

## ...the new releases

four artists although he does manage to capture the spirit of the music that influenced him in the late 1940s and 1950s. Part of his ability in succeeding to achieve this can be put down to the fact that he is solely responsible for the entire instrumentation which includes fiddle, viola, pedal and lap steel, electric and acoustic lead guitar, keyboard, bass and percussion as well as all the vocal harmony. Lovers of well presented traditional music, particularly from those whom Haddock has paid tribute to here, will find much to commend this welcome release. **LK**  
www.EagleInternationalRecords.com

### Grant Peeples PAWNSHOP

Gatorbone Records  
★★★★  
Some songs are broody, vocals at times aggressive but then this album is trying to deal with the state of the world at the moment, so some dark humour is also added for good effect!

Grant Peeples has been compared to the likes of John Prine, Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, Leonard Cohen and Johnny Cash in either his capacity as a songwriter or singer. Personally I found him somewhere between David Allan Coe and Chip Taylor. There are some good and some bad songs on this album as well as some downright brilliant, of which my favourites have to be the Texas swing of *Real Country* with Grant's gritty vocals accompanied superbly by the fiddle playing of Tim Higgins, the excellent *The Hanging*, all about people standing around the gallows which is sung wonderfully by Grant in a duet with one of his backing singers. Another favourite has to be the lively bluegrass-gospel styled *Jesus Was A Revolutionary* with some very clever lyrics and gorgeous piano solo from Kurt Johnston, along with the tongue-in-cheek country break-up tune *Leaving Her Was Easy*. Very good album from this fine singer-songwriter. **DK**  
www.grantpeeples.com

### Hennessy Keane NOWHERE FAST

★★★★  
Self-release via website  
Cool country from the Basingstoke delta

When reviewing albums I try to listen to them at least a couple of times before reading the artists' bio and that idiosyncrasy has served me well with NOWHERE FAST by Hennessy Keane. The overall sound is delightful and very New-Nashville but, surprise surprise; Shaun Hennessy and Ian Keane are from deepest darkest Hampshire! The songwriting on every track is top notch and could easily have come from Music Row but is all by Hennessy and Keane themselves; no finer compliment is available.

Ian Keane's voice throughout is sweet in an interesting way and is particularly heart-rending on *As Long*

*As I've Got You, Ain't Leaving Here Without You* and *Soldier's Wife*. The acoustic *Soldier's Wife* is a particularly powerful and poignant song which goes to prove that the Americans don't have it all their own way with War songs. *Uncle Johnny* is the best homage to Mr Cash that I've heard and I think an e-mail to Dale Watson; when he's collecting songs for his next album wouldn't go amiss.

NOWHERE FAST is good old fashioned working man/blue collar country music with the magic blend of Telecasters, banjo and a voice that drags tears out of a stone. **AH**  
www.hennessykeane.com

### JP Kobialko WHEN ONE ROAD ENDS ... ANOTHER BEGINS

Zamboos  
821228840229  
★★★★

Recommended album from male-female American duo

This new album from promising unsigned artist and tenor-voiced J.P. Kobialko starts well with the honky tonkin', life-on-the-road number *Hayfever* and gets progressively better from there. Clocking in at approximately half an hour, and with a relatively brief nine tracks, this artist shows what can be accomplished when free of a music corporation's superficial shackles. A Christian, Kobialko testifies to his faith in the moving *Talkin' With God* and gets all proud-dad on us on *Ballad for Sharon*, and in-between gets topical on *Ballad of the Times*. Throughout, Kobialko shows that, when listeners aren't busy focussed on Carrie and Taylor—and the overblown production that entails—they can seriously enjoy some stellar product from some unknown, unsigned artists with more intimate, acoustic backing. Recommended. **DJ**  
www.jpkobialko.com

### Jo Kerr STRAIGHT LINES

Autoglide Music  
5065001378010  
★★★★

An album of beautiful musical treats

Jo Kerr's second album STRAIGHT LINES features a collection of nine delicate acoustic-sounding songs. The backing music, electric guitar, drums, percussion and keyboard, is always unobtrusive allowing Jo's vocals to take centre stage. This is an album you really need to sit and listen to in order to fully appreciate the lyrics and Jo's dreamy evocative vocals—you feel like you are listening to poetry set to music as well as something that extra bit special. Having released his first album MORNING HAZE in 2008, Jo has taken this album down a notch or two and released something that is impressive and very palatable. If you like top class singer-songwriters who put their heart and soul into the songs they carefully craft together then you will love the songs on this album. Jo

### Tim Grimm FARM SONGS

Vault Records

★★★★

A truly fine collection of real country songs

Southern Indiana-based musician, movie actor and farmer Tim Grimm delivers stripped bare interpretations of his songs—old and new. Stripped bare because, Grimm's voice and acoustic guitar apart, the only other contributors are Jan Lucas (vocals, harmonica) and talented John Prine sideman, long time friend and musical associate Jason Wilber (guitars, banjo, mandolin, piano, vocals). FARM SONGS was recorded in just two days at David Weber's Airtime Studio in Bloomington, and the artwork that graces the gatefold card liner is the work of Jan Lucas, Tim's wife.

