks quite a few star names. Another great tune is her homage to royalty of the drag kind on *God Save The Queens*. Country legends can't escape her wit either, check out *Whatever Happened To Kenny Rogers's Face* and *I Wanna Be Up Front Like Dolly*. She also does one straight song, a lovely rendition of *The Glory Of Love*. Not as strong as past albums but still well worth a listen. **DK** [www.KaceyJones.com](http://www.KaceyJones.com)

### Kris Morris I THINK WE BOTH KNOW

Download only  
★★★★★

A musical Wizard  
from Aus releases  
a stunning debut  
album

The current economic crisis that is blighting the music industry means that artists like Kris Morris and albums like *I THINK WE BOTH KNOW* are now pre-destined to relative failure. Without Kris getting the backing of a decent record label you will probably never get to hear this stunning album and that's a damn shame. *I THINK WE BOTH KNOW* opens with the sublime *So Beautiful*; a song that Radio 2 would have played to death 12 months ago and still should. Title song is a plaintive cry from one lover to another at the jagged edge of a doomed relationship. Kris Morris uses his edgy voice to great effect on this and *It's OK*, with both songs

crackling with suppressed anger and infatuation.

Kris Morris has honed his talent and paid the proverbial dues over the years by moving from his native Australia to London and playing every pub and club South of Birmingham. The album ends with another two marvellous heartbreakers—*I Still Believe* and *Closer To You*, but thankfully by now Kris has re-discovered love and tells his new lover that he wants to 'risk getting hurt/ replace tension with tenderness/replace anger with gentleness.' James Blunt, Ray Lamontagne and Ryan Adams must all wish that they could have written songs as great as these.

My only regret with *I THINK WE BOTH KNOW* is that it is only available as a download. Gone are the days when a release like this would be trumpeted from the rooftops with full colour advertising; a gatefold sleeve, 32 date UK tour and Kris appearing on every TV programme from Later with Jools Holland to Loose Women. On the upside, not only is it relatively cheap to download the tracks from his website and i-tunes; but you can also get a FREE album of demos too. How can you resist? **AH** [www.kris-morris.com/category/downloads/](http://www.kris-morris.com/category/downloads/)

### Little Green CROSSING LANES

Rootsy Records  
022  
★★★★

Assured debut  
from Swedish

alt.country/bluegrass quintet

Combine some old time front-porch pickin' with a dose of Scandinavian melancholy and you have the unique sound of Little Green. The Swedish quintet, which played the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow at the Celtic Connections festival, has been slowly expanding its European fan-base and garnering positive responses to its debut release *CROSSING LANES*. Originally a two-man outfit, featuring Thomas Pontén (mandolin, guitars and vocals) and Andreas Johannesson (lead vocals and guitar), the band expanded to increase its versatility. New members Karl Wassholm (bass), Fred Sörensson (fiddle) and Johan Hjalmarsson (drums) completed Little Green's transition from singer-songwriter duo to a full-blown country/bluegrass act.

Ten tracks, all of them written Pontén and Johannesson, amply display the band's diverse talents and the broad range of influences from which it draws: Buddy Miller, the Dixie Chicks, Steve Earle and Neil Young are among the artists to have inspired the Little Green vibe. For me the strongest track in the collection is foot-tapping stomper *The Bells Are Ringing Their Last Call*, an irresistible piece of bluegrass nostalgia which more than showcases the band's mastery of the genre. The fiddle has a decidedly Irish twang on this one, and it's hard to imagine a more upbeat opener to a live show. There are more bluegrass blues in the energetic *Love's On The Other Side Of*

### Ghost of a Dog FULL MOON CRIME SPREE

Airheart Records AH005

★★★★★

Impressive debut characterised by stunning vocals

This lot hail from Monmouthshire and the west of England, but there is an Americanised alt.country aesthetic to their material, realised with authenticity and lent weight by some confident, upfront arrangements and a wonderful vocalist in Tamzin Powell. She really is impressive; a full-bodied voice capable of both extravagant vocal theatrics and an expressive kind of restraint. I'm not the first to make this comparison but Kate Bush is called to mind.

