

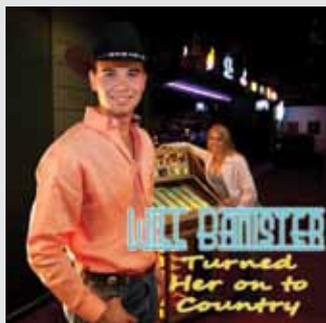


## CD of the Month



### WILL BANISTER Turned Her On To Country

★★★★★



*Turned Her On To Country / Modern Day Rambler / I Hate Santa Fe (Tessa's Song) / I've Never Been Any Other Way / Give Me One Minute / I Really Had Her Going / You Remind Me / I Don't Want To Lose You / Since I Lost You / If I Had Time / Hurtin' Song*

Producer: Johnny Mulhair

**Cloviste Records**

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David Allan mentioned this 21 year old from Clovis, New

Mexico in his column last month and described him as "making waves". And so he ought to be with a record like this. Any Music Row major could pick this up right now, exactly as it is (except maybe make the track listing on the back slightly more easy to read), no tweaking, no further mixing, and at the very least they would have another Easton Corbin on their hands. Except that this is a better album than Corbin's, or just about any other new name on the majors. I was actually reminded of the stunning Clint Black debut album, *Killin' Time* (especially on *Modern Day Rambler*) and the early work of George Strait. Yes, it's that good!

Banister may be young, but his writing (and he has written all the tracks here), shows great maturity, and more importantly, what makes a good country song. He has seemingly soaked up all the right influences; there are traces of Merle and Lefty along with the obvious early Strait, and apart from the quality of material,

his delivery, and in particular, his timing, is impeccable.

Will Banister is a protégé of Johnny Mulhair who has produced the album and plays lead guitar, steel guitar, and bass, and was previously responsible for LeAnn Rimes' early work. Let me tell you, here's a guy who knows how to produce a proper contemporary country record and I would like to think he's shopping this around Music Row as I write this.

Young artists are frequently criticised for subject matter in songs that they can never have experienced, and the material is predominantly lost love/broken relationships, but while there is no way anyone so young could have had his heart broken so many times it is all utterly believable. There's not a bad track to be found, but particularly noteworthy is *You Remind Me*, which probably owes a little something to Strait's *The Chair*, the gorgeous *If I Had Time*, and *I Hate Santa Fe*,

which could easily have come from the *Ocean Front Property* album and highlights his writing maturity. It's pure class.

The city girl discovering country isn't an original theme for a song, but the title track does it as well as any, while *Give Me One Minute* has a wonderful south-western feel complete with castanets and some fabulous Spanish-style gut string guitar from Johnny Mulhair. *Since I Lost You*, with its wonderful fiddle hook, is another favourite and capable of filling any dancefloor in Texas.

To say I like this album would be a serious understatement. This is what it's all about, and just goes to show what's possible. Naturally, without the financial clout of a major label it doesn't stand a chance at US country radio but if there's any justice in the world that will rectified one of these days. This young man has made a perfect country record.

Duncan Warwick

atmosphere and a melody that's almost hypnotic.

Sadly some bad 80s rock breaks up the good stuff. If you download individual tracks instead of albums, you might like to skip *That's What You Get* and *It's Who You Know*, although the funky *It's A Woman Thang* is worth hearing once for a comedic bridge in which Trace considers some strategies for understanding his gal: "Maybe I should watch some Oprah... maybe take a Cosmo quiz or two..."

A track you should definitely buy is *Poor Folks*, a stone cold country song, replete with fiddle, steel and even a spoken narration in which Trace feels sorry for the rich folks who have everything

except a love like his. If any song in the Adkins catalogue could have been sung by George Jones, this is it.

Another strongly traditional number is *Always Gonna Be That Way*, a gentle hymn to rural life that makes you wonder why Big T wastes his talents on blues-rock slop like *Love Buzz*.

Some of the best tracks form the bonus part of the Deluxe Edition. *Damn You Bubba* is an amusing song about resentment of a more successful brother. Trace really gets into the part with his outro interjection: "Remember that dumper truck you lost when we were kids? I still got it!"

There's more fine banter on *If I Was A Woman* in which Trace

and Blake Shelton compete to impress the ladies over a brassy rock'n'roll arrangement. Best line: "You're too stupid to be a woman."

Rather darker is *More Of Us*, in which the patriotic singer rants against the minorities who have such a big sway on government policy. "Don't you think we've taken enough of giving in? It's time to take a stand," declares Adkins on a track the BNP would be proud of.

Less politically charged is *Semper Fi*, a dignified and moving tribute to America's military which closes an album with a lot of high quality cuts, if a tad too much filler too.

Douglas McPherson

### DEBORAH ALLEN Hear Me Now

★★★★★



*Amazing Graceland / It Better Be Big / Anything Other Than Love / Deeper Waters / Hands On / All Because Of You / Never Gonna Run Out Of Love / What Makes A Woman\* / Last Time*