

...the new releases

Winter A MATTER OF TIME

East Central One

★★★★★

A picturesque view of Winter's world—full of passion and overloaded with talent...

The Swedish band Winter is fronted by the charismatic lead singer and guitarist AnnaLena Winter, with new guitarist Fredrik Lidin, Abbe Abrahamsson on drums and Johan Stromberg on bass. A MATTER OF TIME features eleven self-penned songs focused on love, lust, knowing somebody and being somebody, and letting people go.

The opening track *A Matter Of Time* is a hearty song, brimming with soulful grainy vocals and a strong sense of direction, with a catchy chorus and armed with a tone that is both contemplative and compelling. *Face On The Wall* is a sensational track about someone lingering long after they're gone and unifies rock-pop whilst drawing on an Americana influence. *Cccc'mon* is tripping on a country vibe, and with the powerful driving vocals from AnnaLena accompanied by guitars, you could see this track surely moving the crowds at festivals world-wide.

Crazy has to be my number one track on the album, the way the vocals roll from her tongue is both clever and full of style, really drawing on the band's intentional inability to be classified. They draw on so many influences, but all creating driving songs, powerfully captivating and able to rock-out a crowd or move an individual. *Real Gone* is a slower take on Winter's sound and is a positive move to explore another aspect of their act but for me isn't half as attractive as the rockier vibes. *Pretender* is another one of my favourites—who knows what influenced this song, other than the whole idea of being the first girl on the moon, but it makes for an interesting and really enjoyable track on the album, along with the following track *Run* which really bewitches the audience. This song focuses on being happy with yourself as you are, and her grainy and passionate vocals really bring AnnaLena's story to life.

Overall this album is immense—a picturesque view of Winter's world full of momentum, brimming with style and passion and overloaded with talent. **LB**
www.thewinterband.eu



ALL THE SMALL THINGS provides a taster into an album that personally, I think will be a fantastic hit. If the songs on the full album are as good as these three songs, McClurg is going to thrive. The gifted singer-songwriter was born and raised in Canada and is best known for her show-stopping performances which is not at all hard to believe after hearing these three songs. Each one is very different from each other and it shows McClurg really is a talented singer who I believe will go a long way with her music. What a great mini-album. **AmyW**

Stefano Frollano SENSE OF YOU

Self-released

★★★★

Amazingly rich production, run of the mill lyrics

Italian musician Stefano Frollano is a fan of West Coast (rock) music, in particular Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. A published author, his books have focused on his musical heroes. A veteran of Italian rock bands, SENSE OF YOU is Stefano's sophomore solo outing and he penned the ten songs featured. Frollano's voice is heard on the forty second (reprise of) *Hello!* which launches the album, while the full, almost six-minute long, acoustic guitar led version with Gabriella Paravati lead vocal (tantamount to) closes the collection. The disc actually contains twelve selections, the bonus being a radio edit of *The Dance*. Frollano is assisted by keyboard player James Raymond (David Crosby's son) and the electric and slide guitars of Jeff Pevar (Crosby, Pevar and Raymond) as well as a slew of Italian session musicians and a coterie of female vocalists.

Stefano's lyrics are in English and



he sings with barely a hint of accent. That said, his words tend to focus on love and love alone—welcomed or spurned. On the second selection (*She Won't Fly Away*, Daria Venuto is Stevie for Frollano's Lindsey. An antidote to the mainly electric guitar-led anthems, there's a few acoustic oriented selections such as *Northern Lights* and *Memory Of Your Love*. The foregoing should give you a good idea of the musical content. **AW**
<http://www.stefanofrollano.com/>

Ruth Minnikin and her Bandwagon DEPEND ON THIS

Songmill Music

★★★★

It's a rich orchestral folk/pop opus, but would you want your life to depend on this?

I would respectfully suggest that you can only indulge in this notion for a single go-round. I'm referring to the fact that *DEPEND ON THIS*, the third (full-length) solo outing by Canadian music veteran Ruth Minnikin, contains two aurally alternative interpretations of six songs. Their initial incarnation was produced by Minnikin and Andrew Watt, the second tranche by Chuck Blazevec. Till 2008 Minnikin and Watt were members of Heavy Blinksers a Halifax, Nova Scotia band that currently features Blazevec. On the black and white front cover picture Ruth and her Bandwagon sit on a graveyard wall, behind them ghostly replicas stand among the trees and stone memorials. As for the rear cover, it's a garishly bright coloured replica of the foregoing. Hint—the picture furnishes a subliminal hint as to the album's lyrical content.

