

ROLLING STONE, Aust. *1/2 stars**

Once a punk, local singer-songwriter/producer Audrey Auld has found her real voice as a pure country crooner. This, her second album stakes her place as a rootsy purist from the tears-in-your-beer, dark-clouds-overhead variety - but, hey, that's done Kasey Chambers no harm at all. The jaunty western swing of "Jelly Roll" lightens the mood, but in the main this is the type of country where a little heartache is good for you, drawn from the time before big hair and even bigger hats took over twang.

TAKE A RECKLESS MOMENT AND DISCOVER AUDREY AULD

I just finished spinning Audrey Auld's THE FALLEN on Reckless Records for about the 4th time and all I can say is I'll do it again!

This beautiful songbird has a voice that I am sure is making Tammy Wynette smile in heaven. Her vocals and her songwriting ability will take you on a journey that will convince you've made a happy pit-stop in old Tennessee. Audrey writes a country song the way it should be; from the heart and with a little bit of sass and humor thrown in for good measure. This lady has produced this neoclassic piece of work herself and smart enough to surround her work with talented, dedicated people like Bill Chambers, Nash Chambers and Jeff McCormack to name a few.

Her CD starts out with a real good punch, 'I'd Leave Me Too', penned by Miss Auld. We've all been there. Overly sympathetic to the person about to walk out the door. Audrey captures that feeling with that wonderful warm country twang that makes the hurt feel almost good.

Out of the twelve songs on the CD, Audrey is the author of ten. A very impressive collection and definitely not some assembly line writing which sad to say seems to be the norm in Nashville these days. Kudos' to Audrey for doing it right and doing it her way. I want some more Audrey, stop what you are doing and start writing some more songs! I can't wait to see the lady head north to the U.S.A. so I can experience her songs live.

Her humor comes through in songs like 'Jellyroll'. While listening to it I just couldn't help thinking wouldn't it be great to hear her sing it live with Rosie Flores. Our own Hillbilly Filly and the Voice from Down under. Are you listening ladies?

Also on the CD is Audrey's duet with Dale Watson. Their rendition of 'Jackson' is second only to Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash. Dale's deep Texas vocals perfectly compliment Audrey's sassy twang. What a combination! This is Belinda signing off and putting up the do not disturb sign and going for another listen to Audrey.

Belinda Coward **bluntreview.com, USA December 2000**

COUNTRY MUSIC PEOPLE

"Audrey's new solo offering remains in the traditional fold, but exudes a certain coolness that will appeal to the more image conscious fans. Although not related to Kasey Chambers, Audrey displays a similar tearjerk catch in her voice that is quite charming and works perfectly with the roots-based material, largely written by the artist herself. Audrey's own material is superb. 'The Fallen' is a stunning first album. Traditional yet cool, it should appeal right across the age divide, again demonstrating that Australia is producing some of the best country music on offer today. One more for my Albums of the Year."

Craig Baguley, UK, Nov 2000

RHYTHMS

SUNDAY HERALD SUN (Vic)

"Audrey has come of age from her country music apprenticeship with the redoubtable Bill Chambers to post a stunner of a solo album. She wrote all but two tracks and produced to boot, handling some of the country's top pickers and roping in US artist Dale Watson for a duet. This is a first class package that will find favour worldwide for the way Audrey has been able to blend the new with the old. Vocally she tends towards the strident style of 1950s/1960s country stars Kitty Wells and Loretta Lynn but Tassie born Audrey takes a post modern stance in the way she uses such influences. 'Black Cloud' is tending towards the sort of Gothic country Gillian Welch does and is adventurous indeed. It is followed by the straight ahead Bakersfield/Buck Owens style 'Shove It' while 'To The Bone' brings us back to the territory staked out on the previous Bill & Audrey album. There are convincing shuffles, weepers and the joyful romp of the classic 'Jackson' with duet from Watson to mark this as a special album sure to figure in the best country releases of the year."

