

NEW RELEASES

and over again.

Larkin Poe's new sound might lose them a few hardcore folk fans but will unquestionably win them legions of new admirers, and we will probably see them on a series of TV sofas across the UK—good luck to them I say! The release actually includes a terrific bonus DVD from an intimate gig in a Norwegian wine cellar, plus two music videos. **Alan Harrison**

www.larkinpoe.com

Lynyrd Skynyrd LAST OF A DYIN' BREED

Roadrunner Records

★★★★☆

Southern rock legends still going strong



One of my first great concert memories as a teenager goes back to the Knebworth Festival in 1976 that had the Rolling Stones as headliners, plus 10cc, Todd Rundgren's Utopia, Hot Tuna, and the Don Harrison Band, but one group from America blew every other act away that day. That group was Lynyrd Skynyrd, and I've been a fan ever since. They've gone through a few line-up changes over the years, and sadly a few members are now playing the big rock gig in the sky, but however many times the line-up changes the music always remains on top rocking and adrenaline charged form.

The latest line-up for this album is Johnny Van Zant (vocals), Gary Rossington (guitar), Rickey Medlocke (guitar), Mark Matejka (guitar), Michael Cartellone (drums), Johnny Colt (bass), Peter Pisarczyk (keyboards) and the Honkettes: Dale Krantz-Rossington—whom is wife to Gary Rossington—and Carol Chase (backing vocals). The record is eleven tracks of power and passion, riotous rock, brilliant guitar solos and songs worthy of fan appreciation; to be loved both on record and on stage. The voice of Johnny Van Zant is tremendous; the slide guitar on the country twanged *Start Livin' Life Again* is magic alongside Johnny's emotive vocals. Title track *Last Of A Dying Breed* gets the album underway with driving guitars and powerhouse vocals—it's no wonder why so many Lynyrd Skynyrd songs are classed as rock anthems; their CDs being great to use as driving music. It's a terrific CD from one of the best ever southern rock groups.

David Knowles

www.lynyrdskynyrd.com

Nicolette Good MONARCH

Self-Release

★★★★☆

Magnificent, melodic and memorable



MONARCH, the ten-song debut album by multi-award winning, twenty-something, Texas songwriter, Nicolette Good (acoustic guitar, microKORG, piano), was recorded in Austin's now ten-year old Ramble Creek Studio and co-produced by Nicolette, sideman Jesse Basham (electric guitar, banjo) and owner and engineer, Britton Beisenherz (electric guitar, electric bass, percussion). Nicolette's fondness for Denton, Texas writer Doug Burr's Ramble Creek recording of *O Ye Devastator* (2010), brought her to Britton Beisenherz's door. The MONARCH session players include percussionist Jon Greene (Matt the Electrician), upright bassist and pedal steel player Jesse Ebaugh (Heartless Bastards), clarinetist Jonathan Doyle (White Ghost Shivers), organist Oscar Interiano and cellist Steve Bernal (Monte Montgomery).

Aged five, Nicolette began playing piano and has never stopped, earning in the process a degree in English and Music from San Antonio's Trinity University. On MONARCH Nicolette supports her vocals—lead and harmony—with acoustic guitar, microKORG and piano. An accomplished lyricist, Nicolette subtly weaves a plethora of human emotions into her songs, those of the 'oh, woe is me' road variety being a songwriter staple. However, Nicolette's very different take, *The Road*—which opens MONARCH—proves to be a discourse on anguish and truth. At the outset the narrator recalls: 'I was raised up down in Texas, with a pickup truck for my home, and my daddy couldn't stay put, so he took to the open road.' Imprinted by that uncertain and nomadic lifestyle, the now grown narrator subtly informs her travelling man: 'Baby, you were long gone, long ago.'

Son Of My Sister portrays instances where blood is, and is not, thicker than water, following which Nicolette takes the poignant folk ballad *Oh My Darling, Clementine*, deconstructs it—using the folk process—and adeptly delivers the up-tempo reconstruction *Pretty Clementine*. The ensuing album title song, co-written with Jesse Basham, involves a troubadour and a pauper; the latter deluded by the notion that he is a king. The jazz tinged *Call Me* sounds American Songbook familiar,

yet it's a 21st century Nicolette original. Hundreds of words swirl in my brain, relative to the melody, the witty lyric, Nicolette's vocal style, even the manner of its recording, suffice to say *Call Me* is a cleverly conceived classic and the finest song I've heard in ages. Alone, it's worth the price of owning this album.

The Last Word finds the narrator reflect: 'I am the afterthought that you think after you speak.' Set in West Texas, the lingering, sonically eerie, *Marathon* melody is accompanied by a mystically magnificent lyric. *Hurricane Caroline* is a clear case of don't judge a book by its cover—the portrait of a young woman hyped-up 'with chocolate, wine and Adderall.' Towards the close, Nicolette universally transforms the foregoing scenario with 'Wrecking homes in new towns under a different name.' In album closer, *The Flood*, of her art Nicolette enquires: Come and sit with me, tell me, can you hear what I hear?' MONARCH is, quite simply, a cornucopia of musical delights—taste and see. **Arthur Wood**

www.nicolettegood.com

Penny Nichols COLORS OF THE SUN

Pensongs Productions

★★★★☆

Penny Nichols reprises early career songs penned by Jackson Browne



Penny Nichols' performing career began in California during the musically fertile early 1960s, and culminated in the 1968 release by Buddah Records of her debut solo album, PENNY'S ARCADE. These days, Penny resides in the Hudson Valley of New York where she principally pursues a career as a music teacher. This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the release of Jackson Browne's debut solo album, SATURATE BEFORE USING; the sub-title of her latest release being PENNY NICHOLS SINGS THE EARLY SONGS OF JACKSON BROWNE.

Mostly recorded in bassist, Mark Dann's Woodstock studio, this twelve-song, fifty-five minute long collection features contributions from some well-known musicians, including guitarists Pete Kennedy and Mark Goldenberg (Jackson Browne Band, The Cretones), plus the late Kenny Edwards (bass) whilst permutations of Rosemary Butler, Pamela Polland, Greg Copeland, Steve Noonan and Ned Doheny add their voices.