

# MAVERICK

## CD REVIEWS - THE NEW RELEASES

### Jonathan Day CARVED IN BONE

Niimiika Records Niimiika 101

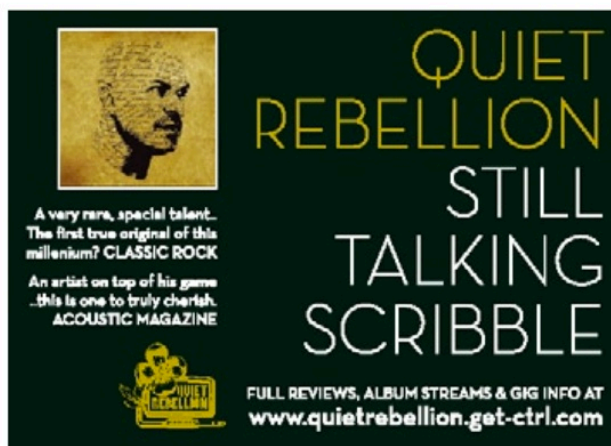
★★★

*Quiet and reflective contemporary folk*

'Contemporary rural music from Shropshire' it says here, and that's more or less correct but there's quite a lot it doesn't say. For one thing there's Day's Steve Knightley fetish, seen throughout but most clearly on *She Walks in Silence*, which in sound, phrasing and general style is a dead ringer for the Show of Hands man. For another there's the frequent straining for mysticism and 'significance' which is fine if it works but too often comes at the expense of the songs.

Overall Day has generally succeeded in creating an air of solitude and contemplation which fits in perfectly with his semi-reclusive lifestyle. Although he's been making music on and off for almost two decades he's been equally, if not more, interested in travel and exploration. It's a pity that spirit isn't evident on the album—it's as though he's come home to rest amongst the familiar and safe and the music reflects that. He has some famous friends and amongst others Joe Broughton, Kevin Dempsey and, most notably, Chris While show up from time to time. There's always the risk though with guests that they outshine the main man and it sometimes backfires: listening to the traditional *Bonnie Light Horseman*, which is sung as a duet by Day and While, makes you long for her to do the whole thing so you could hear more of that wonderfully emotional voice.

In general this album works better as mood music than a set of songs, which is a pity, as Day clearly has plenty of talent, but with the folk world currently rammed with great albums this one fails to rise above the pack. **Jeremy Searle**  
[www.myspace.com/jonathanpeterday](http://www.myspace.com/jonathanpeterday)



### Jude Johnstone QUIET GIRL

Bojak Records

★★★★

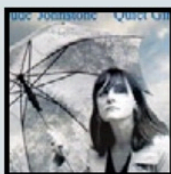
*QUIET GIRL you say. No so! This is a smouldering, passionate song collection, infused with melancholy*

Although her family tree includes generations of North Maine blueberry farmers, music has always been Jude Johnstone's passion and driving force. As soon as she could reach the keys of the family parlour piano, she began writing songs. Given an early career helping hand by the E Street Band's Clarence Clemons—his trademark tenor sax can be heard (here) on the up-tempo *Don't Wake Me Up*—she eventually found a home and work base on America's west coast. In time Johnstone's songs were covered by Stevie Nicks, Jennifer Warnes, Bonnie Raitt, Trisha Yearwood, Emmylou Harris, and the late Johnny Cash. (Jude's) *Unchained* furnished the title of Big John's 1997 Grammy winning Best Country Album.

Following a couple of jazz/blues inspired outings Johnstone slips back into singer-songwriter territory on *QUIET GIRL*, her fifth album in a solo recording that began a mere eight years ago (with *COMING OF AGE*). Emmylou's most recent album featured a cover of the Mainer's *Hold On* and (here) Harris adds her voice to the title song which launches this disc. Other guest vocalists include Jimmy LaFave (*I Don't Wanna Go Home*) and J. D. Souther (*On That Train*), while the supporting choir on the heartfelt, yet lyrically vitriolic *Cry For New Orleans* includes a pair of Cowsills—John & Susan, John's wife Vicki Peterson (Bangles) and Rodney Crowell.

Great albums require songs that can, over time, sustain repeated hearing. Blessed by 'need to hear that again' moments they ascend to a singular/treasured echelon. Among the many *QUIET GIRL* moments are, album producer Charles Duncan's flugel horn sample on *Josephina*—a song that is equal parts Californian and Mexican—the soulful *I Pray for Rain*, the heart-wrenching *On That Train*, Maxayn Lewis' gospel tinged support vocal on *Angel At Your Door*, and John Edwards' French horn on album closer *The Smell Of Summer*. In a recent interview for the PopMatters web site, Johnstone quantified her writing influences as: 'I was greatly inspired by all things melancholy, whether it be music, movies, or philosophy.' Melancholy is probably my favorite shade of song lyric, and this collection snagged me hook, line and sinker.

Like Gretchen Peters, having established a reputation as an exceptional (hit) songwriter, Jude Johnstone graduated to a solo recording career. Come to think of it Yearwood covered the Peters' timeless *On A Bus To St. Cloud* (as has LaFave), and in the spring of 1992 Trisha took Jude's *The Woman Before Me* to number 4 of the US country singles chart. If you have a sneaking affection for Gretchen Peters' music, then you'll simply adore Jude Johnstone's *QUIET GIRL*. **Arthur Wood**  
<http://www.bojakrecords.com/>



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