Keith Glass, Aust. Sep 2000

DRUM MEDIA

"The word is that this is one of the most impressive country albums this country has generated since 'The Captain', and after giving it a few whirls I'd have to agree. There are a variety of country styles canvassed on 'The Fallen'. It possesses an alternately modern and 'old time' feel, with Audrey's influences obviously being fairly wide ranging. Overall it is an emotionally involving recording with much to admire about it."

Craig N Pearce, Aust. Oct 2000

BEAT

"'Song for Clax', a haunting homage, is the cream on this culinary creation which owes much of its success to its celebration of the rich past of the most popular and under-represented music genre in the unlucky radio country. Audrey cooks up a delicious disc, deeply rooted in the heart... ...imagery and grammar is memorable in 'Black Cloud'. ... the vitriol is dosed with venom in 'Shove It' - an assertive antidote to the penchant for positive love songs in the local tributaries of the Nash Trash mainstream. Almost a throwback to the assertiveness of Loretta Lynn. This is Ms Auld's strength - being able to inject her soulful songs with the passion that only comes from experience and close observation. 'The Fallen' is surreal solace for folks impaled on the crass cross of heartbreak - oh, newcomers should note this is not alternacountry. It's the real deal from a woman whose messages are clad in a lush coating of pedal steel, dobro, banjo, fiddle, upright bass and mandolin. And benefit from self-production."

David Dawson, Aust. Oct 2000

3RD COAST MUSIC

"One of the biggest, certainly most unexpected, treats of 1999 was the US release of Bill & Audrey's 'Looking Back To See', a stunning collection of duets by two Australian singers, which served notice that cool country stuff was going on Down Under. Realistically, sources tell me that relative newcomer Audrey Auld and veteran Bill Chambers are pretty much as good as it gets in Australian country. ... tracks range from impressive to downright amazing... Auld writes as good a contemporary country song as anyone and sings them better than most. ... Auld has passion and experience in her voice and songs."

John Conquest, USA, Aug 2000

COUNTRY MUSIC INTERNATIONAL

"One of the nicest musical surprises of the last couple of years was an unexpectedly wonderful album of duets by an Australian couple named Bill and Audrey, Bill being Bill Chambers, who is well known as the founder of the Dead Ringer Band. His partner Audrey, at that time, was almost totally unknown outside her homeland. Now, however, she has graduated from under the wing of Bill into a splendid singer songwriter of genuine country music. On this new 12 track

release she has penned 10 of the cuts and has also taken charge of production. The result is yet another unexpectedly excellent project. Auld's own compositions are very good and mostly recorded in the simple style of the 40s and early 50s. There's a lot of brilliant country music coming out of Australia and any fan of genuine country who has yet to sample the delights of Audrey Auld is in for a real treat."

Frank Bradshaw, UK, Oct 2000

DRUM MEDIA

"Sometimes, when the weather is right, when the sun shines just so upon your face, and when the confluence of circumstances seemingly running your life all fall into place, it's like a verse of poetry has captured you, embraced you into its rhythm and magic. It's the same when words and music merge in a song, or a series of songs, that possess a balance so right, so striking, that their relevance to your life comes from a sensitivity, an environment we all ultimately share. The genre of the music is virtually irrelevant, as long as you are open to the sweet intelligence of its message. Such thoughts occur to me when listening to the dauntingly accomplished debut CD from Audrey Auld. It's a thrilling collection of country tunes that possesses a variety of feels, but strikes its most engaging notes when letting the emotion leach out in a gentle stream of hurt and wonderment. Self-penned numbers like 'I'd Leave Me Too', 'Black Cloud' and 'To The Bone' are classics of the country genre, and deserve recognition in this country for their wit, sensitivity and downright melodic power. Nick Cave and Paul Kelly would be proud to call them their own, as would Tom Waits and Lyle Lovett, for that matter. Audrey belongs to a special breed of local artists (including Bill and Kasey Chambers) who see beyond the barrier of xenophobia that local country music has built around itself. Influenced by the best the USA has to offer, but offering something distinctly Australian, uniqueness abounds on 'The Fallen'."

