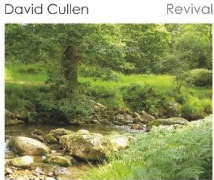


David Cullen

Revival

cullenguitar.com



With deft fretwork and imaginative compositions **David Cullen** is a modern day troubadour. His career spans decades. I've heard him a hundred times as a collaborator for Jill Haley's wondrous National Park Series albums. Cullen has been playing since he was child. His alternative voice is the guitar and it is a strong, clear, and true instrument. On **Revival**, a recognition of his getting back to his own knitting, he takes on contemporary themes on a dozen tracks that would actually make a live

performance sparkle and shine. From very mellow to funky, David's music is richly textured in warmth and a lot of emotion. It spans the gamut from calming to exciting and it is all done with just six strings and a great deal of talent.

The opener, **Looking Up**, has more than a modicum of energy. It's a friendly tune, full of dreams and hopes suggesting the sky is the limit. This is a walking down the road, kicking up a little dust tune. And I was eager to follow.

David offers us a slow circle of sound in the tune **You Will Find Your Way**. It a gentle, drifting melody that gives us time to ponder the questions. The music is simplicity itself, but the soft quietude it offers is just what we need these days. Life is messy.

At first the tune **Knockin' on the Door** was annoying. Yes, I know it's not a nice thing to say. But don't worry. Cullen's funky ballad with a hint of Bossa Nova finally won me over and it turned into quite an eclectic romp. My toe tapped, my head bopped, and finally I let myself go. I swear that somewhere in there, there is bullfrog waiting to hop about.

The title tune **Revival** has a strong, complex theme. It is a lively tune, full of enthusiasms and probably an omen of what is to become of this brilliant guitarist. There are several styles woven into this song, some classic riffs, and a telegraphic sounding overtone. Message received.

One of my favorites on the album is called **Chamba Tranquilo**. It translates to *Quiet Work* and it is just that. Sultry and subtle, it shows Cullen's dexterity with a Spanish theme and how it can easily create a mood. Under Cullen's careful hands, the stars seemed to sparkle a little brighter, the night seemed to take on a perfumed warmth. And the light of that smile found the crack hidden in your heart. Play on troubadour.

Let the Horses Run could be the background music for one of those blue sky, gleaming sunny day scenarios with horses running on the beach and nobody watching. You can feel the power and energy of those carefree creatures that run for the sheer joy of living. This one must have appealed to Cullen well, for it is the kind of sound that you doodle with for a while and after adding a lot of nuanced complexities, it just feels right.

The closer is a song called **Meet You at the County Line** and it is a song of a lover's rendezvous. The melody is a homespun tale of blinding smiles and caring hearts and one unforgettable summer. There is a characteristic tenderness in David's ballad that says youth is sweeter than any wine and that this love is fresher and more pure than the newest rose bud of spring. I hope the story has a happy ending, but it looks good from here. Additional tracks are One Day, Follow the Creek, Clouds No Rain, Rolling in the Meadow, and Back to the Roots.

Revival, David Cullen's metaphor for a new beginning, is all it promised. Every instrumental has a rich story and most of the endings are hopeful, fun, or both. This is an album that is good just about any time, but back porch listening seems like an ideal situation. Cullen has cleverly inserted the ideal of hope and promise of a successful future in all of it. Highly Listenable.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews