

RED DEER ADVOCATE

Donna Durand kicks off The Road Back

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By Donald Teplyske – Fervor Coulee Roots Review

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- Local singer Donna Durand celebrates the release of The Road Back with a concert at the Sunnybrook Farm Museum on Sunday afternoon, beginning at 2; let's hope the weather co-operates. Reviewed below, Durand is a talent worth supporting.

This week's disc reviews:

Donna Durand The Road Back

www.donnadurand.com

Red Deer's Donna Durand has released a roots music album that rivals the best Canadian, acoustic music released this year.

With a gentle manner that is reminiscent of fellow Central Albertan Ruth Purves Smith, Donna Durand has turned her 'pre-retirement' songwriting and performing hobby into a full-fledged, second career.

The Alberta musicians who recorded the 12-track The Road Back with Durand do themselves and the songwriter proud. Local musicians Dave Grobe (percussion) and Tony Mellor (bass) stand alongside Edmonton's Gord Matthews (guitars and mandolin) and Byron Myhre (fiddle) to create a seamless tapestry of largely acoustic sounds.

Whether Durand's characters are brothers hauling coal in an "ice blue storm" during The Winter of 1943 or a prairie girl fretting inevitable heartbreak among the Wild Roses, Durand captures intimate relationships.

With a realism marked by familiarity, Durand's songs are imbedded with details that can only be gleaned from personal experience or those of family and neighbours. The farmer making "one more round" in the fields while supper dries in a pan will be familiar to all wives of the country. When the truck gets stuck in a Durand song (Maybe), the results are not only life-affirming but oddly romantic as her rescuer's "eyes grey mist sad;" yearning, Durand sees and hears him everywhere.

Although she may suffer from misdirection when driving — and is chided for this failing by Ian Tyson within the title cut — Donna Durand's music is steadfastly assured within this gleaming album, capturing both the geographic openness and people temperance of our province.