Craig N. Pearce, Aust. Oct 2000

THE SUN HERALD

Sunday Metro (NSW)

7/10

"Audrey Auld has been hovering around the local country scene for a few years. Sharing with Kasey Chambers an innocent, yet weathered, vocal style, Audrey's 'The Fallen' is a brash, heartfelt, self-deprecating collection of cowpoke tunes. Backed by a smoking combo, the highlights include the no-nonsense 'Shove It', the cruisy heartbreaker 'I'd Leave Me Too' and a cover of Fred Eaglesmith's lament for drug-addled superstars 'Alcohol & Pills'."

Cross reference : Kasey Chambers, Lucinda Williams

Peter Holmes, Aust. Oct 2000

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Metro (NSW)

"Close your eyes and you're in the backblocks of the USA in the '50s: Hank Williams, Hank Snow and a nod to Patsy Cline and plenty of others for aficionados to pick. But they're original songs in the main (except for one cracker from Fred Eaglesmith), written and produced by local gal Audrey Auld. The influence of Bill Chambers isn't hard to pick either. It's sometimes corny, but lively."

Bernard Zuel, Aust. Oct 2000

REVOLUTIONS (online zine)

"'The Fallen' continues a very good year for Australian country music. This is clearly a lady with opinions and indeed some attitude. The songs are strong throughout with ten Audrey compositions none finer than 'Song For Clax' with its sadder than sad lyrics. On a topical note, as the Sydney Olympics have just finished it would be apt to award Audrey a silver medal. A gold awaits this young Tasmanian by the time the Athens Olympics comes around in 2004."

DW, Nov 2000

BCMA

"This new release sounds almost like another album of classics were it not for the fact that ten of the twelve top notch songs are brand new and written by Audrey herself. If this is the sort of music Australia is turning out, UK country music fans may well be encouraged to emigrate!"

UK, October 2000

CAPITAL NEWS

"Produced by Audrey, it shows the maturity of an artist full of self-confidence in what she's doing as a songwriter, producer and singer. No compromises here, just great original Country with an undertone of the classic styles so evident in the Bill & Audrey release. Nice outing."

Ron Adsett, Aust. Sep 2000

CAPITAL NEWS

"Writing, producing and performing on your own album is a daunting prospect for even the most seasoned performer, not to mention a relatively inexperienced newcomer. But Audrey Auld, who's just finished personally creating what is a remarkable piece of work, saw it simply as a challenge - albeit a pretty frightening one. 'The Fallen' is a delicately assembled, beautifully performed, profound and cohesive album that is one of the best recordings to emerge this year. The songs on the album are all good, but there are some absolute killers. 'Black Cloud' is a top-class piece of songwriting that would do justice to even the most seasoned pro, and I'd challenge anyone to remain unmoved by the unbelievably touching 'Song For Clax'. The wonderful 'Shove It' will have many a woman cheering, and 'Jellyroll' is a sheer joy to listen to. 'The Fallen' also demonstrates that Audrey has found her musical niche. She's emerged with a highly distinctive and potent sound, style and feel, and in doing so carved a unique place for herself in Australian Country Music."

Sue Jarvis, Aust. Oct 2000

STATIC MULTIMEDIA (online zine)

