

...the new releases

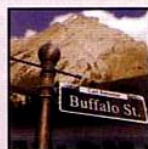
Cori Brewster BUFFALO STREET BR100

★★★★☆

As a veteran and leading exponent of Canada's storied folk heritage, Brewster's mastery of the music's many styles is unquestioned

Accomplished Canadian folk-country singer, Cori Brewster, returns with her fourth album, a wonderful collection of (mainly) self-penned songs inspired by her family and characters associated with them over the past hundred years or so in Banff. With an ear for a great melody and the storyteller's insight for spinning a compelling yarn, Brewster puts both and more, on display with such compelling songs as *My Familiar Sky*, inspired by long-distance love letters written almost eighty years ago, or *Diamond Hitch* which explores the lives of the pioneers of the Canadian Rockies more than 140 years ago. With vocal inflections that sound clear-as-mountain-stream authentic, Brewster's songs of love's travails and the struggle to find meaning in hard times, really strike home on tunes such as *Written In My Name*, *That Was Hell* and the wonderful *Take Me Back To Ireland* a Celtic-tinged song yearning for Ireland and inspired by her great-great grandfather who moved to Canada during the Irish famine of the 1800s.

The title tune examines the way that the original Stoney/Nakota inhabitants of Alberta were badly treated by the Canadian government as their freedom, lands and hunting rights were taken away from them. Told simply and without malice or bitterness this makes quite an impact and serves as a terrific introduction for a varied set that reveals folk music's rich and evolving traditions. She closes with *Across The Great Divide* a cover of the late, under-appreciated contemporary folk stylist, Kate Wolf (an influence on Nanci Griffith), and it's one of those songs that fits in seamlessly to the whole collection. Throughout Brewster's passionate vocals and expressive lyrics are true and affecting, moreover, the acoustic guitar work courtesy of Dave Clarke and Adam Dobres on this CD is nothing short of phenomenal. Highly recommended. **AC**
www.coribrewster.com



around a Califone record deck the lid of which is open and erect. As for *Wilson St.*, it's the South Austin hideaway where this East Village New York bred performer has lived, composed and planned for the past two years. *Bottletops*, the opening selection, is a pleasant pop-country tune wherein the narrator assesses her life. I can visualise Faye adopting a trout pout and Jagger swagger as she stomps her way through the ensuing and edgy *Runaround*—about a young girl and her boy trouble. The latter, with its memorable hook-laden chorus, is one of a pair of Will Sexton co-writes in this ten-song collection. Faye's all star band is composed of Sexton (guitar, bass, backing vocals), David Holt (guitars) and Rick Richards (drums), and *WILSON ST.* was produced by Mark Hallman and recorded at Congress House, his Deep South Austin facility. The (collaborative) credentials of Faye's backing trio reads like a who's who of contemporary roots musicians—Jesse Taylor, Rosie Flores, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Joe Ely, Tom Russell, Slaid Cleaves and more. The foregoing list should help you grasp the musical territory Faye makes her own. As if her trio didn't possess sufficient credibility, there are guest cameos from Gurf Morlix, Gabe Rhodes, John X Reed and others.

Almost all the characters in Faye's songs are searching for equilibrium in their lives, or expressing regret at its loss. Three wistful verses long *She's Gonna Go*, co-written with Austinite Phillips Gibbs, is a classic from the 'loss' mould. Charlie wrings every ounce of emotion from the ballad *Waitin' On Something*, while *Jersey Pride* furnishes Southern commentary on Northern attitude—a scenario Faye has personally experienced. From her 2006 debut *LAST KIDS IN THE BAR*, Charlie reprises *Lady Of The Leading Man*, and then winds down gently with the almost acoustic *Ready To Fall*. The album features tunes that merge country, blues, rock and pop references, and if you've succumbed to the musical spell cast by Lynn Miles' melodies, Carrie Newcomer's lyrics or Carlene Carter's early career brand of country-rock attitude, it's

a shoe-in that you'll also fall head-over-heels for Charlie Faye. I did ...

AW

<http://www.charlifaye.com/>
<http://www.myspace.com/charlifaye>

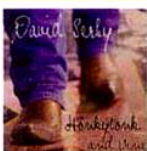
David Serby HONKYTONK AND VINE Harbor Groove

★★★★☆

With vocals a mixture of Alan Jackson and Lefty Frizzell, this guy could soon find himself as the next big thing in country music

Originally from Illinois but now residing in California, this self-penned third album by the highly-listenable David Serby is a peach which is top-notch and shows passion for creating quality country tracks that delivers far more than expected on more than one occasion.

