

MAVERICK

CD REVIEWS - THE NEW RELEASES

I Still Too Late and a couple of the later ones, *Tell Me True* in particular, Ryan seems to me to change key when his backing musicians don't or maybe that is just the way of it with jazz singing.

Everything Must Spin has a livelier rhythm and is one of the best tracks on the album and another I liked was *When Now Turns To Never* which, and apologies for the irony, is actually an instrumental and Ryan is certainly a talented guitar, piano and flute player. The closing track *On a Beautiful Night Like Tomorrow* never really recovers from the silly title but I suppose not a bad daydream, yesterday and the day before were hopeless but, and without really believing it, as a fantasy tomorrow is going to be wonderful. The CD title is taken from the six minute long *It's Tulip Season* and one of those I just could not get to like at all. Maybe it is lines like: 'blizzards in the empty summer breeze' and 'every feeling changes hands, dissipates in the end' and rhyming the words material, ethereal, ephemeral and unmemorable. I could add a couple of rhymes to that, all a bit surreal and given the very slow tune, funereal.

Good luck to Ryan but this one is not for me. **Paul Collins**

Susan Werner KICKING THE BEEHIVE

Sleeve Dog Records
★★★★☆

A thoughtful mainly blues inspired collection sums up Susan Werner's latest

KICKING THE BEEHIVE, Werner's tenth solo album, has been produced by Rodney Crowell and is another classy song collection. This is the third occasion that Susan has recorded (an album) in Nashville, Darrell Scott having helmed *TIME BETWEEN TRAINS* (1998) while Canadian Colin Linden took charge of *NEW NON-FICTION* (2001). From one perspective, following a trio of 'project' releases, KICKING THE BEEHIVE is Iowa-bred Werner's first contemporary singer-songwriter collection per se since the foregoing 2001 title. While *I CAN'T BE NEW* (2004) and *THE GOSPEL TRUTH* (2007) were chock full of Werner-penned originals, the sonic approach of the former was strictly American Songbook, as for the latter that found Catholic-bred Werner's words explore her attitude to faith.

A University of Iowa voice graduate, circa 1990 Werner gained a master's degree in voice and musical history from Philadelphia's Temple University. Had she not attended a Nanci Griffith concert in Philly, these days Susan's would probably be pursuing a career as an opera singer. The latter should go some way to explaining why the late 20th century pop songs that constituted *CLASSICS* (2009) were given a classical music arrangement.

A driving backbeat launches the album title song which opens this collection. Werner's lyric adopts a quote attributed to author/lecturer Dale Carnegie (1888-1955)—sic. 'If you want to gather honey, don't kick over the beehive'—and turns it on its head. In the chorus the narrator attests: 'I keep kicking the beehive just to feel alive again, I keep bursting bubbles, stirring up trouble where I can.' Faced with losing the love of her life the narrator in (the ensuing) *Doctor Doctor* begs: 'Take everything I own, My work, my pride, my home' then adds 'But don't take my baby away.' Werner toured with Keb Mo early last year, and his slide guitar adds atmosphere to the latter title.

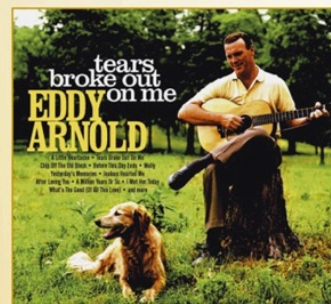
In the bittersweet *My Different Son* the precise nature of the health issue isn't defined—'He's not the same as everyone' and 'Schools and rules were never made for him'—nevertheless his loving mother/the narrator affirms that he is no less a treasure. It appears that in creating material for this album Susan undertook a southbound writing expedition that followed the course of the Mississippi River from Memphis to New Orleans and America's Gulf Coast. The album's already apparent blues influence is further confirmed by the 'field shout' inspired *I Know What I Want*. A deal of research obviously went into *The Last Words Of Bonnie Parker* wherein Werner channels the thoughts of the female half of Bonnie & Clyde, *Manhattan, Kansas* furnishes ample proof that the Iowan can compose exceptional 'big sky' pop melodies (ala Jimmy Webb) and wed them to poignant lyrics. Replete with a sly, wink-wink lyric, aided by Vince Gill (electric guitar), sometime Werner side-person Trina Hamlin (harmonica) and Crowell (acoustic guitar), Susan plays honky-tonk piano on the white-hot country rocker *Red Dress*.

Ringin' further, thoroughly engaging, musical changes Tony Harrell's greasy sounding Hammond organ supports the soulful *Botanical Greenery Blues*, a homeless person narrates the touching *Sleeping On A Train*, advancing (old) age brings the realisation and analysis of one's shortcomings in the acerbic *Irrelevance*, while the melody that supports the final song *On The Other Side* is gospel-tinged. **Arthur Wood**
<http://www.susanwerner.com/>



BEAR FAMILY RECORDS

THE NASHVILLE SOUND



In the late 1950s and early Sixties, Eddy Arnold returned to the Nashville Sound under Chet Atkins' supervision. Often overshadowed by his 1940s country classics and the lush 'countrypolitan' albums of the mid-60s, he created a remarkable body of work – including more than a dozen chart hits. This disc compiles 33 tracks that have been unavailable for 50 years, nearly all making their first stereo appearance! Among the highlights: *I Met Her Today* and *After Loving You* (both covered by Elvis), Phil Everly's *Real Love*, and hits like *A Little Heartache* and *Molly*, all with stellar instrumental backing from Chet Atkins, Grady Martin, Floyd Cramer, Jerry Reed and others.

EDDY ARNOLD TEARS BROKE OUT ON ME

BCD 17205 AN CD with 33 tracks and 44-page booklet



'GENTLEMAN JIM' REEVES

Perhaps the biggest star of the famous Nashville Sound, Jim Reeves also was country music's foremost international ambassador. His legacy remains with late-Fifties and Sixties country-pop hits like *Four Walls* and *He'll Have To Go*, and on this compilation artists like Charlie Rich and Faron Young pay tribute (both sing about *Gentleman Jim*) while others reply to Jim's songs (Jeannie Black: *He'll Have To Stay*, Hank Snow: *When Mexican Joe met Jole Blonde*). Also includes Eddie Clatterbuck's *I Saw Jim Reeves Up There* and a selection of Jim Reeves' duets and original recordings.

THE JIM REEVES CONNECTION

BCD 10341 AN CD with 31 tracks and 28-page booklet



BEAR FAMILY RECORDS
Germany • P.O. Box 1154
D-27727 Hambergen
MAIL: bear@bear-family.com
WEB: www.bear-family.com

UK fans, check your local record shop
or www.rollercoasterrecords.com
ROLLERCOASTER RECORDS Ltd
Rock House • London Road
St Marys • Stroud • GL6 8PU • UK
TEL: 01453 - 88 62 52
MAIL: sales@rollercoasterrecords.com

June 2011 • Issue 107 • www.maverick-country.com

CD REVIEWS • NEW RELEASES

maverick 77