"One of the best traditionally inclined country records to be released this year comes from well outside of Nashville. Well, little surprise there-Nashville has had little to do with traditional country for the last two decades. So where does this honky tonk gem come from-Austin? Chicago? Rural Tasmania?! Australian singer-songwriter Audrey Auld was, in fact, born in rural Tasmania, and has made quite a name for herself in the tight-knit country scene down under. On *The Fallen*, Auld explores a variety of styles made popular by country & western pioneers like Hank Williams, Bob Wills, and the Carter Family. The resulting twelve songs (ten of which were written by Audrey) cover a lot of ground musically. "I'd Leave Me Too," the album's opener, has all the regret of classic George Jones--sadness to the strains of a crying pedal steel. The poetic "Black Cloud" wouldn't be at all out of place on the last Lucinda Williams record. "Shove It," the blues flavored "Jelly Roll," and an inspired cover of the classic "Jackson" (here a duet with Texas maverick Dale Watson) are shit-kickers through and through. Elsewhere we are treated to a bit of the Bakersfield sound ("Without You"), cosmopolitan country without strings ("Still Holding On"), and bluegrass with all the fixings ("Missing You"). Her backing musicians, including the Feral Swing Cats, deliver the goods on all counts. *The Fallen*, which Auld produced herself, is a must-own for country fans sceptical of the high gloss coming out of Nashville. Her passion for musical craft seems to come from a different time, while her physical bearings put her half a world away. Her songwriting puts her in a league with her heroes."

August Forte, USA, Oct 2000

COUNTRY STANDARD TIME (online zine)

"Audrey Auld of 'Bill & Audrey' fame has come into her own. Her solo outing is self-produced, self-released, largely self-penned and unequivocally self-assured. The classic country stylings here belie Auld's antipodean roots. If anything identifies her as Australian, it's the gutsy charge of her voice which would lay out any true-blue Aussie bloke in a Saturday night barroom. When she hollers, "You can shove it", you better believe it. Yet this same remarkable voice is just as effective as a vehicle for grief and loneliness. Auld carries her arduously honest lyrics with both grace and regret; her rueful but unwavering delivery drives home the album's imagery of the

"fallen woman" - wiser, a little repentant maybe, but unbroken. Auld reveals herself to be an astute producer, and she commands some stellar musicianship."

Sophie Best, USA, Oct 2000

FRED EAGLESMITH DIGEST

"I have been asking myself just exactly what makes Audrey Auld's latest release such a current favorite of mine! It contains lots of qualities that I use to explain great music, but so do several other CDs out on the market. What makes Audrey's current effort stand out so flawlessly among the rest? This was the mystery that I was determined to solve as I listened for probably the 30th time in a week! "The Fallen," takes the best of what has ever defined traditional country music and dresses it up with a new style and flare, like a young lady adding a touch of current fashion to an old family heirloom. Her voice has all the glow and feeling that made the late Patsy Cline and Tammy Wynette such standout favorites. Her passion and love for what she does is packed into every single song included on this wonderful CD. Whether the numbers are her own compositions or the work of others, Ms. Auld gives them a depth of feeling that is lacking in today's sorry mix of country pop, branded sadly by many as the "new country." Audrey honors the past and solutes the present by blending heartfelt ballads and up tempo stompers that can evoke many emotions, touch your heart, and uplift you, all at the same time. Her voice is her greatest asset! It makes every line believable and many tunes unforgettable.

From the first strains of Auld's self penned gem, "I'd Leave Me Too," I knew that I was about to hear one of those special CDs. You know the ones? You savor them for years, you never get sick of hearing them and there are times when you just wish you could play them once more! Audrey's own compositions are delightful, heartfelt and poignant. At times, they can almost break your heart, like the words of "Too Far To Fall, " where she sings, "Down on the bottom, it's where I belong. I won't have to go far, when love goes wrong...so just leave me down, it's not too far to fall." Her touching and tear stained version of Fred Eaglesmith's "Alcohol and Pills," a brilliant epitaph to the casualties of life in the music industry, is a tribute to her extreme talent as a singer and performer. Not only does Ms. Auld embrace this song as if it were her own but she conveys the utter hopelessness and helplessness of those that die too soon, too young, too fast. It is a brilliant cover and one of the best I will ever hear! Another fantastic remake is the rendition of "Jackson," originally done by Lee Hazelwood and Nancy Sinatra. This time around, Audrey does this rollicky version with the legendary Dale Watson and the fun is contagious.

Backed by a group of accomplished musicians, Audrey Auld restores our faith in what country music has been and still can be. She is a powerkeg of talent -- writing, singing and producing "The Fallen," with masterful results. Do not miss this CD! I promise you that it will remain in your top 10 list for a very long time!"

