

# arts & entertainment

## hot licks | Harris holding her own; Stewart 'steps out' and up

Country is country; rock is rock; and never the twain shall meet. True enough once, but, oh, how the times have been changin'.

One of the most dramatic trends in recent musical memory is the blurring of lines between what once were separate genres.

Gone is the image of a pompadoured tenor or beehive-haired woman yodeling on the Grand Ole Opry stage—thanks, in part, to renegades like Waylon Jennings, Jerry Jeff Walker and Willie Nelson.

At the opposite pole, John Denver and Olivia Newton-John have used the country guise to snatch awards in Nashville and national ceremonies. Two recent albums typify this trend in country music—away from a cult following in Nashville—aiming now toward that nebulous lump of consumerism known as the mass audience. Emmylou Harris/*Elite Hotel/Reprise*.

Emmylou Harris's second album suffers only when compared to her first album, *Pieces of the Sky*, one of last year's most surprising, welcome success stories. No single album in recent memory did so much to give grassroots country music (no, fans, the Eagles are not country) such widespread appeal.

This album is highly professional, yet a bit less charming than her first effort. Harris plays it safe here with no surprises, no boat-rockers. But anyone who can produce such fine music in the name of safety is all right by me.

Harris uses many of the same songwriters who contributed to *Pieces of the Sky*. She gives a haunting rendition of the Lennon/McCartney tune "Here, There and Everywhere." Rodney Crowell contributes "Till I Gain Control Again" (on which Linda Ronstadt sings background vocals).

Harris co-authored the first cut, "Amarillo." Let's hope for more Harris tunes. Both "Amarillo" and "Boulder to Birmingham"—the only song she wrote for her last release—were high points on their respective albums.

Her voice isn't that powerful—she isn't as gutsy as, for example, Linda Ronstadt. But she is fully aware of her capabilities and makes her limits work for her.

Ballads are definitely Harris's thing—like two heart-clutchers here, both by ex-Burrito Brother Chris Hillman and Gram Parsons, the former Byrd member whom Harris credits with teaching her almost everything—musically, that is—she knows. On "Wheels" and "Sin City," Harris's

# Truffaut to return in fine form

By Diane Wanek

In 1863, Adele Hugo, daughter of the great French poet Victor Hugo, left her home on the Isle of Guernsey, where she lived with her father in exile. She left for one Lt. Pinson, a young English officer with whom she probably had a short affair while he was stationed on Guernsey.

The tale of Adele H.'s journey and obsession with Pinson is the subject of Francois Truffaut's newest film, *The Story of Adele H.*, currently playing at the Plaza Theatres.

The film is immediately refreshing and beautiful. Refreshing because it's the best thing Truffaut has done for a long time. Truffaut's latest films have lacked the genius and exuberant flow that brought Truffaut to the fore as a filmmaker with such films as *Jules and Jim*, *The Wild Child* and *The 400 Blows*. Not so with *Adele H.*

It is brooding and melancholy, but it is magnificent, intense and single-minded, like the film's subject.

Adele, who wanted desperately to marry Pinson, follows him to his new post in Halifax, Nova Scotia, much to the dismay of her disapproving father. Pinson was neither a gigolo nor a rascal, he just was not interested—something Adele simply could not handle, much less understand.

He is transferred from frozen Halifax to Barbados in the West Indies, and Adele follows him, endlessly walking the tropical streets like a madwoman talking to herself.

Her inability to see the light causes her to create a fairy tale world for herself in which she is Pinson's wife and love is her religion. The encoded diary she kept while there, only recently deciphered, is the basis for Truffaut's film. It faithfully records the mad but intense passion of one woman.

It is a one-character film in the same way that Truffaut's *Wild Child* was, and Isabelle Adjani as Adele



H. lends the role a grace and beauty it needs. She is impeccable in the role and enters into the incredible depths of Adele's emotions as though they were her own.

Truffaut used cinematographer Nestor Almendros, who he has not used since *The Wild Child*, and the result is a visual triumph. The richness of color and background, even the composition of single frames, makes this film photographically second only to Sven Nykvist's work on Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*.

All in all, I'm more than happy to say that Truffaut is once again working up to his potential in *Adele H.* He has taken what could have been an overly melodramatic, milksoppy story and made a profoundly beautiful film from it.

voice is as pure as...well, I won't say the driven snow, but you get the idea. Her delivery has the fragility of a trembling whisper.

Gary Stewart/*Steppin' Out/RCA*.

Gary Stewart was completely unknown to me before I heard this album, but he's definitely worth checking out.

The album's ballads are as country as anything Nashville can produce. But it is not limited to that. The rockers are infectious, good fun. Check out, for example, "Trudy" by Charlie Daniels (who plays fiddle and slide guitar on this album) and Stewart's own "Flat Natural Born Good-timin' Man."

For background vocals, Stewart chooses the Jordaires, the group that used to back up Elvis Presley. Stewart himself sounds like Presley at times, especially on Danny O'Keefe's "Quits"—his twitching vibrato warbles at the end of his phrases, like Presley's.

Stewart writes four songs on this album—as strong as anything put out by such current luminaries as Willie Nelson, who contributed "I Still Can't Believe You're Gone" to this collection. (It seems like the Nashville brotherhood sticks together closely these days). On the basis of this album, I'd say Gary Stewart's obscurity is about over. —Deb Gray

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