

## NEW RELEASES

Williams, Geoffrey Richardson, Perry White, Lee Russell, Annie Whitehead, Tim Edey, Brenda Power and Craig McEvoy.

The arresting melodies from beginning to end showcase the stellar studio musicians, as well as spotlighting Atkins and his co-producers Richardson and Russell's arranging prowess. *The Pace* is a mid-tempo ballad with incredible vocal layering, an acoustic lead, and piano riffs. Tight two-part harmonies are woven into a fabric of acoustic guitars, haunting harmonica, melodeon, fiddle and a tight rhythm section on *Ride*. The songs, lyrically, explore human frailties and relationships with great sensitivity and an innate honesty that suggests a personal involvement. I was certainly taken by *Every Road I Take*, a song that certainly resonated with me, but even songs inspired by specific people in his life, such as *Tom*, which questions why Alister's grandfather, a Second World War fighter pilot, took his own life a few years after the war finished, or *Soul Mates In Time* all about his late father have a universal connection to them that we can all associate with. A compelling album that I cannot

recommend too highly. **Alan Cackett**

[www.alisteratkin.com](http://www.alisteratkin.com)

### Jack Tempchin LIVE AT TALES FROM THE TAVERN

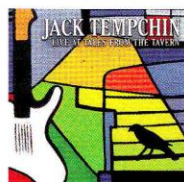
REP036

★★★★

*This CD/DVD*

*combo features a September 2011 solo performance by Jack Tempchin*

In early 2013 the Santa Ynez, California-based concert series TALES FROM THE TAVERN reaches ten years of age. Launched at Mattel's Tavern in Los Olivos, The Maverick Tavern has been home to the series for a number of years. Tempchin's latest solo recording, a CD/DVD package, breaks new ground for this highly respected concert series. Past live releases from The Tavern—a Jon Dee Graham album, a pair from the estimable Michael Smith, as well as their Vol.1 compilation and more—have been audio only. Famed music photographer Henry Diltz (Modern Folk Quartet) was director of the four-man camera crew who



filmed this DVD.

Tempchin's 'exactly as they were written' voice and acoustic guitar CD renditions of the eleven songs runs for a duration of thirty-seven minutes, while at fifty-five minutes the DVD includes Jack's humorous between song musings on being a musician who has pretty much avoided the music businesses machinations, on friendship, on his relentlessly endless (wink, wink) search for fame, (repeatedly) falling in love and the songwriter's muse, and they are spot on. Some would judge Tempchin's narratives as marginally cynical. I'd counter that his grasp of life's realities is truly level-headed. The running order of the songs displayed on the rear of the three-way fold-out card liner varies on the DVD, in that the second and third listed selections—the slide guitar blues *Bender* and the bittersweet *Loneliest Piano In Town*—exchange places.

During Tempchin's September 2011 appearance at The Tavern, he referenced his 'Song A Day' postings to YouTube and from that project he reprised *Lovers Like Us*, the totally focused political commentary

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## NEW RELEASES

*Jesus And Mohammed* and the sly *Amy*. Of course Tempchin's name will forever be linked with The Eagles and band alumni Glenn Frey. Jack opens with the Frey co-write *The One You Love*, and, later, covers their *You Belong To The City*—written specifically for an episode of the television show *MIAMI VICE*. In 1985 Glenn took the song to number 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart. Jack also performs *Peaceful Easy Feeling* which The Eagles covered on their 1972, recorded in London, England self-titled debut album, and the Rob Strandlund co-write *Already Gone* which opened *ON THE BORDER* (1974). Jack's *Slow Dancing*, a 1977 hit for Johnny Rivers, also receives an airing.

**Arthur Wood**

[www.peacefuleasyfeeling.com](http://www.peacefuleasyfeeling.com)

### Jimmy C. Williams RIDE THE TRAINS WITH JIMMY C

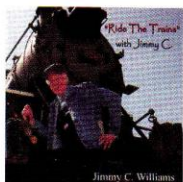
BSW Records CD  
71512

★★★★

*This album rekindled memories of the late Boxcar Willie*

Like Boxie, Oklahoma-born Jimmy C. Williams has perfected the art of imitating the sound of steam train whistles. A former aircraft pilot, and train engineer he has been following his muse as a country singer for more than 30 years without achieving much success. But obviously his love for the old sounds he heard growing up has fortified him. For a time he worked in Nashville pitching his songs, which were almost certainly out of step with the modern sounds of Music Row. His father and grandfather were both Oklahoma cowboys and he can recall the cattle drives with dreams of one day becoming a cowboy himself. That was not to be, but it does mean that he brings a great deal of credibility to these classic songs of Americana.

