



Angie Palmer

Meanwhile, As Night Falls...

Akrasia Records: PMCD5 (CD)

Angie Palmer is a great favourite of Bob Harris, a DJ who recognises a quality songstress when he hears one. I interviewed her and her partner Paul Mason for this magazine a few years back and came away hugely impressed by what they both had to say. Palmer's likened to Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan; the Joni references can be heard in her pure voice and the beauty and subtlety of her guitar playing, whilst I suspect the Dylan observations are aimed at the panoramic, deeply ethereal lyrics. That department is handled by Paul, and as on previous releases, he shows an amazing depth of knowledge and an ability to conjure up the richest imagery.

The Palmer/Mason partnership is balanced to perfection, and this album is probably their most fully realised work to date. The band Angie has around her are all first class musicians but they never crowd her out or smother the essence of the songs. When a real drive is needed, like on country rocker I Hear That Locomotive, they provide the necessary kick, but they drop back and caress on the more introspective numbers with equal aplomb.

Palmer and Mason wrote *Meanwhile... deep* in the heart of the French countryside surrounded by a dense forest, which may account for the mysterious and secluded feel of these beautifully written and performed songs.

DH

RECORDING
MUSIC



Leo Kottke

6 & 12 String Guitar

Takoma/Classic Records (200)

Leo Kottke's debut album is one of those records which I was fortunate enough to grow up with, so my opinion of it is not strictly neutral. Having said that it's probably the best acoustic guitar record made by anyone who isn't John Fahey. But it's on Fahey's Takoma label and reproduced here in its original US black and white cover rather than the orange variation sold on these shores. Kottke was clearly influenced by Fahey, but you are unlikely to mix the two up because the exuberant youth has a clattering and sparkling style that is all his own. One of the few people to pick a 12 string guitar, the noise he makes with it is huge and bodacious; it zings under his bottle slide and makes more noise than a whole truckful of regular acoustic pickers.

Kottke has a dry sense of humour evinced by the sleeve notes which include a reference to his voice sounding "like geese farts on a foggy day", fortunately this didn't stop him writing equally ry songs for later albums but on here it's all wood and steel. Of the 14 tracks, only one is not an original and all of them are entrancing.

This Classic Records pressing is on its new Clarity vinyl, transparent vinyl without the usual black carbon element. Next to one of Classics' standard 200g Quix pressings it sounds calmer and with lower noise which is a bonus.

JK

RECORDING
MUSIC



Brandi Carlile

The Story

Columbia Records: 8697286782 (CD)

Washington DC-based singer Brandi Carlile got her big break on the strength of a demo she sent to Columbia Records. That resulted in her self-titled debut album, a fine blend of country, country-folk and light rockers. There was enough about it to mark her out as one to watch and sure enough, this release confirms we're in the presence of something pretty special. The songwriting's sharpened up considerably, and that voice, always a remarkable tool, is now much more developed and capable of reaching right into the core of the heart.

With the backing of a fine cast of musicians, Carlile takes the listener on a mesmerising trip through the emotions. She has a lovely catch in her voice, a sensuous rasp that hypnotizes the senses, and a quite sensational range that when pushed to the outer edges threatens to crack, but never quite does. She's a little bit (authentic) country, but a long way from the processed, formulaic Nashville machine, and when she decides to rock, she couldn't be further away from it if she tried. That's what makes her special; her amazing ability to get inside the song and pull every last drop of passion and ache from it.

There are 13 mainly self-written numbers on *The Story* with not a single filler in sight. If she keeps this standard up, she's going to hit the perfect 10.

DH

RECORDING
MUSIC

