

THE REMEDY CLUB

★★★★
Back To You

(OWN LABEL) www.theremedyclub.ie



There's a comforting sense of domesticity to this Irish husband-and-wife duo's latest release, with Aileen Mythen's honeyed vocals nestling effortlessly alongside K.J. McEvoy's evident guitar-picking skills to create a slick country-roots sound.

As might be expected, the bulk of the dozen tracks on *Back To You* feel very much like love letters written to and for each other: heartfelt entreaties to stick with the project in light of the inevitable speed-bumps that might emerge along the way. It's sass-free and determinedly inoffensive throughout: 'Roll With It' packs a swinging, brass-infused gospel vibe which enlivens the banal platitudes of its chorus, while the aptly named bar-room romp 'Worthwhile' offers up a tasty gumbo of Southern-state musical staples.

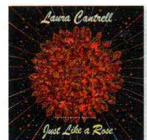
Indeed, if there's a weakness to this well-produced package, it's the resolute absence of any kind of edge: restless closer 'I'm Going Home' aside, whatever sense of drama might be lurking within the songs is often neatly wrapped up within three to four minutes (presumably just in time to put the kids to bed). But then, that's perhaps the key to its easy-going charm. Cannily arranged and flawlessly executed, *The Remedy Club* come across as undeniably pleasant company, equally good for festival sets and dinner parties alike.

Chris Carter

LAURA CANTRELL

★★★★
Just Like A Rose – The Anniversary Sessions

(PROPELLER) www.lauracantrell.com



An established country singer with a long-standing interest in The Beatles, specifically George Harrison, Laura Cantrell

offers *Just Like A Rose* on the twentieth anniversary of her recording career. Her delicious vocals recall the likes of Eddi Reader, Kirsty MacColl and Nanci Griffith on bouncy opening track 'Push The Swing' with its rippling organ lines.

'Bide My Time' adds pedal steel and mandolin for a sweetly reflective cut, as Cantrell's melodies slowly saturate the mind. 'Brand New Eyes' has the resolved bearing of someone starting afresh, with a classic girl-group chorus, while the title track swaggers among all manner of rock'n'roll references. 'When The Roses Bloom Again' was co-written by Jeff Tweedy and finds Steve Earle lending a hearty vocal to its spirited Celtic groove.

However, the indie folk of 'Unaccompanied', 'I'm Gonna Miss This Town' and 'Secret Language' have a pleasantly languid flow yet don't really strike the head or heart. 'Good Morning Mr. Afternoon' by Joe Flood is sunny and jazzy, like The Kinks meeting Rickie Lee Jones, though the album is rather characterised by its two closing songs.

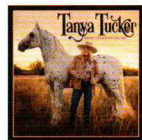
There's the nostalgic loveliness of 'Holding You In My Heart' but a rather sprawling history lesson in 'AWM – Bless'.

Gareth Thompson

TANYA TUCKER

★★★★
Sweet Western Sound

(FANTASY) www.tanyatucker.com



In her fifty-one years as a hit-making musician, Tanya Tucker's probably seen it all. From the teenage charm of 'Delta Dawn', via pole position in the Outlaw scene, receipt of two Grammys, and a place in the Country Music Hall of Fame, she's become a stateswoman of country music. Resilient too, in bouncing back from the 'personal problems' that can dog artists who enjoy success but lack the essential support mechanisms.

2019 saw her win her second Grammy and woo a new generation of fans with *While I'm Livin'*, and she has again called Brandi Carlile and Shooter Jennings into action in recording *Sweet Western Sound*. With a voice now timbrous and well seasoned, and her trademark mastery of phrasing, *Sweet Western Sound* is a joy. Bernie Taupin's lyric to the soulful 'Breakfast In Birmingham', referencing The Beatles, Arthur Alexander and 'the same old C-sharp harp' tell a moving story, and 'When The Rodeo Is Over (Where Does The Cowboy Go?)' is Tex Ritter reimagined.

The twin mid-album country soul ballads, 'Waltz Across A Moment' and 'Ready As I'll Never Be', are remarkable, where with only rudimentary instrumental and vocal adornment Tanya wrests jaw-dropping emotion from the considerable reserves she's garnered through half a century of soul baring.

David Innes

The songs and sound of **Lara Taubman** are a gift. This New York-based artist is only two albums into her career but already her prowess and promise is fully on display. With a voice that hovers a vast canyon of influences, she manages to maintain an authentic identity that marks each composition. That said, there is a hint of Laura Nyro in her tones.

"I remember when I was a child," Lara reminisces, "when my mom would drive me around in a station wagon, or carpooling when I was a child; that's just what was on the radio, and she was playing it. I guess I really liked it. There are times when the tone of my voice is really eerie, and I guess that tone is very similar sometimes, but it's not intentional.

"I've been listening very seriously to music since I can remember. My mother was a concert pianist and my dad is an opera-obsessed Bach lover, and my brother is rock'n'roll obsessed, so I was bombarded. Music has been at the centre of my life, so it was just such a pleasure when I began to make music."

That love and the music Lara was exposed to certainly inspired a route for her to take and to forge an undeniable character: "I knew I had a voice, and for a kid who did not do well in school, and didn't do well in much of anything, I felt like that was the only time people saw me, and there wasn't a lot of resistance to create a dynamic with other people and connect."

Although currently based in New York, her background stretches deeper into the heart of American music. "I'm from the South. I'm from that part of the world [Montana] where old-time music is prevalent. Where The Carter Family is from, in those hills and in those mountains – I'm from there. It's interesting, the first time I woke up to write, what influenced me was not the vast amounts of music from all the different places I loved – it was old-time, and it was Texas folk musicians like Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt, and Steve Earle. That was my structure at the beginning. That's who I turned to, to learn how to write and to learn how to play, and I listened to them obsessively."

Her latest album, the delightful *Ol' Kentucky Light*, contains gentle nods to those troubadours while keeping an originality intact, while the live stage creates a place for these songs to heal. "I feel like this is my reason for being – to make music and to write these songs. Music helped me so much as a child. I feel my songs are there to help people who are despairing or just need to feel better... or just a mental shift that can create a window, and that there is always a way out even if it is fleeting. My thing is that I really believe in connection."

On her latest EP, *Blindspot*, Lara revisits tracks from her 2020 debut *Revelation*. The impassioned 'Snakes In The Snow' certainly benefits from a new sheen. "Steve Williams [producer] had the thought of doing it, and it seemed like the thing to do. I love my first album, but I guess it was music that we had back there, and now I have this incredible band in my home city of New York, so why not? Let's see what we make."

KEVIN BURKE

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