

RECORD REVIEWS

Various Artists Highway Prayer — A Tribute to Adam Carroll Independent Release

THERE'S A PHOTOGRAPHER'S eye and there's a poet's eye. **Adam Carroll's** songs seem to mesh the two styles together, using words to paint the photographs of life on life's terms.

There's 16 Adam Carroll songs on this project, produced by **Jenni Finlay** and **Brian T. Atkinson**. But, Adam only sings on the first one, "My Only Good Shirt." The rest are sung by those who admire this newer-age Guy Clark-style songwriter.

Jason Eady sings "Errol's Song," making a listener wish he knew Errol. "He held my hand when my boots got too heavy, with the mud from the rice fields coming to my behind... We walked through the graveyard of the rusted combines." And a look at characters *Scarface* and that dirty-haired girl, in their usual hidey-holes, namely a bar, in **Hayes Carll's** cover of "Girl With the Dirty Hair." And the singer laments, "If I had me some sense, I'd be five years gone by now."

A personal favorite is "Karaoke Cowboy," covered by **Noel McKay** and **Brennen Leigh**. "In a Stetson hat and some snake skin boots, a bollo tie and jeans, There's the karaoke cowboy, his name is Bob, at the bar in Grand Saline." Bob is clearly seen as a Branson and Nashville wash-up, a success until "a trailer park tornado took all of that away."

Terri Hendrix immortalizes the pot-growing couple in "Red Bandana Blues." Hippies, who never grew up and never moved to town. "Two tie-dyed, brain-fried misfits, who lived in a shack in the back of the Bodark woods ... And in trouble they got deeper when they grew their crops of reefer. Because business and pleasure were two words they got confused. And the days went by with the red bandana blues."

James McMurtry, who sings "Screen Door," is quoted on the liner notes as saying, "Adam's like a young **Kris Kristofferson**. He writes about things that are older than me." And the notes also state that the record is dedicated to "the memories of **Guy Clark** and **Kent Finlay**, who forever changed Texas music."

—MARY JANE FARMER

Alan Fox Band Coal Back Sky Mesquite Street Records

THE **Alan Fox Band** IS AN established Fort Worth Based group of talented and dedicated musicians; **Alan Fox**, **Donnie Pendleton**, **Donnie Hart**, **Greg Cagle** and **Terry Salyer**. Their newest CD, *Coal Back Sky* released in October 2016 on Mesquite Street Records showcases a unique brand of Texas Southern Rock. From "Redemption" to "The Path," I was swept along on a wave of undeniably good music. It is no mystery as to why

they were named the 2016 Nashville Rock Band of the year.

The vintage 1920s intro into "Redemption" grabs attention and then smooth vocals and **Donnie Pendleton's** stellar guitar licks takes it to a

rocking crescendo. "Riverboat Man" starts out sounding like Alabama and then moves into **Lynyrd Skynyrd's** style of rock and tells a story about a man who makes his living on the muddy waters trying to work his way back home. Again, the guitar solo is nothing short of fantastic! "Moonshine" plays on words when **AFB** sings about buying Moonshine from an old lady and then how a country boy goes crazy when the Moon shines down. "Coal Black Sky" uses symbolism to describe agonizing depths of depression. "If You're Scared," rocks hard about a one-night party where everybody should come. "If you're scared, say you're scared and if not, we'll see you there."

"In the shadow of 'El Cabron,' time stands still I know." The band delivers "Chase Away the Shadows" tight on the next tune and then slows down to a sultry blues-rock on "Never Learn." **Donnie's** down and dirty solid rocking guitar takes us on the "Ride," a song about being on the road and about life in general. "The Path" ends this high-energy CD with reflection. *Coal Black Sky* was produced by **Mike Gage** and **Alan Petsche**. All songs were written by the **Alan Fox Band** except for "El Cabron" and "Never Learn." If you love Texas rock, you need this CD in your player"—turned up loud.

—JAN SIKES

Maylee Thomas Band Don't Give Up Love Life Records

MAYLEE THOMAS BELIEVES that music should be a passionate expression of the soul. With the release of her new CD, *Don't Give Up*, that belief takes wings and flies. The band consists of **Maylee, George Fuller, Gerry Fisher, Joe Mansir** and **Jay Brown**.

