

steel for piano.

Funding this new album via Kickstarter, one investor benefit was the six-song SAME OLD STORM EP. Fear not, copies are still available. Penned with Jonathan Byrd (2003 Kerrville New Folk) the up-tempo Hurricane opens, The Letter finds the narrator express regret for her emotive words, Same Old Storm charts the potholes in daily life (and love's rocky highway), while the percussive Memphis finds the narrator appeal: 'Just stay with me through the morning, till I find my feet again.' Serendipity graced this year's New Folk Contest with Honor Finnegan's Stark As Stone—the fifth EP song—deservedly furnishing its writer with a winner's slot, and this thoroughly engaging EP, concludes with a solo reading of The Sea & The Shore. **Arthur Wood**

www.amyspeace.com

Templeton Thompson GIRLS & HORSES

Reve Records

★★★★★

Nashville singer
destined to find

more success with her songcraft



Nashville is full of talented singers, songwriters and musicians destined to remain a mere footnote on album credits. One of the finest that I've recently discovered is Templeton Thompson who over the past decade or so has self-released a series of excellent albums. This latest collection brings together some of her newer songs with a few older ones to create ten tracks of pure listening joy, beautifully arranged and produced. If like me you're not aware Ms Thompson, then you can find her songs on million-selling CDs from country superstars Reba McEntire, Jo Dee Messina and Little Texas. Her song, *Settle Down Cinderella* is featured in the movie, Dr. Doolittle 3. Alongside her songwriting, recording and live performances, Templeton is also a busy demo singer and background vocalist ... oh and by the way, an award-winning horsewoman.

As the title suggests, she brings her equine career into her music with several of the songs featured here inspired by our four-legged friends. With the exception of the evocative *Tall In The Saddle*, all songs are penned by Templeton, mainly in partnership with hubby Sam Gay, who

also provides all the instrumental support. This isn't a project created by some producer to make the next female country superstar happen. Templeton Thompson is the real deal and she's come up with what could be one of my favourite albums of the year. The entire album breathes Templeton's personality, the songs all marked by uplifting melodies, insightful lyrics, her quietly powerful vocals and the understated instrumental virtuosity of Gay. *Guardian Angel* is a song full of life advice intertwined with horse-riding references that works beautifully. Taking a more emotive tone, *She Remembers Ridin'* tackles dementia in a straightforward and heartbreaking way, Thompson's voice cutting right through to your inner soul. In contrast *Cowgirl Creed* is more edgy with its anthemic chorus and Thompson's passionate vocal chock-full of determination. There are no over-elaborate arrangements, yet neither are there any tracks that have been stripped back to the extent that they lose the music's inherent dynamic elements ... overall it's a winner from beginning to send. **Alan Cackett**

www.TempletonThompson.com

David Olney PREDICTING THE PAST

Rootsy Records

★★★★☆

A sprinkling of

Olney gems grace
the 16 new studio recordings merged here
with 17 previously released songs.



Olney's latest musical offering is a Europe only, two-disc set released by the Swedish based Rootsy imprint. Disc 1, PREDICTING THE PAST, contains 16 new recordings, while its 17-song partner is titled A RETROSPECTIVE 2000—2012. Regarding the genesis of PREDICTING THE PAST, Olney's liner note relates: 'One of my goals was to feature my road compadre, Sergio Webb. Sergio's guitar playing is mind boggling. On electric or gut string, he takes chances, skates on thin ice, goes out on limbs and makes a song much more compelling than it would be otherwise.' Webb had worked with Paul Burch, making him a natural project producer/collaborator. Recorded at Pan American Sound in Nashville, the principal voices and instruments heard on disc 1 are Olney (Archtop guitar, vocals), Mark

Sergio Webb (lead guitar) and Birch (fuzz/ rhythm guitar, drums, bass). Fats Kaplin (fiddle), Dennis Crouch (upright bass) and Tomi Lunsford (vocals) support on *Cruel Symphony*, Fats' lap steel graces *Walkin' Blue*, while Jen Gunderman (Jayhawks) plays keyboards on *The Beginning And The End* and *Long Gone Daddy*.

Olney is the sole composer of six PREDICTING THE PAST songs, the same headcount is shared with long-time collaborator John Hadley, while on the remaining quartet Messrs. Olney/ Hadley collaborate with Webb on two songs, and one each with Gwil Owen and Kieran Kane. From the first riff on opener *Girl Up On A Hill*—wherein the narrator professes his love for her—Olney's in vocally raucous rock'n'roll mode. On the ensuing *A Long Time Ago* the Rhode Island bred writer slows the pace, and from his back catalogue moves on to resurrect the rowdy *Jama Ball*. The latter previously saw the light of day on the Italian Appaloosa imprint's TOP TO BOTTOM (1991), as did the later *Smoke On Ice*.

A prison inmate narrates *We're All Innocent In Here*, the Webb co-write *Johnson City Blues* is a road song, while *Long Gone Daddy* possesses a bluesy feel as does the later *Walkin' Blue*. Featuring Webb's ukulele the gently paced gem *There Was A War* I'd characterise as twin to the classic 1917. Webb fingerpicks Spanish guitar on the optimistic ballad *Look*, the lyrical enigma *Lampshades* simply rocks, while *Things Fall Apart* explores the torch song genre. The penultimate *Cruel Symphony* finds Webb's Spanish guitar adopt a Latin rhythm while Kaplin's fiddle gently weeps. Narrated by a road weary individual, and possessed of a much slower tempo, the melody to the heartfelt album closer *The Beginning And The End* hints at Prine's *Souvenirs* and *Speed Of The Sound Of Loneliness*.

Disc 2 reprises material from some of David's 21st century releases. There are three selections from 2000's OMAR'S BLUES, five from 2007's ONE TOUGH TOWN and four from 2010's DUTCHMAN'S CURVE. Olney's recent trio of EPs draw disc 2 to a close, with two songs each from 2011's FILM NOIR and the stunning THE STONE (2012), while *Go Down Dupree* from 2012's ROBBERY & MURDER ends the journey through this talented writer's recent back pages.

Arthur Wood

www.davidolney.com