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CD REVIEWS - THE NEW RELEASES

Ian McFeron SUMMER NIGHTS

Self-Release/Website

★★★★

A restless Americana road trip set to haunting melodies

Ian McFeron is a genuine 'one off'; he travels across the States every week of the year booking his own gigs on the basis that the town 'interests him' and this is his sixth self-released album of self-penned tunes and arrangements. McFeron has a very warm and friendly voice and Doug Lancio's production gives him just enough 'edge' to lift him high above the crowded marketplace. The songs are all very 'expressive' which is an odd thing to say; but I mean they all tell stories without getting bogged down in metaphors, poetry and innuendos. *Come See Me (Before You Go)* sounds like a man standing on the precipice and the harmonica and pedal steel in the background sent shivers down my back. McFeron sounds a bit like a young Randy Newman as he plays the piano on *My Old Lovers* and the fiddle that comes in half way through gives the song a sweet country feel to it, too.

You don't have to know about Ian McFeron's background to know that these songs were all probably written in cheap hotels in the middle of the night, and history tells us that's where the best ones come from. Ian is an especially good songwriter and he surpasses himself on *Windchime*, with some wonderful imagery: 'the starlight dripping from my drapes and the dripping from my tongue, tastes like Teenage summer love' ... how good is that?

But the best song on *SUMMER NIGHTS* came at me like a hammer blow, on *Ain't Dead Yet* Ian starts out with a little bit of acoustic guitar then tells his sleeping lover: 'these days I can't seem to feel much of anything...I've been waiting on summer like a slow train coming,' and then the melancholy builds until he gets to the chorus of: 'sweet pretty lady put your red dress on...we are going out tonight...because I got things I want to forget...and I ain't done living and I ain't dead yet.' *Ain't Dead Yet* could easily be a great lost Dylan song from the mid 1960s or more likely a brand new Justin Townes Earle song—it really is that good. I certainly won't be surprised if I heard the song on the radio being sung by someone infinitely more famous some time in the near future. I'd never heard of Ian McFeron prior to listening to *SUMMER NIGHTS* but I will be rectifying that tomorrow; I urge you to do the same. **Alan Harrison**

www.ianmcferon.com



Jed Davis

THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

Eschatone Records ESC005

★★★

Range of styles played with the guts to do it

Originally from Albany, New York, Jed Davis first started out playing in the local coffee houses during the mid-1990s where he literally gave away his music to anybody who was interested. This sacrifice has obviously paid off for Jed who is now involved in several bands with each having their own distinguished success. It is on this record that you hear a seasoned professional giving it his all on eleven songs which sounds odd yet excellent at the same time. It's a difficult combination to achieve but somehow Jed pulls it off. The well-thought out arrangements and instrumentation of *Enough*, one of the ten tracks written by Jed, build together to create a hit musical nirvana. The only way is up for Jed Davis. **Russell Hill**

www.jeddavis.com



Jonathan Edwards

MY LOVE WILL KEEP

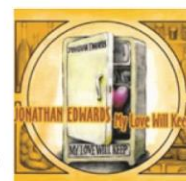
Appleseed Recordings

★★★★

Edwards returns with a mixed cocktail of originals and covers

MAN ON THE MOON (1998), his sophomore release on the Rising Records label, was the most recent studio recording by Cape Elizabeth, Maine-based Edwards. A couple of live albums appeared during the ensuing nought-ies, including one on Dutch-based Strictly Country Records. The appearance of *MY LOVE WILL KEEP* means that this Minnesota-born, Virginia-bred musician has released recordings in five consecutive decades. Co-produced by Edwards and percussionist Jim Begley, this new collection was recorded at the Studio in Portland, Maine.

The twelve songs on Edwards' debut for Pennsylvania-based Appleseed Recordings include no less than seven covers, wed to a handful of Edwards-penned



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real-life event. Whether it's true to say that other songs here also harbour that connection that's for Clive to reveal. Nevertheless I wonder about *Till You Get Home*—the collection's hardest rocking number—and, possibly, album closer *Without You*. Lyrically and melodically the lively *I Think I'm Falling In Love* could easily be a long-lost Buddy Holly creation, while *Daisy Chain* finds Clive at his most light-hearted. He's joined, vocally, by sometime touring companion Patsy Matheson on the lovelorn character portrait *Julianne*, and later, and more prominently, by Texan songbird Denice Franke on the bittersweet *Start Again*.

In terms of the BITTERSWEET support players, on eight selections Clive (guitar, keyboards) is joined by Mark Griffiths (bass) and Martin Hughes (drums), while the remainder feature Clive and Simon Whitbread (drums). In addition to the (basic) fourteen-song version of the album, Fulfill are releasing a Deluxe edition that includes a second, six-song disc and a poster. **Arthur Wood**
<http://www.clivegregson.com/>

Danielson BEST OF GLOUCESTER COUNTY

Fire Records FIRECD168
 ★★★

An eclectic band that delivers the goods

Based in Gloucester County, New Jersey Danielson features nine core members who between them perform on banjo, organ, drums and even horns. It has certainly put them on a firm footing for launching their respective careers as the arrangements on all these songs seem as though the finest minds around have somehow been involved.

People's Party has that quality of being able to stay in the memory long after hearing it, mainly for two reasons, firstly it has a completely different sound from the rest and the second being that it changes its groove several times so you really don't know what to expect from them next, but what does come next is an element of quality which takes you by surprise even after hearing it for the third, fourth or tenth time.

Taking you on a whirlwind journey of emotions, Danielson demonstrate that they are a band which show a substantial interest in pursuing a successful career and are serious in creating music of sublime quality; this album is evident of this for sure.

Russell Hill
www.danielson.info



David Garrett ROCK SYMPHONIES

Decca Records 4782686
 ★★★

This will hopefully encourage you to broaden your attitudes to include something 'a little different'

In my youth I was switched-on to Bach by the producer Waldo De Los Rios and his album *Symphonies Of The Seventies*. Here in the 2000s it's the flamboyant posturing of poster-boy violinist David Garrett that will hopefully enthrall a younger, more street-cred audience. Strutting his stuff recently on the Alan Titchmarsh Show (I kid you not!) I was taken by the theatrics of it all and wondered how someone like this would be accepted by the 'folk' scene...then I thought has anyone seen Seth Lakeman recently? You see it's not only just the music that counts to the general public but that sense of showmanship and, dare I mention the words 'marketing-hype'. Well, bring it on, I'm sure the 'folk' world is man enough to take it with the inclusion of the 'folk' influenced sounds of Beethoven's 5th, Bach's *Tocatta* and Edvard Grieg's *Peer Gynt* all getting a shout. The ostentatious flourishes of say Andre Rieu (the Classical world's answer to James Last) are knocked for six here with genuine 'rock' attitude from Garrett's gifted fingers and the inclusion of well established, popular standards continuing that theme of 'folk' influences it is on the opening track (Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* no less) that proves an all together different beast turning the melody into an unorthodox wild Gypsy style dervish. I've long given up the thought process of trying to 'pigeon-hole' my tastes in music but have learned to embrace the wilder excesses of 'folk and acoustic music' as I see it. Perhaps some of you reading this review might be encouraged to broaden your attitudes to include something 'a little different'. If so, then I've succeeded in my job and I can die a happy man. **Pete Fyfe**

www.david-garrett.com



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