

excellent job in recreating the original John Hurt style and this is a fitting tribute to the man, which will I am sure will re-kindle interest in his songs that have pertinent lyrics today.

ADRIAN BLACKLEE

GRACIE CURRAN & THE HIGH FALUTIN' BAND

PROOF OF LOVE

Vizzable Music



Taking a line sometime trod by Etta, Janis, and Shemekia, Gracie Curran has a powerhouse vocal that drives a high pulse and drains the emotional bucket dry. She and her band have only been together three years but it appears they causing quite a stir Stateside, notably in their base of Boston and on the East Coast. Releasing this debut album while in Memphis though, was a blues-cultured wise move and it is being recognised as quite a debut! The high temperature mix of the electric guitar forward line, funky backdrop and ballsy vocal from the boss lady gives the whole package an innovative vibrancy; think Black Crowes meet Northsyde on a blues playing field. That means it is the clever and intuitive distance her singing stays away from all the instrumental action, yet remains immersed in the same story. Stand out versions of this can be seen in *Jack & MaryJane* and *Rock & A Hard Place*, but there really isn't a deviant number here; even the obligatory six minute pained slow blues, here it is *Weight Of Her World*, has an intensity that justifies the triumphant reception.

GARETH HAYES

GARY HALL

WINNING WAYS ON LOSING STREAKS

Northern Sun Recordings



All roots music contains shades of the blues, and this excellent new country blues album from Gary Hall is no exception. To me Gary is foremost a

poet, and his lyrics are what first attracted me to his work. In one of his earlier compositions he states that "some cry words, while others just talk tears". On this his latest collection he demonstrates this gift of translating emotions into songs to perfection. The new CD has eleven songs. The one that instantly got to me is a hauntingly beautiful song of lost love entitled *I Can't Believe She's Gone*. There's also a refreshingly simple video to go with this song on YouTube. I like all the songs on this album. The Feelgood-Factor Blues is the perfect wry opening track, to lead us into the rest of this varied album. *A Country Mile from Shore* is next, and deals with the storms which rage within and without us all. His cover of *Wagon Wheel* follows, which Gary obviously likes and plays with lots of energy. *The Enemy Within* is next and has a nice south of the border feel to it, which is shared with another of my favourites *Red Dirt Roads*, *Stick Around Bojangles*, *A Small Price to Pay*, *Still My Reason Why*, *One Step Ahead of The Blue* and *Long Mynd Mornings* are also excellent songs, which deserve more words than I have space for here. Therefore I recommend you listen to them, and discover their merits for yourselves. All songs are written or co-written by Gary Hall, apart from 'Wagon Wheel' (Bob Dylan/Ketch Secor)!

BERYL HANKIN

ALBERT COLLINS

ALIVE AND COOL PLUS

Angel Air Records



At 15 tracks, which include 6 bonus tracks, this live collection dating from 1969 is a curiosity, albeit a rather satisfying one. We lost Texan Albert Collins in 1993, aged 61. He learned his fretboard skills from a relative, none other than Lightnin' Hopkins. He was admired by Jimi Hendrix - in fact, when Jimi left Little Richard's band, it was Collins who stood in for him for a while. If this

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