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THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY OF MUSIC, VIDEO, AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT

AUGUST 25, 2001

REVIEWS & PREVIEWS

ALBUMS

Edited by Michael Paoletta

★ BRENN HILL

Call You Cowboy

PRODUCERS: various

Paras/Real West RW 6002

Few industry archetypes have lost ground the way country music's hat acts have. From outside the mainstream, Brenn Hill seems up to the task of reclaiming and redefining the term: "Your daddy calls you a drifter/I call you cowboy," he sings on the title track, an inviting introduction to a collection that seeks to instill pride in all aspects of Western life. On *Call You Cowboy*, tunes that begin as love songs end with the guy leaving for the open road, or they wind up being odes to "Lady Idaho" or "Wyoming Wind"; although Hill's vocal range is limited, his honesty and charm are boundless. In the Gene Autry tradition, Hill performs in a neatly acoustic, innately melodic vein—he lopes through uptempos, ballads, and campfire recitations, rarely breaking a sweat. That may not please fans of more emotive singers like Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, but it makes for a whole other kind of "cool" country that's undeniably appealing. Distributed by Four Winds Trading Co.—**AB**