Ruth's Bandwagon is composed of brother Gabriel (guitar, mandolin, vocals), Craig Buckley (bass), Brain



Murray (banjo, percussion), Anna Plaskett (French horn) and Dave Christensen (bass clarinet, flute). *The Theme Song 1* is light and airy, Buckley's bass introduces the cosmetic solution *Sleeping And Dreaming 1* which includes the line: 'Experts and doctors can fix that right up, They'll sort out the issue with one little cut,' while *Four Churches 1* references a hoofed creature from beneath the earth.

The country sounding *Depend On This 1*—I guess it's the pedal steel and banjo support—lyric name checks her previous solo release *FOLK ART* (2006) which was nominated for Best Female and Best Folk Album awards at the 2007 Nova Scotia Music Awards. *Animals Of Bremen 1* with farmyard noises is reminiscent of a Brian Wilson sand box era out-take, while *Finale 1* is all tempo changes and too clever for its own good. As for the aforementioned sonically-fragmented second tranche, there's no need for me to repeat anything.

AW

<http://www.ruthminnikin.ca/>

Patrick Bloom GHOSTS OF RADIO

Mud Dauber Records MD0005

★★★★☆

A sense of genius runs through the veins of this extraordinary album

Ohio-native Patrick is someone to cherish. On this nine track album, it is a relief to hear that not one of these songs is less than three minutes long. When you consider some of the great songs which have fallen foul to such a circumstance, I am relieved to say that Patrick's music does not follow this path.

With an attentive sound to it, *Prophetstown* has elements of a stripped down Johnny Cash tune about it but made during the days of Sun Studios. It is in fact the best example of Patrick's work, and shows he is not an artist who likes to rush recordings but takes his time and concentrates on getting each note onto tape to the best possible standard. *Union Suit* sounds very much like Kid Rock's hit *All Summer Long* largely due to the summer, care-free sound which was such a vital ingredient of latter tune. This is a song perfect to be enjoyed over a cold beer whilst the sun sets and the day starts to cool all around you. With this album partly funded by a grant from the Iowa Arts Council, I wonder why councils here in the UK do not follow this artistic example especially when the result is this exquisite album. **RH**
www.patrickbloom.com

Natasha James TEQUILA TIME

Highway One Records HOR817

★★★★

Laid back West Coast influenced retro country

Although my mother never tired of telling me to 'never judge a book by the cover' the cover of Natasha James second album *TEQUILA TIME* certainly caught my attention. On it the blonde



singer-songwriter is pictured wearing a sexy low cut blouse and a world weary expression. Both elements sum up the actual album very well.

Natasha's style throughout is friendly and reminds me at times of Loretta, Tammy and even Patsy Cline. The self-penned songs are generally reflective of a life well lived and lessons not always learnt.

A handful of songs on *TEQUILA TIME* really stand out especially *Modern Time* which has Natasha bringing her Resonator guitar to the front of the mix and has the opening lines: 'Daddy goes to NA/Momma goes to AA/the kids are playing internet games/the cats and dogs are spayed/Daddy lives an hour away/Momma's got a new boyfriend'. It's a 100% pure country song and deserves to become a classic.

Ain't Done Nothing Wrong and *Get Out of My Way* are both fine driving songs but I'm left felling a little disappointed with the title track *Tequila Time* which has all the right elements for a great song including some rather neat fiddle and piano interplay but Natasha's warm voice can't quite handle a song about partying hard. Perhaps it will sound better when played live and the tempo is cranked up a touch. **AH**
www.natashajames.com

Kelly Dalton EVERYTHING MUST GO

Halfway Home Records

★★★★☆

Los Angeles based piano man's second

Kelly Dalton is the son of musicians Dan Dalton and Lois Fletcher who, during the mid-1960s, were members of the Back Porch Majority, Randy Sparks' New Christy Minstrels 'farm team'. Mainly recorded in Austin, Texas at Shire Recorders, *EVERYTHING MUST GO* is Kelly's sophomore solo album. As with his Los Angeles recorded debut, *THE LOVE IN EVERY BAR* (2007), the new album was produced by long time collaborator Thom Flowers.

Dalton recorded with rock bands through the closing decade of last century and into the new one. Five years ago he launched his solo career, and found a home for his music among the singer-songwriters who performed nightly at the Hotel Cafe in Hollywood. Dalton supports his voice with guitar (acoustic and electric), harmonica and piano, and he penned all ten selections—album closer *Hang On* is an instrumental. Supporting Kelly are a coterie of West and Third Coast musicians who furnish backing and harmony vocals while, in some cases, also playing electric guitar, lap steel, mandolin, bass, keys, organ, accordion, drums, percussion, cello, viola and violin.

There's a resigned world-weary edge to Dalton's vocals delivery, while his words consistently focus on relationships. Think of a cross between Randy Newman sans the sly humour and a folkie sounding Billy Joel. Standouts are *Forgotten*, the ensuing *It Comes Easy* and the autobiographical confession *Seen*

