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Brenn Hill
Endangered
Red Cliffs Press 2004

Utah singer/songwriter Brenn Hill has the hard-edged catchiness of many Texas country music artists such as Radney Foster and Charlie Robison. Great stories, gritty but not intrusive vocals, and trademark Western-stylized instrumentation give this disc a reason for at least one good listen.

The opening cut, "Buckaroo Tattoo," kicks off with some great driving sounds. From there, the tempo moves from honky-tonk slow dancers to roots-rock cruisers. Stories among the songs are pretty much standard: lost love, the girl he just couldn't get, travelogue descriptions of the prairies, comforting barrooms, and Native American history. Perhaps this could be reason to brush this CD aside, but hearing Hill's honesty in his voice draws you in. It is his inflections, vocal tones, and variance of true crooning to whispering when necessary that all add up to a great traditional country singer. Standout cuts include "My Old Chevy," with its Cajun-flavored fiddle, and "One Hand In the Riggin'," which has some great David Lindley-influenced slide work.

Slide guitar and dobro work throughout the disc is provided by modern legend Colin Linden. The guitar tones help create a wonderful aural picture that supplement Hill's outstanding voice. For anyone feeling sentimental about the late 80s/early 90s young traditional country sound from acts like Foster & Lloyd, The O'Kanes and early Dwight Yoakam, *Endangered* may help fill the emptiness. **Reviewer: Matt Merta**