

American Cowboy

Western Lifestyle • Travel • Entertainment

July/August 2004



Endangered

By Brenn Hill; Red Cliffs Press, Brentwood, Tenn.; 55 minutes, compact disk. For other details, see www.brennhill.com.

The latest album by Brenn Hill could be the artist's best yet, showcasing what has to be considered his ever-increasing proficiency with a tune, his growth as a performer and writer, and his keener sense of his place in the musical landscape. If that landscape is to be thought of as the Western landscape, then Hill occupies an ever-more-prominent position in it.

Produced by Eddie Schwartz and recorded at Ocean Way and Sound Stage studios in Nashville, *Endangered* is a collection of 14 songs with a fuller sound, more intricate arrangements, higher production values, and just a more individualistic stamp on it than Hill's previous work. Hill has developed an ever-broadening audience and has caught the eye of other, more-established artists, as attested to by the fact that he has opened for such acts as Chris LeDoux, Terri Clark, Ian Tyson, Don Edwards, Red Steagall, Michael Martin Murphey, and Riders in the Sky. His touring range has broadened to include some venues east of the Mississippi River.

"Buckaroo Tattoo" is finding its way onto playlists, particularly in Texas, but "Dance Like the Fire" is easily the best cut in this cycle of songs. "My Old Chevy" is an upbeat number that captures the spirit of intergenerational ties out in the wide-open spaces. "One Hand in the Riggins" is a paean to rodeo and self-determination.

--Jesse Mullins