



Title
Put The O Back Into Country

Artist
Shooter Jennings

Label
Humphead Records

Rating
Certainly on the wild side of Country. This album is for those who like their music more on the edge. If you like Travis Tritt or Pat Green then take a listen to the next generation of the 'Outlaw' family - you will not be disappointed

Track listing

- 1 Put The O Back Into Country
- 2 4th Of July
- 3 Lonesome Blues
- 4 Solid Country Gold
- 5 Busted In Baylor County
- 6 Sweet Savannah
- 7 Stead At The Wheel
- 8 Manifesto No 1
- 9 The Letter
- 10 The Southern Comfort
- 11 Daddy's Farm

Bonus live tracks

- 1 ELeCtric Rodeo
- 2 Gone To Carolina
- 3 Manifesto No 2
- 4 It Ain't Easy

The surname may be familiar and the approach to life inevitably is coloured by parental influences. Yet the music of Shooter Jennings is very different from that delivered by his 'Outlaw' father Waylon several decades previously. Put The O Back In Country is his latest album and it is certainly not for the faint-hearted. Shooter Jennings and his band have put together an album that is heavily influenced by both West Coast rock and traditional Country sounds. The result is an exciting sound that hits the listener full on.

The tracks range from out and out rock songs such as Steady At The Wheel and Daddy's Farm which have a feeling of ZZ Top, through to Sweet Savannah, a gentle ballad played almost entirely on acoustic and dobro guitars. Shooter's songs are also eclectic in their style - there is the traditional shuffle of Solid Country Gold and Manifesto No 1, featuring all types of guitar, through to the gentle rock of the title track, 4th Of July (featuring George Jones) and Lonesome Blues which are reminiscent of the early days of The Eagles. Busted In Baylor County offers some express, clean picking on electric, pedal and slide guitar along with some lovely banjo and fiddle in the background, whereas there is some evocative, melancholic playing of slide and dobro in the soulful Southern Comfort.

Four bonus live tracks give an insight to the music. Driven by heavy guitar riffs, the band clearly generates huge excitement amongst their audiences. Shooter's raw vocals cut through some thunderous playing in Electric Rodeo and screaming leads in Gone To California and are complimented by some tight backing vocals. So if you like your music a little on the wild side, then take a stroll this way!



Title
Burnt Toast & Offerings

Artist
Gretchen Peters

Label
Curb

Rating
Contemporary folk/Country at its very best. Gretchen Peters is one of the very best when it comes to the blend of traditional sounds with new songs. This album is a reminder of just how good she really is.

Track listing

- 1 Ghost
- 2 Sunday Morning (Up & Down My Street)
- 3 Summer People
- 4 Jezebel
- 5 Thirsty
- 6 England Blues
- 7 The Lady Of The House
- 8 One For My Baby
- 9 The Way You Move Me
- 10 This Town
- 11 Breakfast At Our House
- 12 To Say Goodbye

Perhaps better known for writing smash hits for other artists, including Martina McBride's Independence Day (see review on these pages), folk/Country performer Gretchen Peters has released her latest album to coincide with her Wine, Women And Song tour in Britain. Burnt Toast & Offerings is a collection of lyrical, sensitive and often poignant songs that stir emotions in any listener.

All the tracks have a very clear acoustic undertone that is supplemented in a variety of ways in this lovely collection. Gretchen's plaintive vocals give the collection a special feel from the aptly haunting opener, Ghost through the driving shuffle of England Blues to the anthemic, dreamy climax of the album, Breakfast In Our House. There is no question of Gretchen's background as almost every track opens with acoustic guitar riffs that develop into a wide range of musical styles. The one outstanding exception is a revamp of the standard One For My Baby. This is reworked as a silky smooth piano blues with some luscious strings to create a real classic.

Gretchen's songs are very much about everyday life and titles such as Sunday Morning, Summer People, Breakfast At Our House and This Town illustrate perhaps what this album is all about. The only concern I would have about this collection is that there is too much emphasis on atmosphere in such songs as Jezebel, Thirsty and Ghost and at times it seems to lack drive and energy.

Having said that, Gretchen Peters is very much about quality song writing and this latest album shows why she is one of the finest.