

Oh Darlin

by Mississippi Chris Sharp

CD: Oh Darlin

Artist: Bradley and Adair

Artist Website: www.daleann.com; www.tinaadair.net

Label: Pinecastle Records

Label Website: www.pinecastlemusic.com

Reviewer: Mississippi Chris Sharp

If I were calling play by play like this review was a baseball game, I'd say that Dale Ann Bradley has hit a stand-up triple and clean-up batter Tina Adair is at the plate, 3-1 ahead in the count with an eagle eye on a soon-to-be hanging curveball just leaving the pitcher's hand. A savvy, experienced batter is likely to swat that ball right over the center-field fence. Game over.

I like duets, and **Oh Darlin** delivers powerful soulful singing, sibling-like harmonies, voices that startle you with power one minute and caress you the next, on close microphones in the studio, great band, excellent song selection, driving rhythm guitar, fine recording, mix, and mastering. Crank it up loud so your speakers can move a lot of air and it soothes, not seethes. The good stuff is always that way. This is good stuff.

The title cut, *Oh Darlin'*, sets the pace and timbre for this CD. It drives without speed, a longed-for effect in Bluegrass music, far easier to talk about than achieve. Curtis Vestal's

thumping bass and Scott Vestal's banjo have me unable to keep from nodding my head in time with the music as the mandolin and guitar lay a colorful palette for the delicious vocals.

Mommy Please Stay Home With Me, an Eddy Arnold song, strongly reminded me of the Louvin's *Angels Rejoiced*, except this time it was "mommy gone bad" rather than daddy. The vocal twist on the last "please" produced some powerful chicken skin every time I heard it.

Jim Hurst's guitar work on the bluesy gospel song, *Send Me*, put a big smile on my face. It was good. It was unexpectedly good. I am delighted to get more than I expected.

Wicked Twisted Road is a moving ballad. Soulful singing about pain and crushed dreams, with beautiful guitar work and subdued music, softly cleared the way for gentle, heartfelt harmonies. "I ran out with the big dogs, guess I had more bark than bite. I knew I won the battle but in the end, I lost the fight" is as fine a line as a song can have. I salute songwriter Wally Braun and **Bradley & Adair** for delivering it with such intimacy.

Apartment #9 (Johnny Paycheck) and *Pick Me Up on Your Way Down* (Harlan Howard) ran straight into bonafide country music territory along with the two Hank songs, *The Log Train* and *Singing Waterfall*. *Singing Waterfall* is transporting. I closed my eyes and felt the loss in the song.

Hold to God's Unchanging Hand is one of my favorite songs. It is here powerfully rendered in call and answer form, giving me pause to consider things upon which I am building my hopes. I may need to rethink some of my plans.

The last song on the CD is *Rockin Alone in An Old Rocking Chair*. Songs that create images in our minds, yielding pictures and evoking memories, are more than just the words, or words put to music. The delivery is as important as the words, maybe more so. Some can hum up images with no words at

all. Combine the words with stellar delivery and the images spring forth in living technicolor, in 3-D, with a clarity that can only be coaxed from within ourselves by every single voice blending in tight harmony, close, as if the singers' lips were pressed to our ears breathing the song straight into our soul. What goes in our ears is the song and its delivery; what that delivery evokes is our essence. How can one not like that?

Dale Ann Bradley and Tina Adair are award-winning professionals. **Oh Darlin** is every bit as good as we expect it to be. It just might be even better, just like hearing the crack of the bat and watching the ball fly over the fence. I'm glad I'm in the stands, cheering on the two that crossed home plate. I'm sure glad I wasn't the pitcher.

The release date of **Oh Darlin** was February 27, 2020. It will be available through all major music outlets.

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