

bass and churchy B3. Moreau's songwriting hits a stride when he's a little more laid back, as on *Shadows Left Behind*, and he remains honest to himself throughout, if not exciting.

Missing You In Texas is a highlight, with a late '80s George Strait vibe. Some songs aren't written to break the mould, they're part of the tapestry as a whole, and *A Different Kind Of Train* weaves together a straightforward country-folk sound that fits nicely with its underground contemporaries.

— By Mike Dunn

Taivi

Rising Tide (Independent)



There's a real danger in releasing a debut album that sounds so good.

Taivi, a Toronto-based songwriter who employs the single monicker, met Claire Lynch, who now spends much of her time in Canada, and the bluegrass legend agreed to mentor her by Skype. When it came time to record, Taivi used Lynch's band of heavy seasoned musicians such as Mark Schatz and Jarrod Walker on most of the tracks, as well as Lynch's backup vocals, adding local Ontario notables such as Ken Whitely. The recording took place in Guelph, Toronto, Nashville, and Frankfurt, Germany. This was not an inexpensive album to make.

The result, as I earlier said, sounds mighty fine to these ears. This is a pop-folk album with a taste of bluegrass. Some of the instrumental passages are awe-inspiring, background vocals are perfect, production is pristine.

The big question is whether Taivi's voice and the songs match the quality of the background. No doubt she can write



Taivi

a good melody. There's a lot of heartfelt longing here (as in *Get On Home*) and love, and *Clearwater*, a song she dedicated to the late Pete Seeger and his effort to clean up the Hudson River. I like the direct simplicity in her lyrics. Her voice is easy to listen to, perhaps a little too easy. I would have liked to hear a bit more edge, a bit more variation.

I've got to hand it to Taivi for putting her money where her mouth is. But as I said, there is a danger—it'll be a hard one to follow in a couple of years when she puts out her next disc. And she'll never sound this good live, unless she can convince these amazing musicians to tour with her. Given the big names they all play for, she could be a few years away from that. Hopefully these high-powered connections will help her get some traction and give her the means to attract some good musicians to tour with.

All that said, this is an album that's worth having. I've listened to it half a dozen times, and it sounds better every time.

— By Mike Sadava

Solju

Odda Aigodat (New Times) (Bafe's Factory)



Solju is a duo comprised of mother and daughter Sámi yoikkers—Ulla Pirttijärvi, mother and chief yoikker, and her daughter, Hilda Länsman.

The Sámi people of northern Finland, Sweden, and Norway are perhaps best known as reindeer herders but, as with all nomadic peoples, this is now a diminishing way of life.

Indigenous cultures world-

wide have suffered losses of language and livelihood but a spirit of renewal is flowing through these same cultures in a global renaissance.

Solju's new album, *Odda Aigodat (New Times)*, is an album of yoiks. The traditional Sámi vocalization can be used to invoke a spirit, to recite a well-known legend, or to tell a personal story. The title track says, "We still hear the yoik. We still hear the herd. How much longer before they disappear?"

Solju has added guitar, synth, percussion, and even the Czech Symphony Orchestra to their yoiks. *Aimejoga jovvna* is a sweet duet with running water, evoking the close relationship the Sámi have with the Earth.

Another yoik, *The Reindeer Driver*, describes how, "The reindeer strides, the sled glides, across lowlands and highlands, the adorned reindeer trots along."

Musically, this is unfamiliar territory but the poetic translations and synth settings evoke a glimpse of a strong and beautiful culture.

As Solju sing, "If we lose our faith, our visions have power no more. If our memory fails us, we exist no more."

— By Lark Clark



Solju