

## ...the new releases

the song shines through in his world-weary rendition.

Louis Riel is the exception rather than the rule in Hawkins musical canon, since it deals practically verbatim with an episode in Canadian history. Performed by Waters it recalls the politician, founder of Manitoba province and resistance leader who was hanged in 1885 for high treason. Hawkins dabbled with drugs and underpinned by a jazz/blues melody the lyrical images in Royal Boost and Frankly Stoned veer on the hallucinogenic. The frankly weird Christopher's Movie Matinee and the autobiographical Stone Solid Blue share a similar wellspring. On the other hand there's the utterly conventional Alison, a melancholic reflection on love that's supported by a hook-laden melody.

Collection producer Ian Tamblyn contributes Tell Me That Story and Midnight Gambler, and sixty-nine year old Hawkins closes this two disc tribute with a reading of his (short) poem Memories. Mainly contemporaneous in terms of subjective matter, lyrically speaking, Hawkins throws his net far and wide. That said, it's hard to reconcile that the same person penned Alison and Frankly Stoned. Hawkins' lyrics don't appear in the liner booklet but can be found at [http://www.wmhawkins.com/lyrics/songs\\_one.html](http://www.wmhawkins.com/lyrics/songs_one.html) AW [http://www.truenorthrecords.com/Albums.php?album\\_id=439](http://www.truenorthrecords.com/Albums.php?album_id=439)

**Ben Winship & David Thompson**  
**FISHING MUSIC VOL II**  
Snake River Records SRR-123  
★★★★

*Gone Fishing—The Concept Album*

Not only is this album of 16 songs an oddity because all of the songs are about fish, fishing or rivers, but it's actually Volume II! Individually some of the tracks are quite ambiguous and on first listening some, like *Mayfly*, *I Caught a Keeper* and *Fishing in the Dark* could be love songs using fishing as an analogy; but they're not; they really are songs about catching fish. *The Winding Stream* does stand out from a very average crowd because of the sultry voice of Aoife O'Donovan who may be worth searching out elsewhere.

It's no surprise that the old Bing Crosby standard *Gone Fishing* turns up here; but in the nicest possible way the duet between Tim and Mollie O'Brien sounds like it would not have been out of place on a cheesy 1970s Saturday night light entertainment show. There a couple of very nice instrumentals that bear repeated listening, *Fishin' in the Wind* is a clever acoustic guitar and mandolin tune and *Opening Day* is a very pleasant Dobro/sax/piano/guitar tune that could and should accompany a helicopter shot of a long river full of fishermen on a sunny Autumnal day. The rest of the songs and tunes all sound out of kilter with each other as some are folk, some countryish and there's even an Irish jig thrown in for

good measure plus a couple of swing tunes, but nothing actually lingers in the memory.

At times it can be difficult reviewing CDs and I'm capable of feeling guilty as I have no musical ability whatsoever. GONE FISHING I & II are obviously labours of love by Ben Winship and David Thompson but I'm not sure who is expected to buy an album like this. **AH** [www.fishingmusic.com](http://www.fishingmusic.com)

**Amy Savin**  
**AMY SAVIN**  
Self-released  
844667014648  
★★★★

*Great songs that will make you want to hear more—much more*



Amy Savin is a singer-songwriter from Toronto, Canada. Music has always been Amy's first love, taking up piano lessons at the age of three. Amy grew up singing in church choirs but preferred writing her own music in the confines of her own home. She never thought that music would be a career, to her it was just a hobby. It was recording a five-song demo with some school friends that made Amy become more serious about music.

