

This album will surely gain Minnesota-based Casey that much-deserved recognition that he has obviously earned as this is a remarkable record which is bound to be played on the airwaves across the world. **Russell Hill**  
www.caseydilworth.com

### Cathouse Thursday NASHVILLE BABY

Topless Records  
TOP106CD  
★★★★

*Draws you in with their sublimely done guitar licks and smoking hot vocals.*

Their sixth album in less than thirteen years, this four-piece band sure knows how to turn the quality button up to eleven in a wonderful way. This eleven track album demonstrates the large-arena potential that they have and, if the whimsical Taylor Swift can fill a stadium or two, than Cathouse Thursday are bound to be responsible for doing exactly that but in a much more awesome way.

If *Funky Hang Loose* does not find radio or commercial success than there is something seriously wrong with people. Changing beat on many occasions to much success, it results in this being the finest track of the album and one which is bound to enter many people's Top Song List of 2011. Other tunes on this record are just as good. *Make A Little Heaven* uses a country-rock beat that grows on you. The electric guitar certainly leads this song on a merry little jaunt which is exceedingly fun to hear



and leaves the body feeling exhilarated towards its conclusion.

This tight-knit band has all the credentials to be a bona-fide act. The music which they release is excellent and here's hoping that this isn't the last the world has heard of Cathouse Thursday.

**Russell Hill**

www.cathousestuesday.com

### Ciorras SILVER LINING

Wisp Cloud Records  
★★★★

*A Celtic band with fire in their belly*

Ciorras were brought together by the legendary (in folk music circles at least) Donal Lunny for a TV series not dissimilar to the X-Factor. There of course the similarity ends as these are 'real' musicians and singers and if that sounds snobbish I'm quite happy to be counted as one. Youth is on their side...they're all about twenty...and the recording shows, with a zest for life that most of us seasoned veterans will have experienced at one time or another. Starting with an uplifting set of reels titled *The Expensive Sneeze* featuring a fiery duet between flute and fiddle, accompanied by groovy guitar and bodhran, this shows that there's still plenty of life left in 'Irish' music. The second track, *Runaway*, utilises a melody performed on the concertina structured in much the same way that Bill Whelan approached *Riverdance* with plenty of syncopated notes and snappy jazz piano stabs that makes the listener automatically want to sway with the



giddiness of it all. But, before we get too complacent, the subtle change of major to minor introducing a more uptempo *Farewell To Whalley Range* written by Manchester's finest (Michael McGoldrick) will undoubtedly leave everyone breathless. Now, personally speaking I'm pleased the rest of the members of the band opted for Ciara Cunningham an English-speaking vocalist instead of any number of Gaelic speaking vocalists they could have chosen and biased as I am, it never did harm the careers of De Dannan (Dolores Keane and Mary Black) or Solas and in fact opened many more doors being a far more accessible language. A fine vocalist, Cunningham proves with the 1969 Richard Thompson penned *Farewell, Farewell* that she can really get under the skin of the lyrics and I'm sure pleased her mentor is Paul Brady. Each member of this star-studded cast will undoubtedly become established in their own right but until then let's celebrate a 'group' that is going places. **Pete Fyfe**  
www.myspace.com/ciorras

### Cris Cuddy DIAMOND SHINE

Cris Cuddy Music  
★★★★

*Canadian Cuddy unleashes another sonic cornucopia*

Subjectively speaking, the lyrics that grace Toronto-based Canadian Cris Cuddy's twelve-selection DIAMOND SHINE mostly tackle love—good and bad, plus there's one song each about a train and a car, and two tending bar tunes. Based on *After Closing Time*, I'd guess the latter is a profession with which Cris is familiar. Prairie Oyster included Cuddy's *Long & Lonesome Old Freight Train* on their album ONE KISS (2006) and assisted by the band's Keith Glass (guitar, mandolin, vocals) they reprise it here. As for *I'm A Cadillac*, the Springsteen influence cannot be denied. The collection is equally divided into Cuddy-penned originals and co-writes, and the gently-paced closing melody *One For Nick*, an instrumental, was written as a tribute to Nick Drake. **Arthur Wood**  
http://www.criscuddy.com/



very well produced pop-record with elements of 1970s and 1980s styles in the arrangements and orchestrations. I was reminded of some of the elements of pop-opera that surfaced around that time. The songs are of a consistent standard throughout, quite catchy but nothing that I would directly hook onto. The best song is *Severine* which features twice; there's a bonus version featuring Sacha Tootop singing in French. It recalls French Café style songs in its structure and is a catchy tune. I can't recommend this as a roots album but I can commend it as a good quality pop-based record.

