



Annie Gallup **"Half Of My Crime"** Waterbug Records

After years of seeing it in print and hearing her name mentioned in conversation by acquaintances, I've finally caught up with the Michigan bred singer/songwriter Annie Gallup. **"Half Of My Crime"** is Gallup's seventh solo outing, and what stood out for me, at first glance, was the fact that four of the songs on the CD possessed numerical titles. Even at this late stage in my life, it seems like once an engineer, always an engineer.....

I guess another factor that I should point out at the outset, is that in the rear of the liner booklet Annie has included a picture, accompanied by a short bio of Sean Kelly, Michael Visceglia and Don Porterfield. The connection being that they are all bass players. The fourteen tracks on **"Half Of My Crime"** were recorded in Colorado, North Carolina, Michigan and New York City, and numerically speaking Kelly contributes to six cuts, Visceglia to the same number and Porterfield to a pair. The only other contributor to **"Half Of My Crime"** is Annie - on lead, backing and harmony vocals, supported by either her electric or acoustic guitar. If you'll excuse the analogy, sonically speaking this is pretty much a back to basics backdrop.....simple but so effective.

It was triple repetition of the word "Faraway" on the third track "3 Brothers" that first rang the bell, and that bell told me that, at least by intonation, the words sounded just the way that those Roche girls would deliver them. I'm not saying that if you love the sisters Roche you will adore Annie, but it's a starting point. By that point I'd already travelled through "14 Days Of Rain" and absorbed the contents of the room - the nightstand with wristwatch lying next to a [European] book of prayers, while the air is filled with the sounds, captured circa 1958, of Ornette Coleman's alto saxophone. The other powerful image painted in the opening cut is of a woman hailing a city taxi while being drenched by rain - *"My hand so naked in the rain coming down."* Gallup aural portraits quite simply suck you in. She doesn't have to spill the beans, she simply infers - for instance *"And the whiskey in your kitchen, confessions and omissions."*

There isn't an embargo on the title you can give a song. That said, "Yesterday" hasn't been used to often! In his "1917," which appeared on the album **"Through A Glass Darkly"** [1999], David Olney related how a battle weary soldier found solace in the arms of a French prostitute. Gallup's "1917" initially follows a westbound and opportunist Irish immigrant whose treasure is *"just a deck of cards painted with naked ladies,"* while in the latter half of this number, having advanced to the depression year of 1931 - fourteen years post 1917 - Gallup introduces us to a second individual, recently unemployed, who, finding a one dollar bill, is quickly [and I guess you could say wastefully] parted from it. The narrator in "Avalon" obviously worships Mary's brother Artie, a recently discharged soldier, card sharp and more. Terminology closely associated with the square ring pervades "The Contender," while you wonder if Tom, Harry and Sara in "3rd Person" are real life characters?

"Enough" amounts to a dreamy cross-county road trip, and in creation and execution can best be described as quite exquisite. Enough is never enough. "Field Of Flowers" is a subtle anti-war song in which the lyrical themes are elliptically interwoven. By the way, did I mention how vocally and subjectively sensual Gallup can be? If you can make it all the way through "Sugar," "Away From The Lights" - oh yes, most certainly "Away From The Lights" - and the album closer "Free," and feel not even the slightest twinge of desire, you should know that medically speaking you have already departed your earthly form.

As much as they rhyme and appear in the liner booklet in conventional lyric structure, what Gallup writes and performs – part spoken, part sung – is poetry. There's an underlying jazz feel to the melodies Annie employs, and I guess that combination raises the spectre of black hair, [beards for the guys], berets and beat poets. For the record, Annie Gallup refers to herself as a Beat Poet Songwriter. Whether spelled whiskey or whisky, that word from the “spirit world” appears in four of the songs. Being “drunk” is referenced in another, decks of cards and gambling feature in another pair, but who is counting? Not I said the sparrow....

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 03/06.