

Vintage Guitar[®] m a g a z i n e

May 2012

Hit List



Carolann Ames

Laurel Canyon Road

Self-distributed

This is the fifth CD from Wyoming-born Ames. She's always been a skilled songwriter but has steadily developed into a better and ultimately first-rate recording artist. Ames has been praised for her "angelic" voice, and that's a good, if somewhat hyperbolic, adjective to use. But too often singers gifted with an instrument as lovely as Ames' allow their vocal skills to substitute for true emotion in their delivery and for substance in both songwriting and record making. That's a trap that Ames avoids.

The songs here are all strong original numbers written by Ames alone, in tandem with guitar player Steve

Peavey, or in various combinations with the rest of the band. The best of them, "Sugar Creek," "Steel Rose," and "Bed Of Roses," are made just that much better by Peavey's guitar and Melissa Harley's fiddle complementing the vocal. Since most of the tunes are mid-tempo, big kudos also go to drummer Rob Hooper, who keeps things snapping without overplaying and forcing his way in. He can also step to it in livelier numbers like "Love Remains Unbroken" and "Everybody's Somebody In A Honky Tonk" which recalls some of Jackson Browne's uptempo tunes like "Redneck Friend." If you haven't yet "discovered" Carolann Ames, *Laurel Canyon Road* is a good spot to jump in. – **RA**