Recorded in Nashville, the production is first-class with such top-notch Music City players as Glen Duncan, Larry Franklin, Mike Johnson, Scotty Sanders, Danny Parks, Buddy Hyatt and Jeff King all being involved. The song choices are perhaps a little too predictable—"Freight Train," "Mystery Train," "Wreck Of the Old 97," "Wabash Cannonball," etc—the only 'new' song being Teddy Gentry's "Ride The Train" which is an excellent opener. The emphasis



is very much on the sing-along type of train songs, which is fine I guess, but it would've been better to have seen a more adventurous approach. There are literally hundreds of train songs around that are deserving of being brought to younger music lover's attention. Maybe next time?

**Alan Cackett**

[www.bsw-records.com](http://www.bsw-records.com)

### Kontiki Suite ON SUNSET LAKE

Self-released

★★★★

*Authentic West Coast sound from the West Coast of England*



I first discovered Kontiki Suite when they appeared at the SummerTyne Festival in Gateshead last summer, and they instantly won me over with their Byrds-influenced take on the West Coast sound. Men of a certain age will immediately poo-hoo Kontiki Suite because they really do wear their influences on their buckskin fringed sleeves, but this sound never did Buffalo Springfield, Big Star or Teenage Fanclub any harm. Every song on the album is full of sun-drenched harmonies, organs, Mellotron Rickenbacker and 6-string jingle-jangle guitars and even some delightful string arrangements, all conjuring up a summer of love that the band are far too young to know anything about.

With not a single bad track on the album I really have to have my arm twisted to find highlights for you, but *See You In The Morning* (Elwood's Theme) is a perfect example of the Kontiki Suite's sound, with a mystical Eastern guitar winding its way through a delicious slice of country-pop from Laurel Canyon and a story that will melt the hardest of hearts. Now I'm picking and choosing my favourite songs—*Moonlight* is especially gorgeous and speaks from the perspective of a parent bidding farewell to a grown-up child, which is a neat twist as a love song.

If I have one disappointment it's that *Open Up And Smile* doesn't even break the two minute barrier, which is such a shame as the hook and melody are as infectious as nicotine and had me desperately wanting more. The same can't be said of *Magic Carpet Ride* which comes in at a whopping 8 minutes 30, but not one second is wasted on this wonderfully meandering song that bears absolutely nothing in common with

the Steppenwolf song of the same name (mercifully). Like the very best of records, *ON SUNSET LAKE* is listenable on several levels; obviously as charming background music, or on headphones while sitting on public transport, or (my preference) as the soundtrack to a VW campervan trip to the beach as the sun is setting and the love of your life is sitting next to you, holding your hand. **Alan Harrison**

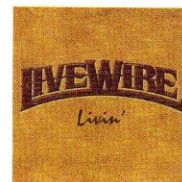
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### Livewire LIVIN'

Way Out West  
Records WOWR 004

★★★☆

*Country-rockin' band hoping for a break*



This six-piece band from Missouri has been around since the mid-1990s, and following being named *2009 Colgate Country Showdown Regional Finalists*, released a self-titled EP which lay the foundations for this full album. This is very much standard modern-day country-rock with a mix of original band numbers and a handful of songs from such Music Row writers as Lisa Carver, Johnny Bulford and Chris Young. The boys come out of the gates strong with *Don't Nothin' Take My Breath* the opener, which has a stadium-worthy sound and a great driving rhythm with electric guitars and fiddle very much to the fore. Lead vocals are handled by Andy Eutsler, who wrote three of the songs here, including the fiddle-driven mid-tempo title track. It's a great slice-of-life song, the kind that country music is renowned for and a definite cut above the norm. They maintain the softer, subtler approach with *Better*, a well-written ballad with again fiddle very much to the fore and emotional vocals with roof-raising harmonies on the chorus.

The rhythmic *Whiskey Sunday*, is a sad-edged song with an upbeat arrangement, though the chorus is so damn infectious you just can't help but be seduced by it. Even more impressive is the Garth Brooks-like ballad *History* and the catchy *Lies* that has recently been released as a single. Livewire is a versatile and talented group with a refined sound that blends contemporary country and rock styles with great panache, but are they different enough to make a major breakthrough?