



Lynn Miles “**Unravel**” Continental Record Services

I believe that honesty is a well-tested and beneficial policy. What I'd like to clear up right now, is that **Unravel** is one of my Albums of the Year for 2001. Possessed of one of the finest voices currently ploughing a folk/pop/country furrow, *melancholy* is a shade that has rarely changed, across five albums, as far as Miles lyrics are concerned. Lodged in a bottomless rut of “*I've lost my man*” misery, most performers bore me to tears. I can't precisely pin my irresistible attraction down to the timing of Lynn's delivery, or her ache filled voice that rises and falls with ease, or even the understated arrangements and the production of this set. Whatever – the truth is, the melody starts, Lynn Miles opens her mouth, emits a sound and all my bells start ringing. Very loudly. This eleven-song collection of Miles originals has been produced by her long time *road* sideman, Ian LeFeuvre. It's their first studio collaboration and a partnership Miles would do well to cultivate further, gauging by what has been achieved here. LeFeuvre played guitar on Lynn's 1996 Rounder/Philo debut **Slightly Haunted**, but was missing from her 1998 over produced skirmish with the L.A. music scene, **Night In A Strange Town**. Here, small inspired percussive fills and Ian's [sometimes] minimalist guitar licks add something special to many of the songs. In the liner LeFeuvre even credits, a *god damned marimba*. As for the songs, where to start? Well, how about the closing track? Take a [quiet] moment, and you might just figure out from the title that *Surrender Dorothy...* draws its inspiration from **The Wizard Of Oz**. It does. What's more, it is one of those memorable songs that you stumble across rarely. Very rarely. It's already consigned to my 10 All Time Favourite Songs. Along with [the aforementioned] melancholy, Miles injects perfectly pitched humour into the song – and if you recall those red slippers and Toto, then [if you'll excuse the pun] the words “*these shoes are too tight, the damn dogs got fleas*” fit [and flit] perfectly. The narrator of the upbeat, album title cut appears to be coming apart at the seams, as she reflects on her life – “*It took me four long years to crawl down to this place, It'll take four to get back and it ain't no race.*” Although the location is not named, I'd guess that it is the *city of the angels*. There isn't a single clunker in this pack, and with titles such as *Undertow*, *Black Flowers* and *Over You*, I think you will get my drift about Lynn Miles, *the magnificent melancholy*. And let not forget Lynn Miles creator of *memorable melodies*. It rarely gets any better than this....he hits the repeat button [yet again].

Folkwax rating – 9 out of 10

Arthur Wood.
Kerrville Kronikles