

## People & Places

### Music

#### 'Be Water' flows freely

### Goodman blends rock, gospel in tasty debut

By Scott Stroud

S.G. Goodman, "Old Time Feeling" (Verve Forecast)

To draw a bead on the unique artistry of S.G. Goodman, it helps to know that she claims the influences of power-chord guitar legend Link Wray and her southern Baptist roots in almost the same breath.

That's hard to reconcile, sure, but so is the feat she pulls off in her engaging debut album "Old Time Feeling". The album, produced by fellow Kentuckian Jim James, lead singer of My Morning Jacket, takes those and other influences and runs with them.

Wray's calloused fingerprints can be sensed most directly in the title cut, which sounds like someone paired

Patsy Cline with the muscular style Wray used to launch a generation of guitar copycats. It's patently unfair to compare Goodman's singing to Cline's, of course, but the point is the juxtaposition. Rock this driving and vocals this plaintive shouldn't fit together so well.

An even better comparison for the vocals might be Hazel Dickens, the fearless, mountain-grown warbler who helped deliver coal mining union songs to the mainstream. Goodman's singing has the same rare quality of being both languid and urgent.

Goodman, too, has been open about her leftist politics in Kentucky, and she's even been known to cover "Which Side Are You On?" Lyrically, though, this album dwells less on activism than on relationships and a landscape filled with cottonmouths, "gas station delicacies" and cypress knees. Goodman draws deeply on her small-town western Kentucky upbringing near the banks of the Mississippi River, and none of it feels forced.

Her range shines on several elegant ballads, especially the aching "Tender Kind". A daffodil pressed into a book; a trip to Memphis recalled — the writing is vivid and spirited, as it is throughout the album.

It's yet another reason to hail Goodman's arrival as an intriguing, original new voice.

Christian Sands, "Be Water" (Mack Avenue)

The metaphor suggested by the title of Christian Sands' new album is apt.

The jazz pianist says he was trying to be freer and more flexible on "Be Water", and it shows. The set's 10 cuts explore a wide range of moods and instrumental combinations, with Sands' trio at the core.

Much of the material is built on the same pattern of tension and release found in a body of water. That begins with the opening "Intro", which settles on the tonic chord after nearly four minutes of shimmering undulation.

The reflective "Still", featuring Marvin Sewell on acoustic guitar, rides a mere ripple of rhythm. On "Be Water II", a string quartet plays against the lapping beat established by Sands' piano. Marcus Strickland's woodwind work makes "Drive" swing as it crests with a cascading electric guitar solo by Sewell.

Sands rarely cuts loose at the piano — his objective isn't to splash — but he takes an active role as the producer, overdubbing extra keyboards and including sound effects and brief recitations by martial artist Bruce Lee. "Water can flow, or it can crash," Lee says. Forgive the flood of puns, but "Be Water" flows freely.

Jimmy Buffett, "Life on the Flip Side" (Mailboat Records)

Jimmy Buffett's first studio record in seven years arrives with equal parts seduction and absurdity.

Coming just as we crave a margarita in a mason jar, sand in our toes and the salty wind of the ocean, Buffett's beach bum life — often mocked — has never been so aspirational. What we wouldn't do right now to join a goopy conga line.

The 14-track "Life on the Flip Side" is no departure from what Parrotheads have come to expect — that special Gulf Coast mix of country, pop, folk and rock, topped by Buffett's swaying voice. Few can mix steel-pans, trombones and pedal steel guitar so effortlessly.

Though the songs were written before the global pandemic, the album nods to our viral troubles. Buffett writes that he'd like them to be the soundtrack as we claw our way to normalcy. Think of it as the flip side of COVID-19.

"Hopefully, the songs we wrote and recorded, will also help folks deal with the fallout," he writes in the liner notes. "There will be a time and a place when we emerge from these troubled waters and things will change for the better."