They have been a fixture in



Maylee Thomas Band



Alan Fox Band

the North Texas Music scene for many years and the fifteen tracks on *Don't Give Up* guarantees that they aren't going anywhere. **Maylee** begins "Satisfied" in **Etta James'** soulful style and then kicks it into high gear rocking hard. "Don't Bring Me Down," is a sincere plea. "Texas Home" testifies to a deep sincere love for the Lone Star State. **Jon Christopher Davis** joins **Maylee** on "Crazy's What I Need" and the ride with it, "More Than Enough," "No More Tears" and "This is My Road" reminds me of a rollercoaster. It starts out flying down a steep incline, levels off, slows almost to a stop, then hurtles you around a hair-raising curve.

"I Keep Falling" showcases **Maylee's** shining ability as a pop singer while "Beautiful" is tender and forgiving.

The title track, "Don't Give Up" features **Jay Brown** on the keys while **Maylee's** impassioned vocals encourage and uplift. "Babe it's hard to imagine/That I'd ever let you down/I should have stayed home holding on/Instead of out there running around/Don't give up on me..."

The honesty and raw emotion in "When You Fall" could apply to anyone who has ever screwed up. Pop-Gospel-Soul comes close to describing "Lay Down Your Burden."

"Angel in My Bed" is a tender love song written by **Maylee** for, and dedicated to, **George Fuller**. There are two bonus tracks on the CD; "Better Day" is an ode to our great country, America, and hope for the future. **Maylee's** cover of "When I Need You" is the perfect ending to this blend of songs and showcases her stunning vocal ability.

With this CD, the **Maylee Thomas Band** has delivered a great mix of all that defines them and the fans will not be disappointed.

—JAN SIKES

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TEXAS NEXUS

BY MARY JANE FARMER

I'VE OFTEN BEEN INTRIGUED by words, and often curious about their origins, and often read the script as I watch **Shakespeare** plays, marking and noting all the many words and phrases that we often hear, which The Bard coined himself, such as "hobnob" and "all that glitters is not gold."

Then, one day on good ol' Facebook, I saw one of the words in the list below for the first time, and it was defined, and that made me more curious about others. So, here's a little bit I found out.

Gig—Slang for a musical engagement. Originally coined in the 1920s by jazz musicians, the term, short for the word "engagement," now refers to any aspect of performing such as assisting with performance and attending musical performance.

Gurm—A term created in Nashville, used to describe an irritating, over-zealous fan, one who won't stop at simply being a fan of the music. A gurm tries to find a way to be involved in the musician's life somehow. A fan who talks his way backstage, that bothers the artist or band in a restaurant while they eat, or in a store while they shop. A gurm

oversteps normal boundaries.

The first time I met **Randy Travis**, unexpectedly, I just sat in my chair, tucked my head down, and chanted silently, "Don't go gummy, don't go gummy, don't go gummy," and the chant worked. But then, when I got to meet **Reba** face to face, I'll admit to being a tad-bit gummy with her. Sorry, **Reba**.

Busk—"He got his musical start by busking the streets of Berkeley." To busk means to play music on the streets for donations, aka tips. This term started in the mid-17th century, a spin-off of the French word *busquer*, or the Italian *buscare*, or the Spanish *buscar*. The term later meant to "go around selling," then by the mid-19th century, "go around performing."

Askhole—Someone who asks the musician a question in the middle of his song.

Cover—A song performed or recorded later on by another artist. The origin clearly seems to be in terms of "covering" the market in a business sense. The music industry before radio was much more regional and the term, if it were around then, could simply have had a geographical sense. Several sites say

it dates back to the turn-of-the-century Tin Pan Alley days and likely that the business practice was entrenched and only slightly modified during the period of R&B covers by white rock and roll artists. It is now morphed to describe the performance of old songs and previously-recorded material. **Don McLean**, of "American Pie" fame, disagreed on the Website *Metafilter.com*, but said that "**Madonna** did not cover 'American Pie,' she just sang an old song, and made an old songwriter mighty happy."

Karaoke—The word itself comes from combining two Japanese words. "Kara" comes from *karappo*, meaning 'empty,' and "oke" is a shortened version of the word *okestura*, meaning 'orchestra.' So, the word *Karaoke* literally means empty orchestra. One source said it began several decades ago in Kobe, Japan, and others attribute its origin to the 1950s cartoons and television shows where people sang along to words on the screen, with the tempo kept by a ball bouncing in time over the words.

Thanks to Merriam-Webster, Wikipedia, Ask MetaFilter, and KaraokeKanta Websites for much of this information. ■