*Truest Friend* opens the EP and is a delicate song with rich vocals. Amy combines country, pop and folk together to create a charming sound. *Hallelujah* is certainly an inspirational song with heartfelt lyrics that are certainly worth a close listen to. *Your Time* has a more modern feel and is a faster paced song than the previous two songs, and has also appeared in a Hollywood film. Amy's voice seems to suit both slow ballads and faster numbers equally. *Hopelessly Lost* is a terrific song backed up by some stunning instrumentation with Amy's vocals warm and soulful. After hearing these five splendid songs listeners will certainly want to hear more from this talented young lady. **SH**

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

**Ashley Harris**  
**UNFINISHED DREAMS**  
Fine Line Records  
884501196826  
★★★★★  
*A stunning collection of songs*



Ashley Harris is a talented American singer-songwriter who has already released two albums *THE BEST IS YET TO COME* and *CHANGE MY HEART*; both albums received praise from critics. In 2008 Ashley released an EP of Christmas songs, enlarging her already enormous fan base. With her new album *UNFINISHED DREAMS* Ashley has changed her musical direction slightly and drawn on many of her own musical influences including Martina McBride and Amy Grant. The songs on this new album are positive in content and blend country-pop with roots and acoustic music. *Alright* is a light bouncy song with a strong modern country feel. The lyrics are refreshing and insightful, making this a catchy

radio friendly song. *Better Than The Dream* is a polished song with quality vocals. *Someday Somewhere Somebody* is a slower song with a gentle feel, Ashley's vocals are electrifying on this terrific number. *Let Me In* is a fast paced modern country-pop song, her vocals are infectious and a real pleasure to listen to. Fans of good quality country with a modern sound will really appreciate this song. Ashley really hits the mark with her slow songs and passionate ballads. They are so beautiful to listen to, the lyrics are worth a close listen to. With this album Ashley Harris has put together a stunning collection of songs that all allow her to show off her amazing vocals. **SH** [www.ashleyharris.com](http://www.ashleyharris.com)

**Dave Gunning**  
**WE'RE ALL LEAVING**  
Wee House Of Music Co.  
★★★★

*Nova Scotia folkie Dave Gunning delivers a winner*



At last year's Cape Breton's Celtic Colours International Festival, contemporary acoustic folk musicians Gunning, Karine Polwart, James Keelaghan, Lori Watson, Rose Cousins and David Francey were sequestered for four days in an old convent in the picturesque harbour town of Baddeck, charged with the task of composing songs to be performed at a themed concert titled *Coming Home*. Recently reviewed in *Maverick*, Keelaghan's album *HOUSE OF CARDS* featured five Baddeck compositions, and three more appear on Gunning's *WE'RE ALL LEAVING*.

This is Gunning's seventh album and the fourth consecutive title to be produced by Jamie Robinson. On the eleven-track collection,

there are six Dave n' Jamie penned tunes. Their *Smith's Rock* opens the album and finds a hard-scrabble farmer reflect upon a lifetime spent toiling on his land. Gunning toured the UK a couple of years ago with New Brunswick based musicians, Jessica Rhaye and bluesman Matt Andersen. Written by Matt and Dave, *The Colour Of Gone* focuses on lovers parted by an ocean. Believing he was conceived: 'With spare pieces that don't fit right' the narrator in *Made On A Monday* muses upon a life that has never run smoothly—just like some cars manufactured on the first weekday. Also co-written by Gunning/Robinson, Nova Scotia bred folk musicians John Allen Cameron (d. 2006) and Stan Rogers (d. 1983) are fondly remembered in *Big Shoes*.

In the Keelaghan co-write *Before The Morning Sun* a young farmer forfeits his life after taking the law into his hands when the bank forecloses on the family farm following 'two dry years.' Co-written with Canadian/Scot Francey, *Ashen Town* paints a striking but stark portrait of the long abandoned church—'All the colours congregate in shades of grey'—general store and abandoned buildings in a once vibrant settlement. Co-written with Cousins, who provides a backing vocal, in *As Far As This Town Goes* school playground friends from a small town meet years later. The lines: 'I left in a hurry after school, I'm pretty sure you stayed' set the scene. Begun in Baddeck, the album title song was completed via e-mails between Dave's base in Pictou County, Nova Scotia and Karine Polwart's home in Southern Scotland. In the vein of *As Far As This Town Goes* not only does *We're All Leaving* focus upon those who leave and those who remain in the context of birthplace,