Buffett's incredible ear for hooks and light grooves are often overshadowed by his lyrics about fish tacos and sunsets, but don't underestimate his song skills. Many of these tunes are destined to be played two generations from now at sandy beach-side snack bars. Will we be wearing masks still?

He salutes the folk who take the time to look around in "The Slow Lane" and mourns that so much of his surfing is on a website ("Hey, That's My Wave"). He seamlessly mixes salsa and mambo for "15 Cuban Minutes" and gets jazzy in "Half Drunk". The only song on the album that doesn't quite fit in Margaritaville is his cover of Paul Brady's "The World Is What You Make It", which wanders too far lyrically and musically from the rest.

Toward the end of the album, Buffett treads carefully into Tropical House with the superb "Live, Like It's Your Last Day", which has lyrics seemingly perfect for this pandemic. "Live like it's your last day/Time just keeps slippin' away." You'll sing along with Buffett — and wish.

Victor Wainwright and the Train, "Memphis Loud" (Ruf)

Here's an hour-long set to help fill the void created by all of those canceled summer music festivals.

"Memphis Loud" was tracked live in the studio by Victor Wainwright and the Train, creating a vibe suitable for a crowd enjoying a sunny, lazy weekend afternoon, when time seems to slow down.

The Memphis-based Wainwright and his six-piece band are right for the job because they serve up something for everyone with their rootsy, funky, well-cooked jam-band mix of R&B, jazz and Americana. Influences run deep, and piano man Wainwright even honors Little Richard with his shouts of "Woo!"

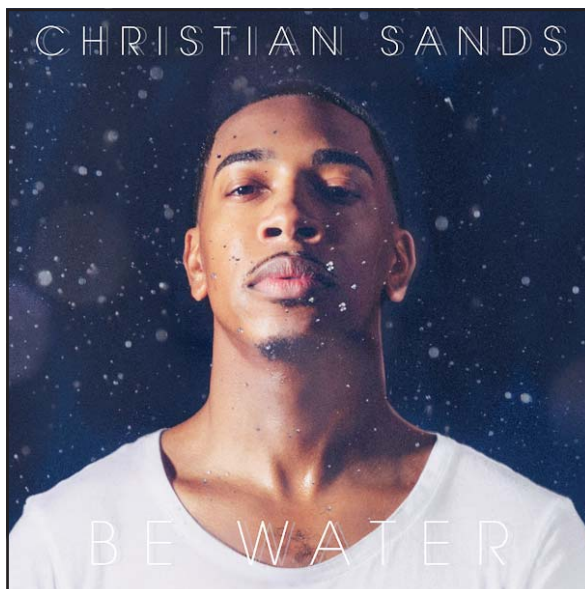
"Everybody start a party," Wainwright sings on the opener "Mississippi", and that sums up the mood. But there's plenty of variety to the arrangements. "Walk the Walk" is fueled by joyful syncopation, the witty "South End of a North Bound Mule" could be a country hit, and foggy Duke Ellington-style horns on the ballad "Sing" suggest a product of the theater. (AP)



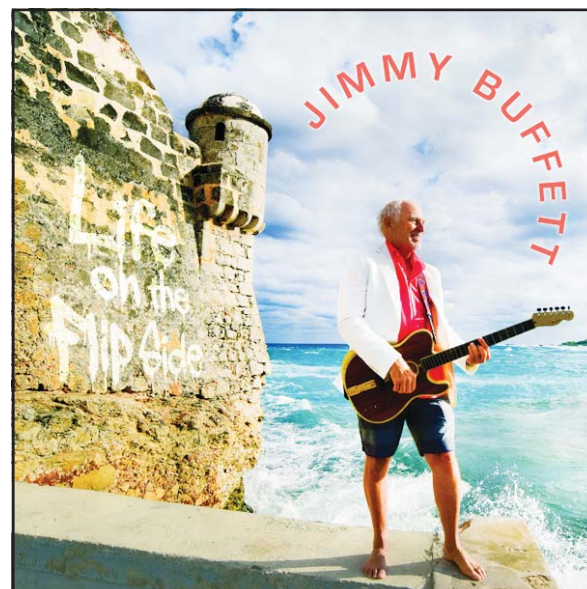
Goodman



This CD cover image released by Verve shows 'Old Time Feeling' by S.G. Goodman. (AP)



