

Du Côté de Chez Sam

Les Chroniques du Cri du Coyote



24 Feb 2023

CRAIG BICKHARDT "Outpourings"

"It is the fruit of the work of a craftsman who has become a master in his field and who gives us here what is undoubtedly his masterpiece."

I discovered Craig Bickhardt about thirty-five years ago with Schuyler, Knobloch and Bickhardt's **No Easy Horses** album. I then had the pleasure of discovering his solo work (five albums including one live between 2001 and 2018) or with the duo Idlewheel that he formed with Jack Sundrud. The man defines himself as follows: "Father, husband, poet, prognosticator of insignificant events, guitar alchemist, and singer-songwriter."

Outpourings comes in the form of a double CD of twenty-six titles (limited to 350 copies, but there is also a single version of thirteen titles) all from his pen with nine co-writings. Two years in the making, a lifetime of preparation, it's a gift to Craig's many friends, family, fans, and followers. It's a gift because the album is as rich as the man is generous and oriented towards others. The record was recorded primarily at the studios of John Mock who co-produced it with Craig while playing classical guitar, pennywhistle, and harmonium. The list of musicians is too long to reproduce but is a true who's who of Nashville and the surrounding area. **Breaking The Bread**, which opens the album, sets the tone with acoustic guitar arpeggios, a clear and touching voice, a captivating melody, and text full of humanism. The impression felt is undeniable throughout the twenty-six titles which will delight fans, for example, of James Taylor or Dan Seals, if references are to be cited. It is sometimes the piano of Pete Wasner that is featured, as in **She Won't Be Yours Alone** or **I Don't Know About Love At All** without altering the general

tone of the whole. The contribution of Michael G. Ronstadt's cello is also very appreciable. Listen, in this regard, to **Trees** where the instrument responds to the classical guitar with, additionally, a female voice that complements that of Craig. This double album, simple in appearance, with a recipe that has been honed by half a century of practice, in fact, reveals treasures that can be discovered with each listen. It is the fruit of the work of a craftsman who has become a master in his field and who gives us here what is undoubtedly his masterpiece. The second disc closes with A Family Quartet, four titles that show us how high Craig Bickhardt holds family values.

- Sam Pierre