

Chuck Brodsky - Color Came One Day (ChuckBrodsky.com Records)

Of all the singer/songwriters we've featured over the past five years, Chuck is close to the top of my personal favourites list - he's a fantastic songwriter who draws the listener into his songs and characters in a manner few can match.

The songs on 'Color Came One Day' are no exception, from the doctor and his wife who turned a small mountain town in a thriving modern community through to a publican who opens his doors at 9:30am, his characters are fully realised and are the stories full of compassion, respect and wit. Where it does differ from his previous discs is that the album seems to have a more laid back sound, the instrumental backing is similar, primarily acoustic guitars with mandolin, fiddle, banjo, keyboards etc., but it seems a little more relaxed and the mixes a little less dense.

Brodsky's songs are so well written and constructed it's often difficult to tell real stories and social commentary apart - he's wonderful at presenting portraits of American characters (historical and current), the doctor and his wife in 'Miracle in the Hills', and 'The Goat Man' are wonderful examples of real tales. 'Forest Hills' which chronicles the lives, issues and pettiness in small town America with a tremendous amount of detail, as the listener you assume it's fiction but given what's gone before you're never quite sure; but whatever subjects the songs cover they're always vivid, memorable and contain an incredible amount of detail.

All of Chuck's discs from 'A Fingerpainter's Murals' through to this new release have been consistently excellent, but he's never really had the success of the more commercial singer/songwriters - 'Color Came One Day' is unlikely to change that situation, but if you're looking for something that's easily accessible yet distinct, and full of detailed and intelligent songs then Chuck Brodsky should be on your list. An excellent album.