This cover image released by Mack Avenue shows 'Be Water' by Christian Sands. (AP)



This cover image released by Mailboat Records shows 'Life on the Flip Side' by Jimmy Buffett. (AP)



This photo shows music producer Dr Luke, who has been entangled in a bitter lawsuit with former collaborator Kesha since 2014, and has produced and co-written Saweetie's new single 'Tap In', the follow-up to her double-platinum smash 'My Type'. (AP)

### Music

#### Dr Luke crafts new hits

### Songmaster rebounds

NEW YORK, July 20, (AP): Controversial music producer Dr Luke

was once pop music's top hitmaker, crafting hits for virtually every female pop star, from Katy Perry to Kelly Clarkson to Britney Spears. He's returned to the charts in 2020, working on songs for rising and established rap stars, including Lil Wayne, Juice WRLD, Saweetie and Doja Cat.

The songmaster, who has been entangled in a bitter lawsuit with former collaborator Kesha since 2014, has produced and co-written Saweetie's new single "Tap In", the follow-up to her double-platinum smash "My Type". Dr Luke also co-wrote and co-produced Juice WRLD's "Wishing Well", taken from the rapper's first posthumous album "Legends Never Die", released last week.

Saweetie's new single, "Tap In", was produced by Dr Luke.

The recent successes mean all three major US record label companies have worked with Dr Luke this year, even if he hasn't always put his widely recognizable professional name to the new collaborations.

Dr Luke marked a major comeback this year with the success of the Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 hit "Say So" by rapper-singer Doja Cat, who is signed to Dr Luke's Kemosabe Records. Dr Luke, born Lukasz Sebastian Gottwald, produced several songs on Cat's sophomore album "Hot Pink", including single "Like That", which is No. 5 on Billboard's Hot R&B songs chart. He is the only producer with two songs in the Top 10 on the latter chart ("Say So" sits

at No. 2).

For his work with Cat, he used the alias Tyson Trax. He used the same pseudonym for his production credit on Toronto rapper-singer Benny Mayne's "Hokey Pokey", released this year. For Lil Wayne's "Shimmy", a track featuring Cat on the deluxe edition of his latest album "Funeral", Dr Luke used the name Lector Duke.

Dr Luke solidified his comeback this year with his artist Doja Cat and the No. 1 smash "Say So", which Dr Luke produced.

Label representatives for Saweetie, Juice WRLD, Lil Wayne and Cat didn't immediately reply to emails seeking comment. Neither did a representative for Dr Luke.

Luke has sprinkled his comeback among the major labels. Cat is signed to Sony Music's RCA Records, while Saweetie is part of the Warner Music family. Lil Wayne releases music through his Young Money imprint and Republic Records, a division of Universal Music Group.

Dr Luke has produced several hits for Katy Perry, Kesha, Kelly Clarkson, Britney Spears and Pitbull. He has also crafted successes for Pink, Avril Lavigne, Flo Rida, Rihanna, Maroon 5, Nicki Minaj and Miley Cyrus.

Before Dr Luke topped the charts this year with "Say So", he last had a No. 1 with Katy Perry's "Dark Horse" in 2014. Months later, Kesha accused him of sexual assault during their yearslong partnership (Dr Luke has vigorously denied the allegations.)

champion, that sold for \$50,400.

The game was designed by Shigeru Miyamoto and Takashi Tezuka as a



Tezuka



Miyamoto

grand culmination" of the Famicom team's three years of game mechanics and programming. (Agencies)

DALLAS: The coronavirus pandemic has taken away another summertime tradition in the US: There will be no free Slurpees at 7-Elevens on July 11 — to hail a date that doubles as an abbreviation of the convenience store chain's name.

