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Picks & Pans : With Nashville's Top Music Critic, Stacy Harris



Mike Schikora

This Cowboy's In Love

Rating: ****

Mike Schikora may be a cowboy, hat, horse named JB and all, but if **This Cowboy's in Love** (a bow to the title song?) is cowboy music, it must be cowboy music for the 21st century, as there are only bits and pieces suggesting a throwback to the singing cowboy era of yesteryear.

Mike wouldn't have to evoke Muddy Waters' name in *Long Way From Where I've Been* (the first of 12 songs Schikora either wrote or co-wrote here)- though he does- for it to take me too long to conclude that Mike's kind of cowboy music is at least equal parts blues (Check out *Be Good To Me*) and/or sometimes country.

Hoot Hester and Hargus "Pig" Robbins lead the list of impressive musicians assisting Schikora (who provides his own background vocals) with this project.

Mike produced this CD and also assisted Zane Baxter with the arrangements.

The songs are uniformly pleasant. All have their moments and some seem to coax the listener to sing along, though be advised that *Run Like the Wind* is not a cover of the old Christopher Cross hit.

As far as hit material, that might depend on if the world is ready for yet another song titled Blue Heartache. Then again, with the right promotion, *Come Closing Time*, *Pour Me Back Down* and *Be Good To Me* could be contenders.