

**Adam and Darcie  
CALIFORNIA  
TRAIL**  
Self-released  
884502131154

★★★★

*Music to be  
shared with  
friends*

If you are a fan of dreamy folk-country music dashed with a bit of pop then you are bound to love the new album by husband and wife duo Adam and Darcie. Layered harmonies suggest that their musical style is something of a throw back to the 1960s. A collection of the duo's friends join them adding harmony vocals and playing a range of instruments on this top class album that stands out because it was recorded with little studio interference and polishing. Adam and Darcie effortlessly bring their lyrics to life, never over doing the backing music or production. The album begins with *The Fox, Hare and Doe*, a gentle dreamy song with mesmerising harmonies reminiscent in style of the Fleet Foxes. The musical backing is unobtrusive allowing Adam and Darcie's vocals to shine brightly. *Never Been A Pilot* has a catchy melody and follows in a similar vein to the opening number. *Hand/Mind* is a slightly more upbeat number but it still manages to retain its dreamlike qualities. *I Need To Let Go Of What I Won't Miss* is a charming gentle song that evokes memories of a warm summer's day. *Nowhere, No One* features some wonderfully traditional instrumentation. *All I Ever Do Is Fall* is one of the standout songs with the gentle flowing harmonies instantly bringing to mind the Mamas and Papas. *Before It's Better* sees Darcie on lead vocals. She has an outstanding voice, which is a delight to listen to. The title song is yet another dreamy number. *Grass Valley* has a gentle feel about it and again the music and vocals are very evocative. The whole album speaks of warmth and love with music that makes you feel good deep inside and lights up even the darkest of days. This is a well crafted album that speaks volumes for the talents of Adam and Darcie. **SH**  
<http://www.myspace.com/adamanddarcie>

**Adam Ezra  
Group  
VIEW FROM  
THE ROOT**  
Tatteredstring  
Music

★★★★☆

*Poetic album*

*from this award winning artist*

Adam Ezra Olshansky was the audience choice and one of the four annual winners of the Singer Songwriter Contest at this year's Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival. *VIEW FROM THE ROOT* is his sixth release as leader of the five-piece, Boston based, folk-rock combo—Adam Ezra Group. Ezra penned the thirteen songs, including *Have We Met* co-written with Adam Elk. Elk also produced, mixed and played on a number of the album tracks.

The album is bookended by



*Vision*—all pounding backbeat and whisky soaked, Ezra vocal—and the shorter, gentle acoustic instrumental *Re Vision*. *Another Sunshine* includes the sly aside: 'Want to walk softly with discretion, Want to discretely kick the walls,' and is immediately preceded by the contention 'Want to fight hard against repression, Want to repress the urge to fail.' The upbeat *Basement Song*, one of Adam's Wildflower! entries opens with commentary on the nine to five treadmill that is the lot of most people and closes with a stinging indictment of society's proclivity to consume the planet's resources with no thought of tomorrow. And while our depleted Earth inexorably spins onward Ezra poetically reflects: 'I'll be seeing things in harmony, smelling them in rhyme.' *You Paint Me* his other Wildflower! entry also appears on *VIEW FROM THE ROOT*, which, overall, is a 50/50 marriage of gentle ballads—sic. *Have We Met*—and out and out rock numbers such as the penultimate, bluesy *Kill Like This*. **AW**  
<http://www.adamezra.com/>  
<http://www.myspace.com/adamezra>

**Anthony da  
Costa  
NOT AFRAID  
OF NOTHING**  
[www.anthonycosta.com](http://www.anthonycosta.com)

★★★★☆

*Talented*

*youngster showcases his romantic side with a good selection of self-penned relationship songs*

Anthony turned eighteen on January 3, and, including his collaborative recordings, *NOT AFRAID OF NOTHING* is his eighth release. In 2007 this personable and prolific wunderkind became the youngest winner, so far, of the Kerrville Folk Festival's New Folk Songwriting Contest. In the process he nudged out Welsh-bred Jack Harris who, aged nineteen, had won the 2005 Contest. Following a tranche of releases helmed by Fred Gillen Jr.—he plays drums/percussion on the opening song *Bells & Birds*—*NOT AFRAID OF NOTHING* was co-produced by da Costa and John Elliott. This autumn da Costa becomes a Columbia University student, and the fourteen tunes he penned for this collection amount to his final testosterone-fuelled high school report. I dropped in the 't' term since the lyrics here are exclusively relationship focused, with that four letter word 'love' appearing in twelve songs.