**Vicky Martin**

www.davidcelia.com

### Desertshore DRIFTING YOUR MAJESTY

Caldo Verde CV012

★★★

*Atmospheric collection of guitar and piano based instrumentals from California duo*

Phil Carney, guitar (Red House Painters, Sun Kil Moon) and Chris Connolly, piano/keyboards are the driving force behind Desertshore. Assisted by drummer Dave Muench and contributions on guitar by band mate Mark Kozelek, who also co-produces. This is a collection which, according to the accompanying press release: 'aims to carry out the re-examination of instrumental rock and its possibilities'. The album opens with *Black Mirror Water* a heavily distorted track full of shimmering piano chords and moody synths as it leads into *The Town Afloat*. This is a more upbeat number with slide guitar and a repetitive series of picked notes throughout, but it meanders on and on with no particular direction in the manner of a bunch of musicians who finding a groove, jam until it peters out of its own accord.

That is the main thrust of this whole album. If you like those Neil Young tracks where the slowly evolving repeating guitar notes go on and on, for what seems a lifetime, then you may find some solace in this piece of work. There is a lot of meandering! The ten-minute title track being a case in point. Unfortunately without any words to top and tail the wandering of the music it doesn't, for me, have any home.

Don't get me wrong. This is a beautifully crafted and expertly played work. The quality of the musicianship is second to none. For example *Gwynnedd* is a gorgeous folk-influenced piece of acoustic fingerpicking that the likes of Nic Jones or Richard Thompson would be proud of. Unfortunately, there is a complete lack of direction without abrupt changes in mood or volume that an instrumental recording needs. The press release may refer to country influences inside this offering but I am sorry—this ain't country man! **John Jobling**  
www.desertshoreband.com



### Souther Still GREAT WILD STREET

Feed Dog Records FDR001CD

★★★★

*Classy alt.country to fall in love to*

As is usual in cases like this, I really do wish I could tell you that Souther Still are from New York/Baltimore/Idaho or somewhere else that sounds cool in the USA; then you would take this breathtaking album more seriously. Instead I have to point out that Souther Still is a London band made up from two Brits, a Kiwi and an Irishman. Let's pretend that Souther Still are from Chicago and they all have goatee beards, skinny jeans and wear their trilby hats at a jaunty angle, then you'll feel more comfortable listening to music like this—won't you? Of course, there are echoes of Gram here and there and more than a smattering of Buffalo Springfield coupled with the lo-fi sensibilities of the Cowboy Junkies on quite a few tracks, but if you roll all of that together and seal it with some Jayhawks glue you will have the distinctive sound of Souther Still.

Every song is so very atmospheric; conjuring up images of long dusty roads, claustrophobic small towns, Formica clad diners, big gas guzzling cars and girls. Big girls, small girls, dark haired girls and blonde girls; but girls that always break your heart. *Atlas of the Dark* is simply beautiful, *Rope* hangs around like a woman's musky perfume and *Geraldine and the Highway 1* with its minimalist growling guitars should become an anthem for a despondent generation. On *City Rose* Souther Still take us into Neil Young and Crazy Horse territory, with Rob Childs making his pedal steel sound like the wind whistling through the trashcans of singer Bradley Putze's heart as he begs his girl to come back to him. *A Ghost in the Neighbourhood* is laced with layers and layers of dirty feedback induced guitar and organ with Putze fighting to get his JD soaked voice heard; it's worth his trouble because the song is astonishing.

GREAT WILD STREET is as good a slice of Americana/alt.country as you will hear in the last or next 12 months. Oh—the CD cover is pretty cool too. **Alan Harrison**  
www.southerstill.com



### David Celia I TRIED

Universal XXI CD 1723

★★★★

*Good quality pop-based record*

Canadian singer-songwriter David Celia presents us with a very well crafted and meticulously produced album. David wrote all of the songs and produced as well, so he's put a major amount of work into this. It's gentle sunshine tinged music. Now the question I have is this—is this roots music? Or, again, is it country music? Well the answer is no it's not—there's not a trace of blues, country, folk or other traditional or semi-traditional music forms here. This is actually a

