

## ...the new releases

**David Anderson**  
**LAYOVER IN RENO**  
Independent  
★★★★☆

*Warm and thoughtful stories*

Another of those near-unknown singer-songwriters that appear from the undergrowth from time to time, David Anderson is only on his third album despite being near-pensionable age. Maybe it's all that experience, but he's produced a work that mixes thoughtful storytelling with openly autobiographical tales and has a warmth and calm that makes it enormously enjoyable to listen to.

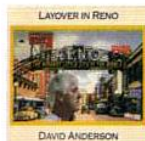
In the storytelling section are the Californian ghost story *Alice Miller* and *Daughter Of The Sky*, his retelling of Amelia Earhart's life. Both have beautiful harmonies reminiscent of Neil Young's AFTER THE GOLDRUSH period and the latter also boasts a wistful and elegiac mood that fits its subject perfectly. On a more personal level there's *Recollections Of Neal*, his story of the two occasions he met the famous Beat, told in an appropriately period talking blues style and the laidback ('I'm having a beer day') title track. Unfortunately Anderson's lyrics let him down from time to time, with *She Glows In The Dark* the worst offender. Heartfelt maybe, but verses like: 'she glows in the dark/that's how I found her/I don't need a flashlight/when I'm around her,' should have been left on the cutting room floor. On the plus side, in *Sarah Bellum* he may have written the only song to ever rhyme statistician and ambition.

Anderson has gathered around him an impressive set of musicians, all unknowns but clearly people who understand his music perfectly and who play just right without any showboating or chop flaunting. John Andrew Eddy in particular plays some delightful soft guitar, but the whole ensemble conjure up a quiet evening on the veranda singing songs as the sun goes down and they make the listener wish they'd been there when it was recorded. **JS**  
[www.the-moon.com](http://www.the-moon.com)

**Danny O'Keefe**  
**IN TIME**  
Bicameral Songs  
★★★★☆

*Goodtime Charlie writer returns with first new album in years*

Danny O'Keefe hails from America's Pacific North West, still resides there, and has been recording for four consecutive decades—OK, he didn't release much during the closing decade of the last century. Whatever, IN TIME is his eleventh release and the songwriting credits find him collaborating with some established and successful Nashville names. Self-released on Bicameral Songs this twelve song collection was produced by Mick Conley (Kathy Mattea, Marty Stuart). *The First Time*, co-written with Fred Koller, finds the 'now mature in years' narrator recall pivotal initial occasions in his



life—marriage, sex, divorce, finding religion, indulging in alcohol or drugs—and the second cut *Maybe Next Time* pursues similar territory relative to the longevity of his relationships with the opposite gender. Victor Krauss (longtime bass man in Lyle Lovett's Large Band) shares the composing credit on *Siamese Friends*, and O'Keefe is joined, vocally, on this love-themed song by Beth Chandler.

By now you may have concluded that love is a consistent theme in O'Keefe's lyrical canon. Featuring a piano introduction Randy Newman would have been proud to have penned, *Alone In The Dark* is an O'Keefe and Jay Gruska collaboration wherein the narrator dreams of making 'a movie of our love.' *Missing Me* is the only song here that solely bears the writing credit Danny O'Keefe, while other team efforts feature contributions from Tim O'Brien (*When You Came Back*) and Michael McDonald (*We're All Strangers Here*). The soulful sounding *Unspoken* was penned with Grammy winning songwriter/producer Dennis Matkosky, while Tim Krekel—currently recovering from cancer of the abdomen—helped O'Keefe concoct the road song *Sleep Anywhere On Earth You Are*.

Hit songwriter Beth Nielsen Chapman assisted O'Keefe on *Back In Time*, a reflection on 24/7, memory and bloodline. For the penultimate cut *Last Call*, set in a smoky late night drinking den, Danny teamed with Jackson, Mississippi bred now Nashville based hit songwriter Fred Knobloch. The second Matkosky collaboration, *A Bedtime Story*, closes this collection. Like *Back In Time* humankind's three score and ten on planet Earth underpins the storyline.

IN TIME amounts to an engagingly melodic, if subjectively repetitive, laid back outing by this veteran singer-songwriter. **AW**  
[www.dannyokeefe.com](http://www.dannyokeefe.com)

**Deanna Johnston**  
**GFN (GOD, FAMILY, NATURE)**  
Independent  
★★★★☆

*Gritty, gutsy vocals and soulful country music discovering God, family and nature*

From a lowly farm in Canada, living with her mother, father and three sisters, Deanna Johnston rises—the soulful country gal of the South, that years on, now resides in Nashville, Tennessee. Anthemic songs tinged in country-soul, but featuring a voice of grit and guts, exploring experiences that are personally connected to Johnston, she is in the same category as Laura Vecchione, Laura Roppe and the likes. Opinionated lyrical content regarding God, family and nature, there are five songs on this second CD of material from Johnston. All of the songs stand out with a strong country feel, the band consisting of Dobro, acoustic guitar, bass, drums and keys, but Johnston also brings the contemporary country feel with her vocals, drenched in that 'fresh from Nashville' sound. She



is obviously very religious and this can be a bit overbearing at times, but that's just personal opinion. Aside from that, the five songs are strong, well written and bring to the forefront a country sound that is carried by the soulful voice of this talented singer on the Nashville scene. The CD is available from iTunes. **LB**  
[www.deannajohnston.net](http://www.deannajohnston.net)