*Matters Of The Heart* and the seasonal *November* are acoustic and heavenly, *I Am Way Too Much* climaxes with an electrically-generated sound-storm of instruments, while *If You Want It and For A While* come across as hi-energy power-pop statements. Anthony captures the raw emotion of love lost in the penultimate *Crazy*, and the album closes with the almost optimistic *Sleeping On The Couch*: 'You took me in from the shadows to the sunlight.' Having alluded to the 'not strictly roots music' genres that da Costa embraces here, it has to be said that his songs possess potency and



listener longevity. *I'm Your Son* and *Dolly & Porter* on last year's *TYPICAL AMERICAN TRAGEDY* found this mature in years teenager tackling themes that did not orbit around that thing called 'love.' I harboured the expectation that he would sustain his pursuit of alternative themes on this latest album. Maybe next time. **AW**  
<http://www.anthonycosta.com>  
<http://www.myspace.com/anthonycosta>

**Catie Curtis  
HELLO,  
STRANGER**  
Compass Records

★★★★☆

*A revisit of past classics, some covers, some of her own, given fresh interpretations*

A couple of years normally slip by between Catie Curtis releases, but hot on the heels of last year's *SWEET LIFE*, this Boston-based, Maine-bred folksinger delivers this string-band retro-collection. On this disc half-a-dozen cover songs sit comfortably with a handful of reinterpretations from Curtis' back catalogue. Recorded on Compass Records' premises, in their upstairs studio, Curtis is supported by label co-owner Alison Brown (banjo), plus Stuart Duncan (fiddle, mandolin), Todd Phillips (bass), George Marinelli (guitar, mandolin, Dobro) and Kenny Malone (percussion).

The cover songs furnish proof of Curtis' transatlantic musical influences, albeit somewhat vintage. Now approaching forty years of age *Tuesday's Dead* made its public debut on Cat Stevens' (aka Yusuf Islam) album *TEASER AND THE FIRECAT*. Penned by the late John Martyn *Don't Want To Know (No Evil)* is only a few years younger, while Richard Thompson's *Walking On A Wire* is rapidly approaching thirty years of age. Supported principally by banjo and fiddle, Catie is joined by Mary Gauthier for an energetic duet reading of Alvin Carter's *Hello, Stranger*. The home turf selections continue with Don White's amusing *Be Sixteen With Me*, wherein the conspiratorial narrator proposes adopting a shoe on the other foot approach to life, and pictures the 10am Sunday morning scene: 'The kids will ask us where we've been, And then they'll ask us again, And we'll just make up a great big lie, And swear that it's the truth until the day we die.' The final Stateside cover is Bill Monroe's *I Wish I Knew (How It Would Feel To Be Free)*.

As for the selections from Curtis' catalogue, the standout has to be *Dad's Yard*—probably her best known creation. Last year, with her parents in the South Maine audience, I saw Catie perform this amusing 'real life' ditty about accumulating backyard junk—when asked her father did not deny his squirrel tendencies. Toward the close of the album the gospel flavoured *Passing Through*, co-written with Mark Erelli, finds the compassionate narrator reflect upon passing on personal and planetary legacies to the coming generations. **AW**  
<http://catiecurtis.com/>



**Butch  
I GUESS I'M  
LUCKY**

CMI Records/  
Cash Mattock Inc  
844553004753

★★★★

*Outstanding  
debut album  
from country blues superstar in the  
making*

*I GUESS I'M LUCKY* by Butch captures you with its blues country feel and quality songwriting making it one of the records of the year so far. Butch (real name Edgar Eugene Barnette) is one of the most interesting singer-songwriters to come out of Tennessee for a really long time. With influences as varied as Frank Zappa, the Allman Brothers, the Band and John Hiatt to name just a few, He is a rare find as he makes music that many musicians crave to. He appreciates quality songwriting and guitar playing and has the unique ability to be able to change how he plays to suit the song. He has a natural talent and sounds as if he found it really easy to make this record.

When you first listen to *I GUESS I'M LUCKY* it feels so familiar but at the same time new and fresh, he takes his influences and gives you something unique. Butch's writing is fresh, honest and truly in tune with people, their thoughts and aspirations and the human journey of life we are all on. Butch shows a great range with his guitar playing. He can play beautiful folk songs, and then also play amazingly technically perfect blues guitar solos. *Dirty Water* is very much in the vein of the Band if you are looking for comparisons, with its amazing harmonies, piano, and a very raw underling blues sound complimented by some of the best harmonica playing heard for a while.

*My Name is Edgar* is a beautiful folk guitar song again accompanied by harmonica, this is the story of his life and his name, and where he came from. *Life Happens* is an ode to the past and many nights drinking too much. The album finishes with the beautiful *The Note, Would It Take My Breath Away* with Butch's vocals sounding honest and pure. He sounds so genuine and as if he means every word he is singing

*I GUESS I'M LUCKY* is such an interesting and laid back record that shows real talent by blending different genres and making it work. Butch is definitely somebody to watch out for in the future judging by his outstanding debut. **CN**  
<http://www.cashmattock.com>  
<http://www.myspace.com/edgar-butchbarnette>

**Charlie Faye  
WILSON ST.**  
Wine & Nut Records

★★★★☆

*Texas-styled  
country-pop-folk-  
rock with a definite  
rootsy edge*

Remember Lewis Morley's early 1960s iconic photograph of a naked Christine Keeler sat astride a chair? On the cover of her sophomore recording a clothed Faye reclines ala Keeler on her stoop, legs wrapped

