

NEW RELEASES

Musically packing a punch is the lullabyic *Blow Northwest Wind*; *Sierra Bound*, that will leave you humming its chorus long after it's ended, not to mention the banjo-driven *Nothing Left Of Me*, which will have you tapping your foot along with its infectious pace. A 27-minute long collection of songs that ultimately leaves you with a lasting impression long after the final note has trailed off into the silence, and if you're looking for something low-key to finish off a languid day in the sun, then this little album is undoubtedly what you're looking for.

Emily Saxton

www.ritahosking.com

Peter Rowan THE OLD SCHOOL

Compass Records 7
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★★★★☆

*Traditional country/
bluegrass out of the
old school*



This latest album from the veteran Peter Rowan is aptly titled. If I hadn't opened and read the credits, I would have sworn that these were old classic bluegrass or country songs from way back when. But good ol' Peter penned 'em all—with the exception of the gospel standard *My Saviour Is Callin' Me Home*—and has captured the pure essence of what used to constitute 'classic' country music in the 'good ol' days.' That's not meant to dismiss today's country music; what we have here would've been just perfect for the 1950s and 1960s in the same way that the Band Perry and Brad Paisley are just right for 2013.

Wisely Rowan and his producer Alison Brown have called on some of the finest singers and musicians working within bluegrass and acoustic music to create the right ambience for this music. The line-up is impressive to say the least and includes Bobby Osborne, Jesse McReynolds, Bryan Sutton, Mike Cleveland, Jason Carter, JD Crowe, Stuart Duncan, Don Rigsby, Del, Robbie and Ronnie McCoury and Buddy Spicher. *That's All She Wrote* is straight out of the Monroe songbook with Del McCoury's harmony vocal adding just the right textures and the driving fiddle, fierce mandolin and plucky banjo providing the perfect counterpoint. There's echoes of the ol' Blue Yodeller to *Ragged Old Dream* with Mike Witcher's Dobro adding the bluesy edge to Rowan's wearisome vocals. Another gem is the evocative *Doc Watson Morning*, that

features just the twin acoustic guitars of Bryan Sutton and Rowan and the latter's laid-back vocals. *My Saviour Is Callin' Me* is a call-and-response gospel number set to powerful lyrics of spirituality. A monumental release that though out-of-step with what constitutes country or even bluegrass music today, is still very relevant and a reminder of how powerful down-home traditional country music can be. **Alan Cackett**

www.compassrecords.com

Suzzy Roche & Lucy Wainwright Roche FAIRYTALE & MYTH

Self-released

★★★★

*Vocally mother and daughter synchronise
or solo, while soaring and swooping...
faultlessly*



The new millennium had barely dawned when Suzzy Roche last released a solo musical statement, her second. It would be true to say that collaborations have been the order of the day in the years since. First there were a couple of duo albums with oldest sister Maggie in 2002 and 2004, for a short time, concurrently, a Bitchin' Babe, Suzzy contributed to their NO ASSEMBLY REQUIRED (2002), while The Roches revived in 2007 with MOONSWEPT. Now the youngest Roche sister is joined by her talented daughter Lucy. In terms of content FAIRYTALE & MYTH merges half-a-dozen Suzzy originals, with a handful of covers. According to the LP-style card liner Suzzy and Lucy sing—solo or in unison—supported by Suzanne Ornstein (violin, viola), Rob Morsberger (piano, accordion, B3, string arrangements) and Stewart Lerman (bass). Messrs. Morsberger and Lerman recorded the sessions and the latter mixed the final result.

Opener *Broken Stemmed Tenderness* is a tender paeon that praises the beauty of the natural world. Oxford, Ohio raised Rob Morsberger—diagnosed with terminal brain cancer in late 2011—penned *Everyone Wants To Be Loved* wherein the album title surfaces in the opening verse. Introduced by: 'When I was just a little kid, a strange guy came to visit, He had a drawing pad, he was a friend of my dad,' the creation of 'the painting of your life' is recalled in *Double Rainbow*. A delightful waltz underpins the whimsical *Mego*, the focus being one person's doppelganger. Having debuted on his twelfth album, 1992's HISTORY, Lucy's dad

Loudon Wainwright III shares the lead vocal on a reprise of his amusingly neurotic *When I'm At Your House*.

Living In A Beautiful Day captures the unhurried salad days of summer, while the rhythmically energetic *Imaginary Friend* finds the narrator, possessed of 'the patience of a saint,' wait and wait and wait for an arrival ... just imagine. The voices of mother and daughter soar and swoop exquisitely on Lennon & McCartney's baroque pop classic *For No One*. Lily Bart, a woman of good birth who falls from grace, was the lead character in Edith Wharton's 1905 novel *The House Of Mirth*. Suzzy's waltz paced *Lily: Song For Edith Wharton And Lily Bart* 'speculates and ruminates' about the writer, her novel and a missing four-letter word. Loudon collaborator Dick Connette penned *Wonder Of The World*. The song appeared on the 1997 self-titled debut album by Last Forever and alludes repeatedly to: 'turning back the hands of time' and 'going back home again.' Mark Johnson's 1992 debut album 12 IN A ROOM featured his *When A Heart Breaks Down*. This pop-flavoured ode to love closes FAIRYTALE & MYTH, which is currently only available from http://www.suzzyroche.com/www.suzzyroche.com/Coming_Soon.html.

Arthur Wood

Susan James DRIVING TOWARD THE SUN

Self-Release: SJM:
SJM-04

★★★★☆

*Californian hybrid-music maker delivers
another passionate collection of songs*

Following close in the highly acclaimed footsteps left by 2011's HIGHWAYS, GHOSTS, HEARTS & HOME, a somewhat career-marking project which gained the praise and interest of alt.country rocker Ryan Adams, comes the splendid fifth full-length album release from Californian hybrid-music maker Susan James. What an enchanting little gem it is, with eight beautifully composed songs snapshotting points in a breaking relationship and superb contributions from legendary musicians like Los Angeles drummer Don Heffington (Buddy Miller, The Jayhawks, The Wallflowers), Iowan multi-instrumentalist Eric Heywood (Son Volt) and California-based guitarist Neal Casal (Ryan Adams) amongst others, not to mention having been produced by Ryan Ulyate, who