Fourteen songs long this is Grimm's seventh solo recording. Through hands-on experience as a hay farmer, Tim's lyrics verbalise the good times as well as the back-breaking realities for those who toil on the land. When the Indiana Repertory Theatre staged James Still's *Amber Waves* at the close of the last century, Tim and Jason penned most of the background music, while Tim and Jan acted in the production. *80 Acres*, which opens this album, featured in the production. The lyric recalls Bailey Needham, William Gresham and Cora Logan who, since the early 1800s, once owned the land Tim now farms. The precious memories of a farmer's wife take centre stage in the poignant and beautiful *She Remembers*. Recently widowed and persuaded to sell up and move to town, leaving the land is tearing her heart asunder.

*Pray For Rain*, the shortest FARM SONG, references a seven-year long drought and merges seamlessly with the dustbowl recollection *The People's Highway*. Later, the new song *Heart Of The Winter* further explores the farmer's growing season dependence on fair weather. During the closing decade of last century the Grimm's resided in Hollywood with their two sons, and the autobiographical *Too Hard Drivin'* recalls life in the fast lane and their decision to build: '...a house out on this piece of ground, We bought those years ago back in Indiana.' A few years farther along, *The Back Fields* and album closer *Pumpkin The Cat* visits the Grimm's on their rural retreat: '...down a little dirt lane that we call home.'

Tim's acoustic interpretation of his FARM SONGS is a sixty-minute plus delight, *Amber Waves* and the hymn styled *The Longest Night* being particular standouts. Grimm repeatedly alludes to farm families as close knit units, to the unpredictability of the climate, but primarily extols the umbilical cord that binds the farmer—male or female—to the land. It's a lifelong love affair that remains simple, honest and true in this corporate propelled world of instant gratification. **AW**  
http://www.timgrimm.com/  
http://www.myspace.com/timgrimm

has been compared with many top male singers like John Martyn and Neil Young but I feel he has a voice and style all of his own with songs that are reflective and warming. The album opens with *Be On My Side* a lovely guitar backed song, which beautifully shows off Jo's talents. He has an amazing voice that instantly makes you want to hear more—it has a rawness about it but also comes over as silky smooth. *Welcome Back* follows in a similar style as Jo's music blends rock with folk to create a great acoustic sound. His vocals are effortless and haunting on this little gem. *Another Day* is a catchy song with an uptempo feel. Occasionally there are hints of Neil Finn and Michael Stipe in Jo's vocal style. *Midnight Dancing* is another stylish song with great lyrics and more luxurious vocals. *Straight Talking* is a faster-paced song with a catchy hook—filled with character this would make an excellent single. The lyrics encourage people to talk more in order to solve their problems. *Hole In The Rain* is very similar in style to *Welcome Back* and is another song filled with gentle evocative vocals, yet towards the end the drums kick in and you are left with a passionate rock song. *Free As The Wind* brings the album to a close with a blues feel provided by the use of the electric guitar. This song has a more dramatic feel than the other songs and is a likeable song to end an amazing album that musical connoisseurs will adore. **SH**  
www.myspace.com/jokerr123

### John Jones RISING ROAD

Westpark Music WP  
87179

★★★★☆

John Jones takes baby steps out of his secure shell

John Jones' dextrous vocal has for 30 years been the defining front to the extremely successful Oysterband—so it may come as surprise to many that Jones is only just releasing his debut solo album. Whilst other members of the politically minded folksters have dabbled in side projects, Jones always found solo territory a frightening prospect given associations of his rich voice with the group. However, the man from Aberystwyth final takes those fledgling steps on *RISING ROAD*, his ode to the British countryside. Inspired during his break from Oysterband, which saw him take time to tour with friends Benji Kirkpatrick and Seth Lakeman, it is little surprise that both well-reputed musicians crop up on *RISING ROAD*. Mixing the traditional folk song along with his own compositions, Jones doesn't stray from his roots. However, gone are the bolder, riotous sounds of Oysterband, with Jones presenting a calmer collection.

*RISING ROAD* is aptly titled. Far from being a middle of the road collection, it is thoughtfully compiled yet far from painstakingly perfect. *Searching For Lambs* which features the angelic yet accented tones of Rowan Godel resonates beautifully as the album's