7-Eleven has been giving away its slushy beverage to all customers for nearly 20 years on July 11, but it scrapped the promotion this summer to reduce the risk of people flocking to its stores and risking contracting the coronavirus. (AP)

### TV

#### Comedy & music

### Criss 'shows off' his goofier side

By Mark Kennedy

Great songs have been inspired by all kinds of things — like love, dreams and heartache. Now comes an unlikely one inspired by a hot dog.

That's the comedic premise of the first episode of Quibi's new 12-part series "Royalties", starring Darren Criss and Kether Donohue as an aspiring songwriter team. One day, the hungry duo find creativity while munching on frankfurters.

"I was playing ketchup," the lyrics go to their subsequent soaring ballad. "It was more than I could chew/But you put me on a roll/Turned me into a frank man."

The satirical look at the music industry has a fresh song in every episode and allows Criss to show off more

than his acting chops: He wrote all the music, from a raunchy rap song to pure, irresistible pop.

"Songwriting and music has always been such a huge part of my life that gives me such a great deal of joy. That has just had nowhere near the amount of exposure as my acting career," said the Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winner. "And so I'm trying to level the playing field a little bit."

#### Reunites

The show reunites Criss with the writing team of brothers Matt and Nick Lang, who all collaborated over a decade ago on the cult comedy "A Very Potter Musical". They've been mixing comedy and music ever since.

"Going into a really zany, goofy comedy is what I was doing with the Langs before my Hollywood train got running," said Criss. "So getting to go back to that — being a goofball, writing goofy songs, doing stuff that isn't really totally serious — it is my wheelhouse."

The show which started airing last month, explores how songs from superstars are often crafted by unknown songwriters, something Criss has long been obsessed with. As a kid, he studied the liner notes of albums to find out who the overlooked writers were. "While this show is about songwriters, it really is an ode to the creative process in general," he said.

The show's creators cleverly made the show work on Quibi, the mobile phone-only platform that offers installments of movies and TV in 10 minutes or less. Other celebs on the platform include Chance the Rapper, Chrissy Teigen and Jennifer Lopez.

"It was certainly a bit of a challenge to say, 'OK, how are we going to pack enough stuff into the 10 minutes to make it feel like a show, but also make it feel a little bit like every episode is its own self-contained adventure?'" said Nick Lang.

"Royalties" has tapped "Clueless" and "Fast Times at Ridgemont High" Amy Heckerling to direct. It has also attracted an impressive list of guest stars, including Mark Hamill, Jennifer Coolidge, Kevin McHale, Julianne Hough, Rufus Wainwright and Lil Rel Howery.

Landing Hamill was due to pure luck. Criss wrote to the "Star Wars" actor asking him if he'd consider being part of an episode that centered on a musician fascinated by King Kong. It turns out, completely unknown to the show creators, that Hamill has had a lifelong obsession with the King Kong franchise.

#### Recording

"The next thing I know, I'm in the booth recording Mark Hamill's vocals on a song and just not being able to believe a goddamn second of it," said Criss. "I have no idea how we pulled it off."

Republic Records will be releasing the Season One music from the series on July 3, including Hamill's song "Mighty as Kong".

"Royalties" is just the latest show trying to lure viewers to Quibi, which was launched at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic and has endured a rocky start, with fewer subscribers than hoped for.

Criss, who has starred in everything from "Glee" to "The Assassination of Gianni Versace", is optimistic that people will seek out a good show regardless of platform. "At the end of the day, we hope that the content can speak for itself," he said. "People are spending hours and hours of their life on Instagram anyway. They might as well spend a couple of those chunks of time on our show."

It's a feeling Nick Lang shares: "If the content and entertainment is good and valuable and enjoyable, I think it will be valuable for people no matter what. So I hope that people can enjoy it." (AP)



Criss