

# NO DEPRESSION

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Perhaps I missed it, but I didn't see where Radney Foster's latest, *Revival* (Devil's River Records), had been reviewed here so here's my review, which originally appeared in The Texas Star Tribune. I thought it was a great record and deserves some attention here.

Some may think, after seeing the cover of Radney Foster's new record, *Revival*, that it's a gospel record. Please believe me when I say this is much more than a gospel record. It's a record born from the very spirit that is the heart of the artist's soul. It's very close and personal record to him, and it shows on virtually every track of this fine record produced and recorded on his own label (Devil's River Records) .

He chose to either write all of the songs himself or collaborate only with a few very close and trusted friends (Darrell Brown and Jay Clementi) due to the personal nature of the songs. This is one of the most spiritual and satisfying records I've heard this year.

Like in cooking, for the food to taste exceptionally good, love must be one of the main, if not the main ingredient. That is the case here. Love is the main ingredient in the songwriting and it's the main ingredient in the performances. The artist was able to transfer his love and personal bond for each song to the artists performing them.

Mr. Foster included his long-time road band on this record and appropriately enough, dubbed them The Confessions. You can tell by listening, they love the music as much as the creators of the music.

The album opens with the title cut, "A Little Revival", released for Texas radio on June 29th. The song is a rocking, guitar driven tune about a very confusing world where bad things can happen but something good can come from them; "If it's Jerusalem or Tiananmen Square/Didn't it all get started 'Cause someone stood up somewhere". Very thought provocative lyrics indeed, which end with – "Between the dawn and the darkness/The ashes and the spark/My miracle moment was giving you my heart". As mentioned earlier, this is a very close, personal, and spiritual record and it starts out with a bang.

It threads nicely with the very next tune, "Forgiveness". "You can ask for it sitting in a pew underneath that pretty painted glass/Search of it in shadows hidden deep in your checkered past/It'll feel sometimes like you're looking for a ghost/But then you see it in the eyes of the ones that love you most" Then comes the chorus - "Forgiveness, everybody needs it/Forgiveness, give it and receive it/Sometimes the toughest thing you can give yourself/Forgiveness". Beautiful to say the least, and certainly words we can all relate too and some point in our lives.

I was hooked by the first two tracks, but then I heard "I Know You Can Hear Me". Talk about up close and personal. This song literally brought tears to my eyes. It's a song about wise words we have all heard in our past. Words so familiar, you would have thought there was a manual to not just raising kids and being a Father, but to being a son or a daughter as well. We've all heard a parent say things like, "I love you son, but this is going to hurt me more than it will hurt you", just before you got your little butt spanked, but this is much more than that.

This is a song about a son using a variation of the verbiage his Father used on him during a disciplinary event in his past and relating it directly to his unconscious Father while on his death bed. The words are eloquent- "I know you can hear me/You don't have to say a thing/You've been so strong, you're not alone/And I know that you're in pain/I know that you love me/You can let go whenever you're ready/And I know you can you can hear me". I can't remember a time when a song touched me the way this song did. I'm not sure it's ever occurred.

That's how this record is. It's as if Radney Foster is sitting with you and sharing his spiritual journey with you. A witness, if you will.

Mr. Foster invited the likes of Dierks Bentley on *Until It's Gone* and Darius Rucker harmonizes nicely on *Angel Flight*.

Incidentally, on the latter recording, co-written with Darden Smith, came about after Mr. Smith had a conversation with a pilot with the National Guard who flies these "angel flights". An angel flight is when a fallen brethren is being flown home for his final resting place. It's from the view point of the pilot of those final flights and their passengers. Mr. Foster and Mr. Smith are donating proceeds from this song to a charity that provides assistance to military families beset by tragedy.

I have only touched the very surface of this record. It's one of the best records I've heard this year. My fear is that it will be categorized as a "Christian" or "Gospel" record, which is okay. But in my opinion, it needs to be heard by everyone, not just Christians, and the only ones who listen to Christian radio stations, are other Christians. I don't want this to be perceived as a negative. I just believe this is an important record and should be heard by not only those who know the word of God, whoever God is, but more importantly, to those who haven't heard it yet.

This record is an absolute triumph.