**Chuck Prophet**  
**LET FREEDOM RING!**  
Cooking Vinyl  
★★★★

*A summer well spent as Chuck Prophet romps home from Mexico with a fantastic release*

Chuck Prophet may have made his name back in the 1980s as part of Green on Red, but solo success has been assured since 1990's *BROTHER ALDO*. The Californian has increasingly demonstrated a penchant for the British super-groups of the 1960s and once again draws inspiration from the period with the near on perfect summer rock of *LET FREEDOM RING!*

Having critically peaked with 2007's *SOAP AND WATER*, Prophet has set himself up for a fall with his latest release. He penned the eleven-song strong record during an extremely warm San Franciscan summer, with Iggy and Thin Lizzy blasting out of his stereo. He then made his way down to Mexico City with a handful of musicians to spend eight days laying down the tracks at Estudio 19. The result, a sublime journey through the highs and low of a blindingly warm summer's day. Prophet is an interestingly versatile vocalist, who is able to lend himself well to any situation. Though the album consists in the main of dance floor romps, *Barely Exist* is without question the album's defining piece. A talk-sung ballad, Prophet demonstrates an otherwise hidden tenderness that is truly unforgettable.

Though *Barely Exist* walks away with the heart and soul, Prophet clearly feels most at home with the killer upbeat. Strangely pitching his sound somewhere between the Strokes and the Coral, Prophet succeeds in not even failing to please once amongst the eleven tracks. *Hot Talk* is easily the weakest of his repertoire, but barely warrants criticism. If *SOAP AND WATER* set a high bar, Prophet was more than willing to try and jump it. *LET FREEDOM RING!* is a well-rounded, interesting record with distinct vocals from an intriguing musician. Be sure to add it to your collection, as this is a record your friends will all be talking about. **JW** [www.chuckprophet.com](http://www.chuckprophet.com)





## ...the new releases

but also relative to our allotted time on Earth.

WE'RE ALL LEAVING is a memorable, almost thematic, collection of songs, one that will undoubtedly see Gunning reap further Canadian folk music awards. **AW**  
<http://www.davegunning.com/>  
<http://www.myspace.com/davegunning>

### John Gorka SO DARK YOU SEE

Red House Records  
★★★★  
New Jersey  
bred musician  
musically

'smashes the ball out of the park'

A rural, possibly autumnal scene, Claremont Near Ascutney, by New England based painter/musician Tom Pirozzoli, graces the entire cover of the SO DARK YOU SEE liner booklet. It is Gorka's fourth release of the new millennium and Ron Genadek has been involved in the production of all of them, in this instance as the musician's co-producer.

A fifteen song, sixteen track package, but they're not all Gorka originals. The New Jersey bred folkie begins with an interpretation of Robert Burns' *Ae Fond Kiss*, except that it's listed (everywhere) as *A Fond Kiss!* An error sufficient to spark an international incident! Gorka often employs a lyrical structure whereby the contents of the ensuing line are established by the preceding one. An example you ask?—'I can't get over it, Better go around, Can't get around it, I better go down, Can't get under, I better go up, And start all over again.' While the foregoing lyric appears cryptic, it's clarified by the insight that *Can't Get Over It* was inspired by the 'unexpected loss of a friend.'

Where Gorka's autobiographical early career offering *I'm From New Jersey* was laced with humour some self-deprecating, its new sibling *Ignorance & Privilege*, coupled with an Eliza Gilkyson harmony vocal, delivers a more serious and factual portrait of his younger years and initial foray into music. Prior to a performance of the late Utah Phillips' *I Think Of You*, a song whose focus is adoration, the dulcet tones of Austin, Texas DJ Larry Monroe enquires: 'That song there, I really hear it sung and would love to hear it coming out of John Gorka. John do you hear me now?' In *Where No Monument Stands* which (immediately) follows, Gorka's music supports the words of Kansas bred poet William Stafford. Stafford was a lifelong pacifist and the song appears on the soundtrack of *Every War Has Two Losers*, a documentary about the poet, his life and beliefs. SO DARK YOU SEE also finds Gorka covering the blues number *Trouble In Mind* and a personal favourite Michael Smith's *The Dutchman*.

