

Sunday

Tiffany Eckhardt with Dave Steel

Bio March 2010

"I'm only happy with a song when I'm saying exactly what I mean and exactly what I feel. Complete honesty. I have to get that out. When you're really honest you can reach people. Because we all feel the same."

Tiffany Eckhardt has applied that simple philosophy of songcraft for 15 years, from country town open mic nights circa '95 to the hushed tents of Australia's largest folk festivals. She started out writing songs on her piano at ten years of age where she grew up in the Victorian town of Geelong. In her early twenties she won a series of song writing awards which encouraged her to record her first album "Looking for Signs". With its success, she has continued on from there, writing, recording and performing at clubs and festivals all over Australia.

Michael Dwyer writes...

For six albums, her crystalline voice has rung with the kind of unflinching reflection that turns to universal truth in the shared space between audience and performer.

Sunday, her seventh, is a watershed album. It's the first to co-credit her partner, renowned guitarist, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Dave Steel, as a primary creative force. Partly as a result, it's the most fearless and accomplished self-portrait of Tiffany's career.

"*Runaway Train* was a little scary to put out there," she says of the first song, which sets the scene by looking back on her reckless youth with more compassion than longing. "I've never talked openly about that part of my life but we were feeling a little less afraid, I guess. What the heck," she says. "It's the truth."

Her resolutely openhearted approach can ache like absence itself on *Two Mile Bay*, a wistful letter to a departed friend, and it can feel like the wind in your hair in *Open Road*, one in a long series of songs about the gypsy spirit that weaves through the pair's adventurous musical life.

Tiffany met Dave at an open mic night in Geelong in 1995. She'd been writing songs on the family piano since she was 10; the guitar since she was 17. He was already an accomplished roots-rock journeyman with Weddings Parties Anything, Archie Roach and several solo albums on his resume.

"Dave has always collaborated on my albums but this time he recorded and mixed and produced and played a lot of instruments," she says. "I couldn't just say it was a Tiffany Eckhardt record because there's so much of Dave in it.

I wrote all the songs, played the piano or guitar, but then he'd sit up all night and come up with all this amazing stuff. He really made it what it is."

And so *Sunday* took shape, between May and December 2009, in stolen moments and long, quiet nights at the family home near Winchelsea. The final phase was a Herculean remix at the suggestion of Black Market Music's John Durr, Tiffany explains.

"John harassed us into going sideways and pushing the boundaries so Dave went back and mixed it again. I couldn't believe he would physically go back up there and start again but he did. And he made it into something 1000 times better."

The end result is an album that matches vivid, emotional storytelling with the expansive atmosphere of a world-class producer and multi-instrumentalist. Dave's empathetic ear for mood, meaning and texture turns *Child of Mine* into a warm bath of layered voices, acoustic strings and hand percussion; and the languid title track into a sonic equivalent of a sparkling morning sun shower.

From the melancholy ebb of *Feel So Low* to the upbeat climax of *High*, what draws us into their charmed world are the sounds and details of home. The crisp acoustic arrangements complement vivid word pictures of rising tides and moons; morning coffee and car keys; dogs, chickens and unmown lawns; domestic quarrels and rainbows dancing in the light of an open window.

The compelling balance between the familiarity of everyday life and the magic of musical expression is encapsulated in *So Much Music, So Little Time*. "Music is my passion and my art and my sanity and I just can't get nearly enough of it," Tiffany says. "It seems strange to be a musician and to feel you've never got enough time to actually play music!"

Except on *Sunday*, when there seems to be just enough.

Sunday is out through Black Market Music www.blackmarketmusic.com.au

For further information www.tiffanyeckhardt.com

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