

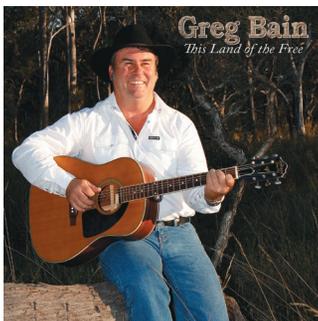
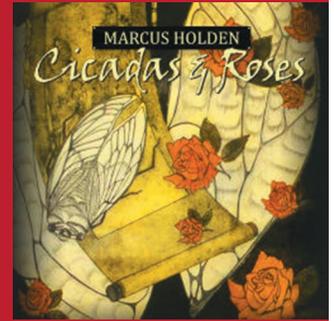
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**CICADAS & ROSES** MARCUS HOLDEN ROUSABOUT RECORDS

Marcus Holden's best known in country circles as a fiddle player, having been involved in numerous projects, including the Fiddlers Feast and the Golden Fiddle Awards. But Marcus is also an accomplished classical violinist, and his new album draws on that as much as his folk and country sensibility. This is an exquisite album, which takes some of the great musical classics and brings them back to their roots, with a simpler, more folk sensibility that works beautifully. This album is stripped back and organic, but at the same time it conveys the subtleties of these timeless tunes in a warm, accessible way. My favourites included *Bach's Brandenburg Concerto In G Major*, the ethereal *Winter* from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, the gentle *Salut D'Amor* and Marcus's own wonderful composition, *To Say Goodbye*. Other standouts are *Sicilienne* and *Song Of India*. Marcus's playing is superb, as is that of fellow musicians Raimondo Fioravanti, Garry Steel, Andrew Toner and Elsen Price. This album is a gorgeous, rich musical tapestry that is a sheer joy to listen to.

ROUSABOUT RECORDS/UNDERCOVER MUSIC RRR62

SUSAN JARVIS



**THIS LAND OF THE FREE**

GREG BAIN

LBS MUSIC

The fact that Greg Bain loves Australian Bush Ballads and story-songs and is very good at performing them is patently obvious as you listen to *This Land Of The Free*. His third album since winning the Australian Bush Balladeers Association Star Quest 2007 shows why his prominence as one of our top-shelf balladeers continues to grow. As respected broadcaster Ian Crombie says in the cover notes "it is Greg's uniqueness that makes him stand out .... Greg possesses a style of his own which makes him recognisable amongst all other artists." Twelve strong Australian songs from the pen of Greg and esteemed writers like Ben Jacobs, Shaza Leigh, Rick Aitchison and Michael Clare. All enjoyable, but this album would be value for money simply for the title track, a true story about four generations of the one family who have protected our country and way of life through military service, it's a classic in the making. Producer, Lindsay Butler has done Greg proud on this project.

LBS Music LBS145CD

Garry Coxhead



**KICKIN' UP DUST**

THE VIPER CREEK BAND

INDEPENDENT

The opening track, *Tonight*, *Tonight*, lets us know that these boys know how to rock in up, but by the last track, *Pour Me Something Stronger*, we are left in no doubt that lead singer Damien Baguley knows where country is. Having taken the Tamworth festival by storm over the last couple of years this album consolidates a place in the recording side of the business that shows they can come up with the goods in the studio as well. Yes, it's predominately a country rock outing, with the almost obligatory anthem to the amber fluid (*Thank God For Beer*), broken hearts (*I Used To Call You Mine*) and a call to return to the country (*My Hometown*). The band delivers it all with drive, passion and a clarity of vision. Production (Simon Johnson) and session players make this album a genuine contender for contemporary country accolades. Mark this country rock and add Kickin' Up Dust to your collection.

INDEPENDENT/WJO DISTRIBUTION

JON WOLFE



**LIVE AT REVOLUTION**

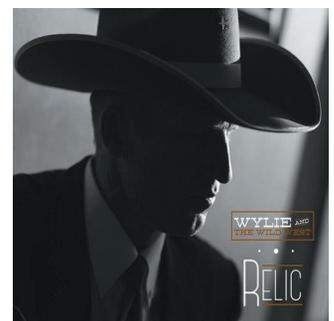
THE GOOD LOVELIES

INDEPENDENT

There's something about Canadians that really connects to Australians, and their music very definitely has that effect, particularly in the hands of a young, talented act. Canadian girl group The Good Lovelies are like a breath of fresh air, with their quirky, folk-tinged original alt-country songs. These three girls – Caroline Brooks, Kerri Ough and Sue Passmore – have been performing together since 2009, and in that time have picked up a swag of Juno Awards [Canada's Golden Guitars]. This album, their fourth full-length recording, shows why. It showcases a range of their songs, including three covers, of Bruce Springsteen's *Mr State Trooper*, Gram Parsons' *Juanita* and a spine-tingling version of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*. But it's their wonderful originals that really leave their mark, including *Winter Hours*, which showcases their three part-harmonies perfectly, the delightful *Duvet Love*, *Mrs T* and *Lie Down*. There are also some wonderful stories about the songs, which provide a great introduction to the band. This album was a delightful surprise.

GLOO5

SUSAN JARVIS



**RELIC**

WYLIE AND THE WILD WEST

HI-LINE RECORDS

If you are one of them folk that lament the loss of the words "and western" from the phrase "country music", you've probably already caught on to Wylie and The Wild West. *Relic* is album number twenty for the real life cowboy and his long-time travelling companions, and it's just about as old-school as it gets – think classic 1960s country with a little yodeling thrown in for good measure. But you get the feeling that there's a lot more to Wylie Gustafson than cliché – not just in the wryly humourous lyrical moments but also in the overall musicality of he and the veteran band. Then of course there's his beautiful cover of KD Lang's *Diet of Strange Places*. In an age where authenticity is making a comeback, an album like *Relic* might well find itself on CD racks next to a Lyle Lovett anthology, Willie's latest duets effort or a Drive-By-Truckers-Best-Of. It's highly listenable, real country music.

HI-LINE RECORDS HLR0114

ALEX TURNBULL