The Gorka originals include, a first, the instrumentals *Fret One*—acoustic and electric guitars supported by bass and percussion, and the banjo only *Fret Not*. One of three songs featuring Lucy Kaplansky's voice, *Night Into Day* is a commentary on the times we live in, while *Live By The Sword* rebukes those who profit by their (evil) deeds. His Christian name



is Wyatt, and from afar *Mr. Chambers* worships a woman named Eliza—given the opportunity to engage her in conversation shyness envelopes both of them. Gorka's snapshot of human frailty is closer to the truth than we'd care to admit. Album closer *Diminishing Winds* finds the narrator enumerate his night-time and daytime delights, and the lyric furnishes the album title. **AW**  
<http://www.johngorka.com/>  
<http://www.myspace.com/johngorka>

### Delbert McClinton & Dick 50 ACQUIRED TASTE

New West  
Records-NW6174  
★★★★

Not much else  
needs to be said except that this is  
pure Delbert McClinton!

The album is called *ACQUIRED TASTE* and inside the sleeve it just says: '...nobody likes me at first,' well if this album was your first time of hearing this legend then it may take you a few songs to get into it but by the time you reach the last four or five tracks I am sure you will be liking him. The album opens with *Mama's Little Baby* which is a reworking of the children's tune *Shortnin' Bread*, and Delbert goes very heavy blues on *I Need To Know* with Kevin McKendree playing some really gutsy blues guitar alongside Delbert's harmonica. *People Just Love To Talk* is a wonderfully toe-tapping jazz track with fine saxophone from Dennis Taylor, and the fantastic keyboard playing of McKendree supports Delbert's superbly gritty vocals on gorgeous ballads such as *Until Then*, the quite exquisite *Wouldn't You Think (Should've Been Here By Now)* and the lounge jazz styled *She's Not There Anymore*.

Not forgetting the excellent Rob McNelley (guitar), Lynn Williams (drums) and Steve Mackey (bass) who make up the rest of Dick 50 along with McKendree, this is another quality blues album from the great Delbert McClinton. **DK**  
[www.delbert.com](http://www.delbert.com)

### Downpilot THEY KIND OF SHINE

Tapete Records  
★★★★☆

Third from DIY  
studio wizard

Downpilot is the current recording project of one Paul Hiraga, seen elsewhere bolstering the ranks of post-punks *Breaking Circus* and purveyors of Big Star power-pop the Mings, and *THEY KIND OF SHINE* is the third record to be put out under this moniker. It stems from a previous project, producing Wedding Present bassist Terry de Castro's *A CASA VERDE* record, for which Hiraga had hand-built the bulk of the studio equipment. A more recent trip into said *ad hoc* studio saw the recording and crafting of this most recent LP, on which the majority of the playing is provided solely by Hiraga with some vocal support from cohort Jeff Brown and the odd appearance from outside musicians.



### Exene Cervenka SOMEWHERE GONE

Bloodshot BS166

★★★★

American Punk Goddess discovers her sensitive side

Even before I'd listened to *SOMEWHERE GONE* I knew that I was going to like it; as in my humble opinion the mighty Bloodshot Records from Chicago have never, ever released a bad album. Then I did a little bit of research on Ms Cervenka who apparently was the singer in Noisy American Punk band X, who influenced many of the original Britpop bands; especially the early Blur albums. I was aware of them but always thought them too 'shouty-shouty' for my delicate ears. Exene Cervenka has a wonderful voice and this; her second solo album, is a blend of folk, Americana and New-Country very much in the Lucinda Williams and Neko Case genre; which is no bad thing at all. Played solidly now for two days, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a poor track.