Fern MacDonald, USA, Sep 2000

FRED EAGLESMITH DIGEST

"Front and center on 'The Fallen' are Audrey's incredible vocals that soar and swoop to embrace the gamut of emotions embodied in the album's 12 tracks. Her songwriting is fresh and well crafted, and it captures the spirit and tradition of the legendary country music of the 40's and 50's. Add two magnificent covers and a stellar lineup of musicians, and the result is a masterful collection of toe-tappers, honkytonkers, ballads, and more. In the opening track, "I'd Leave Me Too", Audrey's sense of humor and Michel Rose's pedal steel bring tears to your ears and a smile to your face. But the transitions in 'The Fallen' are swift and sure. Track 2 is the melancholy "Black Cloud", which contains exquisite work by musical partner Bill Chambers (Bill and Audrey) on electric guitar, acoustic slide, and fretted dobro. Next come the sassy "Shove It" and the romantic "To The Bone" followed by "Jellyroll", where Audrey lightens things with a swingin' tune about her "big fat daddy". Track 6 is the first of two covers on 'The Fallen'. Backed by the stunning tandem of Chambers' electric and Rose's steel guitars, Audrey gives everything she's got in an outstanding version of Fred Eaglesmith's "Alcohol and Pills". The next 4 tracks are classic country at its best, but 3 of the songs - "Without You", "Too Far to Fall", and "Still Holding On" - are originals. In the mix at track 9 is the other cover - a rip-roaring duet with Dale Watson (yes that Dale Watson) on the classic "Jackson". The final two tracks are right in line thematically but, at least to my ear, are wonderfully tangent stylistically, thereby lending even greater depth

to the album. "Missing You" is a solid bluegrass number with Audrey backed by Chambers on acoustic guitar, Ian Lees on bass, Kym Warner on mandolin, and Rod McCormack on banjo. The final song, "Song For Clax", is a beautiful lament for a dear fallen friend. "Song For Clax" is one of those rare, special songs that just stops you in the middle of whatever you're doing. Even with the remote in my hand, I've been too slow on the Repeat button as I've sat mesmerized. This was a difficult song (emotionally) for Audrey to record, but I sure am thankful she did.

"The Fallen" by Audrey Auld is an absolute treasure! You need to have a copy in your library. "

Tim Walsh, USA, Aug 2000

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Fern MacDonald, Fred Eaglesmith Digest, USA Sep '00

AUDREY GOES ONE UP WITH THE FALLEN

Having been a regular at the almost famous and now, sadly, defunct Hillbilly Jam gigs run by Audrey Auld and Bill Chambers, I was fortunate enough to hear some of the songs on this album in their raw state. Backed by

the Feral Swing Katz, Audrey would run through some of the numbers but, in retrospect, it was only a slight indication of what Audrey had in store for us when the CD was finally released. Audrey captures an amazing range of styles as she works her own songs into a finely balanced selection of numbers, with influences as diverse as Kitty Wells, Rose Maddox or Lucinda Williams showing through on some of the tracks. The hauntingly beautiful Black Cloud and the lively Missing You are, in my opinion, superb in their lyrical poignancy.

Ten of the twelve numbers were penned by Audrey and it's an impressive list to say the least. I'd Leave Me Too is a pure country sound in the true tradition of love-leavin'. Black Cloud is an enigmatic song of confused love delivered with a finely balanced vocal treatment a la Lucinda

Williams or Jann Brown. The hillbilly song, Shove It, is going to be the dance number for the toe tappers and Jelly Roll, a blues-based rendition, is as swingin' as you're going to get on a locally released album. The Feral Swing Katz, who play on most of the songs, are unequalled in this area and Audrey takes the tune into an evocative ride through the low-down lovin' valley of home-style blues. Canadian-born singer/songwriter, Fred Eaglesmith, gets a thumbs up for his Alcohol and Pills, a trip back through the times of Hank Williams, Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix who took their careers on the merry-go-round of money, drugs and, ultimately, death. Without You is another pure country song of envy and lost hope, a recurrent theme which Audrey sharpens into a blade to slice through the barriers of pain and despair.

