

Ben Walker
KILL OR CURE
Peak Recordings
★★★★

Easy listening
album certain to
relax you



Ben Walker illustrates his talented skills as a musician as he sings effortlessly on *KILL OR CURE*. Walker also plays piano, electric guitar and bouzouki, all to a high standard, which seems flawless. *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day* is a great song to put on every night before you retire for bed, as it unwinds and relaxes you. In a way, after listening to the peaceful song, I felt cleansed from my bad energies. Vocally, Walker has a soothing and calming voice, and he knows exactly how to use it to his benefit. I can definitely see a selection of songs such as *God* gaining airplay on radio stations such as Magic and BBC 2. Overall, this is a fine piece of work Ben has put together with the help of his band. **CB**
<http://www.benwalkersongs.com/>

Charlie Winston
HOBO
Real World
Recordings
3140162
★★★★

Full flavoured,
deep and rich
in quality, a British artist that is well
deserving of our support...

Charlie Winston has a lot to say about life, in song and elsewhere. There is much to say about his exciting style and his many musical influences. But if you've never heard of this English recording artist, you're awaiting one awesome ride.

Charlie Winston's debut studio album *MAKE WAY* was self-released in 2007. The big success from the debut was *I'm A Man*, a cover of the Spencer Davis Group's song that was soon picked up for a Volkswagen advert featuring a singing dog. This advertisement was eventually banned with many complaints to the RSPCA but the album was a debut success. The follow-up album *HOBO* was released in France in January 2009 and soon topped the French charts, before being certified platinum, and the single *Like A Hobo* topped their single charts on its release.

Now released in the UK, *HOBO* is unlikely to achieve such chart stardom here, where we have a chart dedicated to false pretences and a lack of true talent, but Radio Two should definitely focus on this delectable singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist.

HOBO opens with *In Your Hands* an uplifting, passionate and revealing track, a story of being restricted in life because of where you were born and a need for money to save your family. With a jazz feel featuring trumpet, trombone, tuba and French horn and an intense percussive attack that lends its influence to the vocal structure and depth of craft, this track is powerful throughout. Following this is the title track, which was also featured on the debut album and



Bill Ward
JUST FOR THE MOMENT
Songdog Records

★★★★

A thought-provoking, well-played album from one of the Lone Star state's best kept songwriting secrets

This album is a prospect to savour, since almost a decade has elapsed since Florida-bred, Houston-based Ward released a studio album. *CAUGHT IN THE ACT*, a live disc, surfaced a handful of years ago and from that collection he reprises the engaging up-tempo, childhood cowboy fantasy *Two Bit Palomino*—‘A supermarket stallion ride, Leather reins and plastic saddle.’

Stark reality and inventive fantasy are the extremities from which Ward has constructed his lyrics on this occasion, album opener *Hell Deep* being one of the former. Having leased some land to a mining company, after: ‘The shovels came, took what they needed,’ a barren terrain with poisoned watercourses was handed back. The moral, always read the small print. On the opposite margin, *Unicorn*—which lyrically references the Great Wall of China, and includes interludes of Eastern music—witnesses John F. Kennedy, James Dean, John Wayne and Van Gogh in conversation.

I recently spent a short time inside the Auschwitz boundary fence, and that of nearby Birkenau—the latter a killing factory of such magnitude it was simply impossible to comprehend. One of Ward's closest friends was born in Belsen, and *The Toast*—an on-the-money observation that references prejudice, memory and conscience, while alluding to continued genocide—opens with: ‘Some say nothing really happened there...from ‘33 to ‘45, But those who made it out alive, have a different point of view to share.’ *Last Call* recalls a dark of night seduction and the awkward morning after, while the almost six minute long title track could easily have been penned by Lennon & McCartney during their exploration of Eastern culture and music.

Apart from a couple of backing vocals, stringed instrument leads on three of the eleven cuts, plus drums and percussion throughout, Ward played all the other instruments heard on *JUST FOR THE MOMENT*. As for his vocal delivery, depending on the scenario painted, Ward growls or reaches for some infinite tenor note. With aplomb Bill Ward blurs the boundaries as he effortlessly glides from piano led ballads *Katy*, to back-beat powered folk-rock *Potter's Hands* and *First Stone*. **AW**

<http://www.songdogrecords.com/> • <http://www.myspace.com/therealbillward>



has an accomplished sound that cuts soul and jazz with folk and raw acoustic set. With soulful vocals that captivate and leave you under his mesmerising influence, you get trapped in the feel of this song, with harmonica accentuating just where you think it should. This album has such flavour, depth and is of such amazing quality, that many would fall over themselves to have a copy—if only they knew about him. With songs like *Kick The Bucket* and *My Life As A Duck*, the album focuses on variety and offers hilarity when needed, thought where wanted and timeless uplifting moments just as you drive too deep. Sensibilities reeling, every song on this album echo a true sense of enjoyment, in life, in creativity and in imagination, and leaves us as an audience with a delicious taste in our mouths. Lyrically, vocally and musically compelling, don't fail to enjoy and support this worthy British artist. **LB**
www.myspace.com/charliewinston

Daddy
FOR A SECOND TIME
Cedar Creek
CCM003
★★★★

And not before
time either!