Exene's punk fans will burst into tears when they hear the catchy *Where Do We Go From Here?* and *Walk Me Across The Night*. *Somewhere Train*, *Fevered Paper* and *Willow Tree* are all three, pure honky-tonk country songs with a stiletto edge that Bloodshot Records are famous for sneaking into the public domain. There also two absolutely stunning tracks that you simply must hear, *Honest Mistake* and *Somewhere Gone* which both feature some amazing cello complimenting Exene's pleading voice and are unquestionably influenced by Leonard Cohen somewhere in their construction. **AH**  
[www.exenecervenka.com](http://www.exenecervenka.com)



Mostly though, this is Hiraga's record, and there's a level of intimacy to be expected from the deeply personal approach he took. This is rich and warm indie-Americana, shades of emo and bedsit pop, closed in but longing for wider spaces. You can hear the dust as it settles on the handmade equipment that hums and buzzes long into the night. And there's a remarkable sense of cohesion, the playing all fits together tightly and packs a greater punch for it. On *THEY KIND OF SHINE*, Hiraga proves himself as capable running a studio as he is at crafting songs, and the fact that he has already established himself as a skilled songsmith should speak volumes.

AlexC  
[www.downpilot.com](http://www.downpilot.com)

### Eileen Rose & the Holy Wreck LUNA TURISTA

Floating World  
Records-  
FREEM5020

★★★★☆

COME THE STORM was loved by many,  
but I think this new release may have  
even surpassed that great album.

Eileen Rose writes some fantastic songs and since settling in Nashville has turned a little closer towards country whilst still keeping her rock undertones. She has written all but one of the songs on this superb CD, the one cover being a wonderfully tender version of *Luckenbach, Texas* on which she duets with Joshua Hedley. Another terrific country tune is *Trouble From Tomorrow* with Joshua adding fiddle plus some fine guitar picking from Rich Gilbert. Eileen can sing some truly wonderful slow tunes, like the beautiful *Third Time's A Charm* and *Silver Ladle*. She also tackles some sad personal losses on *Sad Ride Home*, the lyrics of this song really puts life into perspective.

Known for her powerhouse live shows and passionately intense vocal delivery, Eileen does not disappoint



on this CD with the brilliant opener *Simple Touch Of The Hand* and the highly explosive rock'n'roller *All These Pretty Things* that builds superbly with the electrifying guitar playing of Gilbert coupled with the pulsating excellence of Nate 86 Stalfa on drums, both mainstays in the magnificent Holy Wreck Band. The song is like a powder keg of gunpowder just waiting to go off, and that it does as Rich gives a manically chain-sawing guitar solo before Eileen's vocals get louder and vehemently vociferous as she shouts at the end: 'I'm Sorry,' truly awesome track that bridges the gap between rock and country. Brilliant album. **DK**  
[www.eileenrose.com](http://www.eileenrose.com)

### The Larson Sisters HOUSEWIVES & BUTCHER KNIVES

Self-released  
884501180795

★★★★

Stunning vocals  
really bring the seven songs on this  
album to life

The seven songs featured on this album are all amazing both lyrically and vocally. The album starts off with the title song *Housewives & Butcher Knives*. The lyrics are powerful and strong and the vocals are edgy and really pack a punch. This song feels modern but not too modern that fans of more traditional country music won't enjoy it. *Lay Your Burden Down* continues in a similar vein. *Turn Around* is another great song with strong vocals. There is a certain amount of warmth in Stephanie and Rachael's vocals and that warmth seems to ooze out through the songs they sing. *Stay* sees the mood slowed right down to almost a crawling pace. *Stay* is one of those songs that listeners will really cherish. The music is peaceful allowing the girls' vocals to really shine. *Enough* is a classic singer-songwriter song. It is so easy to see why these girls have been compared to Patty Griffin after