By the time Jackson, an emotive duet with Dale Watson, comes along you know you're listening to an album with class and passion. Still Holding On is another standard love-sick tale of hopelessness and, again, Audrey nails the emotions of love gone wrong. Missing You is definitely my favorite song and has a beautiful bluegrassy/old-timey sound, not surprisingly, given that the musicians include Bill Chambers on guitar, Kim Warner on mandolin, Ian Lees on bass and Rod McCormack on banjo. The album rounds up with Song For Clax, a lost, wasted-life tale about someone close who didn't get through the darkness of a tormented existence. A well thought out and evocative number, it caps not only the album, but the reason for the title. Each song expresses a chapter of a moment in a lifetime of painful emotions and passions we all relate to but Audrey, has been able to gather them all together under the banner of The Fallen with a flair which takes them from the self-pitying, mournful perception into excellent and lively renditions in the styles she obviously knows and cares a lot for.

The quality of the musicians also has to be noted. The brilliance of guitarist Stuart French and the pedal steel (and mandolin!) of Michel Rose and brilliant fiddle from Mick Albeck, ably backed by a variety of rhythm players, including Michael Vidale, Chris Haigh, Doug Gallacher, Robbie Souter, Nash Chambers and others, help to make this the best country album to be released this year. It's a long way from the Tasmanian Youth Symphony Orchestra for Audrey Auld and a great companion piece for her duo CD with Bill Chambers, Looking Back To See. But this album has certainly propelled her onto a new platform in a pursuit of bringing country music in Australia up to date with not only what's happening in the diverse areas of Americana-styles emerging from America but also a trip around the early country sounds of the 50s and 60s as it should be performed. If I had five big hats, I'd give four of them to include this album in my collection. Buy it!

Ray Baldwin, Honky Tonkin' Down Under Aug '00

Until now, Audrey Auld's name has usually been spoken in the same breath as Australia's royal family of country music. Her partner is Bill Chambers, leader of the legendary Dead Ringer Band and, of course, father of Kasey

Chambers, whose spectacular solo career has changed all the rules and preconceptions about Australian country music. As a duo, Bill and Audrey made ears prick up around Australian, American and European music circles with last year's self-released album of country duets, Looking Back to See.

Auld's new solo release, The Fallen, is so damn good in its own right that the only reason to invoke the Chambers name is flattery by association. Auld's remarkable voice shares some of the qualities that have made Kasey Chambers so renowned--a singular strength and passion. It's a voice that carries suffering and grief with elegance, then belts out a punch that would lay out any Aussie bloke in a Saturday night barroom.

Auld's love for Bob Wills, Hank Williams, Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family would seem to place her in the "neo-traditionalist" tent, but although she was raised in rural Tasmania she has what she calls "an inner-city person's approach to country music." She came to country music via post-punk arthouse European and Australian bands like the Birthday Party, Bauhaus, and the Psychedelic Furs. An unusual record collection for a young woman living in small-town Hobart in the early 1980s.

"It was quite an extreme thing," she says with a laugh. "I lived with a musician at that time who played in a Brit-punk band. Then another friend, an art teacher who had really diverse tastes, started making me up tapes

-- Dwight Yoakam, Lyle Lovett, Patsy Cline, Bob Willis, John Prine, Gram Parsons, Emmylou Harris, Loretta Lynn. From then on, it became an obsession. I used to raid people's record collections wherever I went."

Auld's hunger for music was shaped by a childhood routine of classical violin and piano lessons from age six. Her father was a jazz piano and cornet player ("boogie woogie, dixieland stuff") and imposed a strict music regime. "At home, it was all classical, jazz, opera," she remembers. "No television or commercial radio, and definitely no country! When my parents broke up when I was 10, my mum went out and started buying supermarket pop records."