Fronted by Will Kimbrough (musical aider and abetter of pretty much everybody from Rodney Crowell to Jimmy Buffett) and Tommy Womack (the man for whom the word sardonic could have been invented) and driven by a drummer, bassist and keyboard player who can count everyone from the Dixie Chicks to Emmylou Harris amongst their credits, Daddy is a band that knows what it wants to do and does it with power, passion and good old fashioned juke-jointing rock'n'roll.

With musical nods to everyone and everything from Elvis to Dylan, from the *Big Rock Candy Mountain* to *Brown Sugar*, Daddy tear it up from the get-go as they create a mighty sound. None of this would matter though if the songs weren't up to snuff but they are and then some. Largely Womack-Kimbrough



co-writes, they range from the Warren Zevon-esque *Early To Bed*, *Early To Rise*, a commencement address where Womack counsels the students, *inter alia*, to ‘wear a suit, learn how to smile...learn to go farther than the extra mile’ with a sneer that has to be heard to be believed to the up yours response to school bullies of *He Ain't Right* and the bluesy groove of *Love In A Bottle*. There's also an impassioned cover of Mike Millius' *Ballad Of Martin Luther King* and to finish things off, the Jeff Finlin-Kimbrough *Redemption Is A Mother's Only Son*, a truly lonesome tale of ‘a drunkard's second son.’

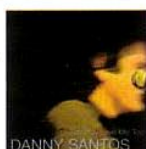
It's as a full-on powerhouse that Daddy excel though and on the evidence here they are one of, if not the, finest rock'n'roll bands around. Whether it's Kimbrough's searing guitar leads, John Deaderick's lonesome harp, Paul Griffith's Keith Moon-rivalling drumming or a host of other signifiers this is a band to be reckoned with. **JS**
www.myspace.com/daddytheband

Danny Santos
SAY YOU LOVE ME TOO
Brambus Records
★★

Catchy, relaxed
tunes by
Christian singer-
songwriter

Danny Santos poses a soothing and calming voice, which accompanied with a slow peaceful melody as found on *El Coyote* means you unwind till you find yourself laying down. *Hungry For Love* like the majority of the songs on the record are extremely catchy, and despite being my first time listening to the song, I found myself joining in on the chorus.

Haagen-Dazs Blue shows the listener how Danny is a funny man, singing about how he loves the ice cream, begging not to be fed any other ice cream: ‘Don't give me no darned old Blue Bell or that damned old Ben Jerry's.’ If you're after a laid-back (virtually horizontal) singer-songwriter, singing about love and joy then this album is for you. **CB**
<http://dannysantosmusic.com/>



David Olney & John Hadley
OL' DIZ
Deadbeat Records
★★★★

A folksy charm
embedded
recording, which
baseball fans will doubtlessly find
engaging and enlightening

If you've devoured the contents of Olney's CD liner booklets in the past you'll immediately recognise Hadley's name as a regular co-writer. This former University of Oklahoma arts professor, now Nashville-based, has also written with Kevin Welch, Jim Stafford and others.

Don't go expecting a conventional Olney album, as this is a side project featuring ‘themed’ songs co-penned by the duo for Ben Jones' one-man play *Old Diz: A Musical Baseball Story*. Back in the 1980s Jones played Cooter Davenport in the *Dukes Of Hazzard* television series, then served terms as a Democrat Congressman before returning to acting and writing. *Ol' Diz*, Arkansas born Jay Hanna ‘Dizzy’ Dean (1910-1974), was a Depression-era star pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals and led the 1934 World Series winning team. Nicknamed the Gas House Gang because of their dishevelled appearance and roughhouse tactics, Jay's younger brother Paul (aka Daffy) was also a member of that team.

On this bare-bones eleven-song recording, banjo or acoustic guitar accompany Olney and Hadley's vocals and narrations. Olney's voice should be well familiar to readers, and Hadley's voice possesses a similar lived-in quality. Employing a biographical or storytelling style there's recall of the passing of Jay's mother when he was aged seven: *Precious Memories To Alma Dean*, the Depression, President Roosevelt and baseball: *The Cards Are Pitchin' Dizzy Dean Today*, and the ‘hardball well-oiled baseball machine’: *The Gas House Gang. Heaven's Game* is a gospel styled number, the ballad *True To My Pat* recalls Dean's no-nonsense wife—‘He's my pride and joy, He's an overgrown boy, A kid with a ball and a glove,’ while in *Hall Of Fame*, which closes the album, Hadley references