**Eli Young Band**  
**JET BLACK AND JEALOUS**  
Blue Wrasse B  
0011794-02  
★★★★

*Overbearing drumming spoils a promising country-rock album*

The Eli Young Band is a group of four relatively young artists who have been together for eight years, honing their skills by touring widely. JET BLACK AND JEALOUS is their first major release. Their avowed intention was to record an album which would reflect the way they perform live without actually recording a live album and one must concede that if they have succeeded in this aim then they must be an exciting stage act whose appeal is not just to a younger audience but extends to those who enjoy a vibrant, driving rock sound, not too heavy but punchy enough to satisfy those who prefer a little pep in their music. They are closer to rock than they are to country, but perhaps there is enough here to attract the attention of those country fans that tend to have one foot in each camp. The line-up is pretty basic, James Young on guitar, mandolin and harmonica, Mike Eli on guitar and vocals, Jon Jones on bass and Chris Thompson on drums. Of the dozen tracks, Eli and Young are responsible, either jointly or on their own, for bringing eight original numbers to the table. The opening cut, *When It Rains*, a Young contribution, was the first single to be released. As a video it received considerable support from CMT, and the press handout claims that it was the longest running hit on the Billboard Hot Country Singles chart in history. This, of course, must be taken with a pinch of salt because, although it did spend 36 weeks on the chart, the highest position it reached was 34 and one could find numerous other singles which far exceeded that run. Nevertheless, it is still some achievement for a 'new' act to spend three months on Billboard.

Both lyrically and melodically Eli and Young prove themselves to be highly promising writers with numbers like *Radio Waves*, *Enough Is Enough*, *Guinevere*, *Mystery In The Making*, *How Should I Know* and *Home* all highly commendable. The David Lee Murphy/George Ducas team contribute the more countrified *Always The Love Songs* with Keith Gattis offering *Famous*. *Get In The Car And Drive* comes courtesy of Blu Sanders, who co-wrote *Radio Waves* with Mike Eli. Sanders, also plays acoustic guitar and along with Mike Wruckle, who produced the album, and Vince Barnhart, sings harmonies. Additional guest musicians feature



on banjo, steel guitar and harmonica, filling in on what is otherwise a predominantly electric guitar, bass and drum driven backing. Chris Thompson is an excellent drummer but on almost every track he is right up there in the forefront, something which may well please line dancers or those tapping out his solid rhythms while driving but which proves to be a little overpowering for those who simply want to sit and listen. Mike Eli's voice, if not stone country, is certainly listenable. As stated, this is a band which appears to prefer to drive along apace but it would be nice to hear Eli acoustically backed a little more than he has been, but of course, after eight years on the road, the band knows what their fans enjoy the most, so who can argue with that? **LK**  
[www.eliyoungband.com](http://www.eliyoungband.com)

**Ian Foster**  
**ROOM IN THE CITY**  
Self Released If02  
★★★★

*A very harmonious album that has*

*such an air of quality and tranquillity about it that is badly needed in these trying times of financial doom and gloom*

This thirteen-track album by Ian Foster, should definitely be on your list to buy. Its mixture of downright happy vocals with a very groovy beat makes this a very enjoyable listen and certainly worth catching. Even if you find yourself not into this type of music, it seems that Foster has the ability to persuade you to listen to his work.

*Berlin* begins with a very easygoing beat, mostly aided by some casual pedal steel playing. It has a quite morbid sound to it that a lesser talented artist might have failed in trying to pull off. But then, all of a sudden, amongst the ghost-like harmonies that sound as though they have been taken from Ennio Morricone's track *Jill's Theme* from the film *Once Upon A Time in the West*, this musical explosion which would put shame to an atomic blast, happens. It just seems to hit you and there's no chance of running away from the fallout. But this fallout is not a bad occurrence as this experience will never be forgotten by this reviewer in a hurry. *After Evelyn* sounds as though it is an ode to times that have been enjoyed but have come and gone and never to be seen again. It has a very downbeat sound to it but, as with *Berlin*, Foster does not fail in his attempts to try and make this type of song a listenable one with its inclusion of a stonking electric guitar solo that is bound to see you appreciate this track. The lyrics of *Red Skies* are indeed a descriptive bunch, and are sung to pure brilliance. The acoustic picking, despite its simplicity, has such an inviting sound which cannot be ignored. It is whilst listening to this track that I realise Foster has one of those voices that has such an intergenerational appeal which could be applied to any musical genre and succeed. As with many albums, there

