



THE SHOOTOUTS
BULLSEYE

5 ★★★★★

I Don't Think About You Any More / Rattlesnake Whiskey / Another Mother / Hurt Heartbroke / Bullseye / Here Come The Blues / Everything I Know / Waiting On You / Missing The Mark / I Still Care / Forget To Forget /

Saturday Night Town
Producer: Chuck Mead
Independent
36:29

I thoroughly enjoyed The Shootouts' debut album *Quick Draw*, their performance at the Rock'n'Roll Cafe in Memphis was one of the highlights of my trip to the Ameripolitan Awards last year; plus, whilst there, I was also able to interview front man Ryan Humbert for this magazine. Suffice it to say I have been looking forward to hearing this album for some time.

Also in that Memphis audience last February was Chuck Mead; he had undertaken the 400 plus mile round trip drive from Nashville as part of

his research before agreeing to produce *Bullseye*.

My eager anticipation of this release was not in vain. It is a beauty. I have read various comments about *Bullseye* which draw the comparison between The Shootouts and BR5-49 and whilst on certain tracks I would agree I don't accept any assertion that it is Mead's influence on the desk which has achieved it. I believe the similarity has deeper roots in that both bands comprise fine musicians who not only play well but also possess an impeccable understanding for the feel of what they are playing.

This is an excellent mix of pure honky-tonk country delightfully seasoned with

boundary pushing forays into Western Swing, rockabilly, ballads and that difficult to imitate Bakersfield sound.

Ryan Humbert's song writing impresses throughout; I admire the way he can take an extremely personal and heartbreaking experience and make it a message which applies to every one of us as he does with *Another Mother*. It is a song which had it been possible to pitch it to the likes of George Jones or Ricky Van Shelton could well have been a smash hit single for those artists in their heyday.

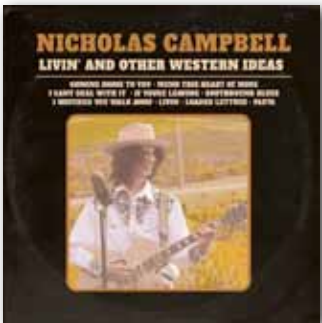
Brian Poston's notable guitar skills provide an attention grabbing intro to the Spaghetti Western style *Rattlesnake Whiskey* and take the lead in the

instrumental title track but there is no star in this show it is very much a team effort – and a very successful one too.

If The Shootouts were introduced to British and other northern European audiences the right way I believe they could establish themselves as festival headliners in a very short space of time. An appearance on a sympathetic television show such as "Later with Jools Holland" would obviously help but meantime let's hope a lot of radio people pick up on this album and play the hell out of it.

This album will be in my Pick of 2021 list for sure and I dare say I won't be the only one to rate it.

Chris Smith



NICHOLAS CAMPBELL
LIVIN' AND OTHER WESTERN IDEAS

3 ★★★★★

Coming Home To You / Mend This Heart Of Mine / I Can't Deal With It / If You're Leaving / Southbound Blues / I Watched You Walk Away / Livin' / Loaded Lettuce / Pasta

Producer: not listed
Nicholas Campbell
28:42

Nicholas is a young Canadian singer-songwriter from Ontario. *Livin' and Other Western Ideas* is a pretty solid debut, especially considering that he's still a teenager, with another great 'throwback' cover - keep those Western shirts coming!

The skilled musician cites Brian Setzer as one of his influences on his website, alongside names that will please many readers of this magazine, such as Faron Young and George Jones, and the first track *Coming Home To You* definitely has a Stray Cats feel to it - as does track five, *Southbound Blues*.

Nicholas has a voice ideally suited to classic country and it truly shines on tunes like *Mend This Heart of Mine* (which boasts some brilliant backing vocals), the twang-heavy *If You're Leaving* and the gorgeous *I Watched You Walk Away*. I felt the music lent a bit too heavily towards rockabilly at times, though I loved the Spaghetti Western-esque instrumental, *Pasta*.

Nicholas Campbell has real potential and I expect to hear great things from him in the future. He definitely has a five-star album in him but this, despite some excellent moments, isn't quite it.

Adrian Peel



BRIGITTE DEMEYER
SEEKER

3 ★★★★★

All The Blue / Cat Man Do / Salt Of The Earth / Louisiana / Calamity Gone / Already In / Ain't No Mister / Wishbone / Seeker / Roots And Wings And Bones

Producer: Jano Rix
BDM Records
35:36

DeMeyer has teamed up with The Wood Brothers' drummer Jano Rix. Given his blues credentials and her history of Americana roots releases it's a great pairing. He's helped write the album and produced a tasteful acoustic bluesy set. When I say bluesy then we're talking more about sophisticated New Orleans than down home Clarksdale. Much of the sound reminded me of Norah Jones' earlier releases, that is, piano based, breathy, extended phrases and ultimately coffee house or cocktail bar smooth. She has an attractive range that carries the melody and there's a depth and emotion to the vocals. However the temperature simmers rather than scorches.

DeMeyer has returned to California after living in Nashville for the last decade. The circumstances of relocation are part due to a wider family tragedy and a desire to take her son back to San Francisco. This departure

has come after soul searching and wasn't an easy decision. These events are the backdrop to the recording process. She wrote the lyrics throughout and there are several themes in the ten songs including leaving, belonging and her husband.

Seeker is a goodbye to Nashville, more pop than blues. *Louisiana* features Rix on piano and J P Ruggieri on slide guitar whilst she delivers a beautiful slow blues with a few vocal gymnastics about the sweltering melting pot that is the state itself. *Ain't No Mister* sees some cocktail jazz with upright bass and accompanying piano that occasionally takes off for the odd solo before returning to the melody. Her story here is about her unreliable but utterly charming consort. *All The Blue* sounds like Sheryl Crow with slide guitar behind her plaintive vocals.

This is a crafted album that never fails to demonstrate her attractive voice. Though whilst there's no filler there's no particular killer. The instrumentation is spaced and tasteful. Overall, not least due to the sedate pace of every track, it's very late night stuff or the type of soundtrack to a glass of wine after a busy day with your feet up.

Tony Ives