Beginning with the happy-go-lucky atmosphere of *Country Club Couples*, this is very much in the feel-good nature that Jimmy Buffett creates with his Gulf and Western tracks. It has a 1940s country sound about it; pure and sweet instrumentation which could be performed in front of a live crowd without much hesitation or problem at all. With a traditional hoe-down sound that could have been played at a Friday Night Opry fifty years ago, *The Grass is Always Greener* keeps true to the instrumental style laid down by the likes of Roy Acuff or Lefty Frizzell as Serby heaps his own interpretation on this song whilst maintaining an awesome level of quality. *For Cryin' Out Loud* certainly is a mixture of genres; traditional country, Cajun and even the odd sprinkling of bluegrass is included in its mix but to great success. It rolls along quite stonkingly, and at no point does its sound become distorted due to the diverse musical merging. Ideally a track to get a crowd dancing vividly, it certainly does that for this listener. With an end-of-the-night feel about its three-minute duration, the ever-so-touching *I Only Smoke When I'm Drinking* has both the appeal of the classic country title and pedal steel playing which just makes the



heart melt away. With a Lefty Frizzell groove, the magic of an Alan Jackson and a Dwight Yoakam feel to it this is bound to be one such track that will end up on the playlists at many a honky-tonk. A country gentleman that surpasses the label of one-off as each and every song on this thirteen-track album should be played on the radio not just in the States but also here in the UK. David Serby is one guy who I would bet my Stetson on to be a success story. **RH**
www.davidserby.com
www.myspace.com/davidserby

Ernie Thacker THE HANGMAN Pinacastle Records PRC 1167

★★★★★

A beautifully crafted album made with love and patience

Ernie Thacker moved to Pinacastle Records and started recording *THE HANGMAN* in 2006 but before the album was completed he was involved in a horrific, near fatal road accident in which he lost both legs and a part of one lung. It has taken two years for Ernie to recover sufficiently to return to the studio and complete this album. Full credit to Ernie's band members, Matthew Thacker (bass and tenor vocal), Dick Roach (banjo and baritone vocal) and Brandon Shuping (mandolin), collective known as Route 23, who have waited patiently for his recovery so that they could complete the album with him. Ernie plays guitar and sings lead and they are joined by guest musician, Mr. John Rigsby on fiddle.

The programme is made up of a couple of ballads, *The Hangman* and *The Ballad Of Old Charlie Dill*, the pained story of a family break-up in *Friday Once Again*, and an excellent rendition of the Louvin Brothers' *I Wish You Knew*, with Ernie singing baritone and Matthew singing tenor. Ernie was a great admirer of the late Keith Whitley and he pays handsome tribute to him in the self composed *Keith, How Many*. There is an interesting take on Dwight Yoakam's



This Drinkin' Will Kill Me, played and sung at breakneck speed, with a revival of Kristofferson's *Sunday Morning Coming Down* sounding as if it has always been a bluegrass staple! *Rollin' On These Rubber Wheels* is a traditional number, and of course, no bluegrass album would be complete without the inclusion of at least one gospel song, this time titled *Church Upon The Hill*, written by D.D and Matt Thacker.

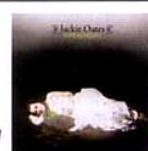
Ernie Thacker and Route 23 sing and play bluegrass in a traditional style refraining from including drums, percussion or any other instruments which were not a part of the music of the founding fathers of the music. Without exception, Ernie and members of his band prove themselves to be excellent musicians; each allowed opportunities to take centre stage to strut their stuff. Guest musician, John Rigsby, makes a valuable contribution on fiddle and lovers of a more traditional approach to bluegrass are sure to find much of what they hear on this release to their liking. **LK**
www.pinacastle.com

Jackie Oates HYPER- BOREANS Unearthed/One Little Indian

★★★★

Traditional-styled English folk with some contemporary influences

Hyperboreans is the third outing by Jim Moray's little sister and he produced the recording. This year Devon-based Oates picked up the BBC Radio 2 (Folk) Horizon Award for best newcomer, an award Jim scored five years ago. Oates isn't a songwriter and this acoustic collection includes seven traditional songs which she arranged variously with Jim, James Dumbleton or Alasdair Roberts. It appears that the latter traditional folk performer penned the album title track specially for Jackie—in Greek mythology the Hyperboreans were a mythical people who lived far to the north. *May The Kindness*, the closing track and a tender song of parting, was composed by Exeter-based writer Dave Wood, while Phyl Lobyll penned the music that accompanies the late Henry Lawson's poem *Past Caring*. The curve ball in this traditional English folk-flavored pack is a cover of *Birthday* by late 1980s/early 1990s Icelandic alternative rock band the Sugarcubes. **AW**
<http://www.jackieoates.co.uk>
<http://www.myspace.com/jackieoates>



Joe Solo MUSIC FROM POTTERS FIELD CDLP 2009

★★★★★

13 Songs about WWI as sung by the combatants from a Yorkshire folk troubadour

Since leaving the security of pop-punk band Lithium Joe in 2001, Joe Solo has been a bit of a permanent fixture on the North Yorkshire folk circuit. He released his