A British band making such explicitly American and country influenced music runs the risk of coming across as derivative, or of simply emulating the fundamentals of their genre without making a valid contribution to it, but *Ghost of a Dog* come across as fresh and exciting owing to some original musical and lyrical ideas. *The Russians are Coming* sees Powell delivering a yearning lyric of time travel and making up for one's mistakes, all over a bouncy driving instrumental standing counterpoint to the thematic content of the song. *Mexicano (Boys Night Out)* takes on a spaghetti western vibe, indebted to Calexico without ripping them off. Album closer *Burning Coal* is a soulful and elegiac, stripped down folk anthem. *FULL MOON CRIME SPREE* is an exciting debut, hinting at a familiar sound that the band has made their own. They've hit the ground running and not missed a step. **AlexC** [web2.nessmmp3.com/bands/639](http://web2.nessmmp3.com/bands/639)



*Town*, while closing track *The Crop Is Ripe* is sheer unadulterated fun, a musical frenzy that shows some fine musicians at their best.

Fans of pure country will relish *Give Me a Reason*, the heartrendingly simple lament of a man falling in love. *Merry Go Round* has a strong catchy melody that could make it a contender for airplay success. All in all, it's an eclectic collection and a sure-footed debut that leaves a taste for more. Be sure to catch these guys next time they're in the UK, and until then this album will be sure to get your foot tapping along. **KL** <http://www.myspace.com/littlegreenswe>

### Lynn Miles BLACK FLOWERS, VOLUME 2

Self-released

★★★★★

Some more  
acoustic or  
alternative takes on the vast Lynn  
Miles' song catalogue

Miles' twice yearly self-release of back-to-basics, mostly voice and guitar interpretations of material from her vast song catalogue, moves on apace with this ten-song collection. The Ottawa-based Canadian rose to international prominence following the release of *SLIGHTLY HAUNTED*, her 1996 Rounder/Philo debut, although in truth it was her third recording. A number of years earlier Lynn had released a self-titled, cassette only debut set, followed on CD by the sophomore *CHALK THIS ONE UP TO THE MOON*.

*All I Ever Wanted*, which opened the latter 1991 album, and is reprised here, wherein the narrator conjures images of love that is 'a bottomless moat.' From the aforementioned *SLIGHTLY HAUNTED* playing electric guitar Miles revisits *Last Night*, and reverts to acoustic guitar for *I Always Told You The Truth*—a 1995 Kerrville Folk Festival performance of the latter also exists on CD. As for the former cut, apart from the line that references Joni Mitchell's song *River*, I'd swear that in contemplating the coming spring Lynn's phrasing of 'I'll complain and complain' and 'If it ever

gets here' amount to a nod to fellow Canadian Jane Sibbery aka Issa. The principle Miles lyric staples are love (good and bad) and the road, and she consistently unpins her words with hook-laden melodies practically guaranteeing that they will enjoy repeated listening. With regard to the road, *Night Drive* surfaced on VOLUME 1, and on this go round from *LOVE SWEET LOVE* there's *Eight Hour Drive*. Augmenting her voice and acoustic guitar with harmonica, Lynn also tackles *Flames Of Love* the opening track on the latter 2005 released collection.

From her Juno winning 2001 collection *UNRAVEL* there's new aural sketches of *When Did The World and Black Flowers*. In the latter, a woman, now widowed, weeps—and at one point wails—for a husband lost in a coal mine disaster. *Rust*—a subtle, poetic comment on memory, ageing and the passage of time—closed *NIGHT IN A STRANGE TOWN*, Lynn's sophomore album for Philo Records, which was recorded in LA her temporary home during the closing years of last century. The latter disc was co-produced by John Cody with whom she also co-wrote. Accompanying herself on piano, this album closes with their previously unrecorded *The People You Love*, wherein the narrator reflects on her life and the strength she has drawn from the people—lovers, family and friends—she has known. The obviously resilient narrator in *Hide Your Heart*, the other new song here, may have recently lost in love but with conviction she intones: 'He's all trouble, he's all heartache, so let him go.' Mostly a reprise, nevertheless, *VOLUME 2* once again confirms that Miles is a truly talented songsmith.

**AW** <http://www.lynnmilesmusic.com/buy.html>

### Maria Taylor LADY LUCK

Netwerk

★★★★★

Accomplished  
third outing from  
Los Angeles based  
singer-songwriter

Maria Taylor is one of the most interesting female singer songwriters