Like many Australians, Auld caught the travelling bug and moved around the Northern Territory and the Kimberleys before settling in Sydney. "I felt quite lonely in Sydney," she says. "I was oblivious to the whole country music scene that I'm part of now."

Her songwriting career was born out of roaming the isolated spaces of Australia's remote north. "It was a free and easy life, just driving around up north by myself in a ute-- very conducive to writing," she recalls. "When you're driving, the creative part of your brain becomes active. I started combining words and music, and it was the writing that prompted me to start discovering my voice."

Auld involved herself in choirs and singing groups, experimenting with a capella, gospel and African music. "Then I formed the Cowbells with two other girls, singing country music a capella, and we went to Tamworth (Australia's largest country music festival) a couple of times."

Her love of western swing stylings led her to form the Harmony Grits. "We played acoustic western swing with a jazz flavour, close harmonies, no drums," she says. "But the clubs were so used to rock'n'roll, country rock bands--they just didn't get it."

Adding drums and an upright bass, the band evolved into Audrey and the Rhythm Wranglers. "I realised then that I had to invest a bit of money in my career. I had to do a recording, but I always felt really alone in trying to find the musicians who wanted to do what I wanted to do -- country music just isn't that big in Australia."

It was at this career crossroads that Auld met Bill Chambers at the annual Hank Williams birthday jam session hosted by Sydney's Keith Glass. "Meeting Bill was great because he understood what I was talking about musically," Auld says. The duo started writing together in mid-1997 and formed Luke and the Drifters, performing Hank covers and classic hard country material.

Auld and Chambers then set up their own label, Reckless Records, and began to learn the machinations of independent distribution and promotion. Looking at the modest success of their duet album, Auld comments, "It's a very good feeling to know that we didn't have much money but people just responded to the music... It's done surprisingly well. Having seen what's gone into Kasey's career financially, I'm aware of how much money it takes to break an artist."

Her solo project introduced Auld to a new role in the music business as producer. "I've always been interested in the production side of things," she says. "I love Owen Bradley, Pete Anderson and I'm always listening to other musicians, trying to get to know their styles and their strengths. As a producer, you have to stay focused all the time, so I felt really proud of it -- especially as a woman."

Auld considers herself to be "very Australian," but her role models are to be found across the Pacific. "I aspire to write like Harlan Howard and Hank Williams and Willie Nelson," she says. "What I'm writing about is beyond nationality -- falling in and out of love, falling down in bars, falling off the rails. I like the idea of the fallen woman."

The Fallen highlights Auld's strengths as a songwriter, but she also pays tribute to one of her songwriting heroes with a cover of Fred Eaglesmith's "Alcohol and Pills." She enthuses, "I'm just the biggest Fred fan. He's

more country than anyone out there at the moment, his songs are so real. He's changed my whole approach to writing and music and life, actually."

Auld is an active member of the "Fredheads" Internet digest community and recently contributed a version of "Crazier" for the fan tribute CD, 20 Odd Hollers. (Available for purchase on the Reckless Records Web site.)

Dale Watson puts in a surprise performance on *The Fallen* with an impromptu duet of "Jackson." "Bill and I had met Dale when we did some tour supports in 1999, and I got up for a couple of Kitty Wells songs during his Living Legends sets," Auld recalls. "In March this year, I was recording in the ABC radio studios in Sydney, and Dale walked in to do an interview on 2BL. I ran into him during a break, I was wearing my Johnny Cash T-shirt and I pulled him into the studio after running round trying to find a computer to download the lyrics for 'Jackson.' We were cheek to cheek round one mic and put it all down live." This little example of serendipity was an inspiration for Auld: "It was one of the most exciting times I've ever had, pure spontaneity. It restored my faith that if you want something, it'll come along if it's meant to."

SOPHIE BEST Aug'00 Miles of Music

Following the critically acclaimed Bill and Audrey album, "Looking Back to See", Audrey has struck out on her own with an impressive solo effort that will surely be the talk of the industry. The somewhat oblique title refers to Audrey's interest in all things "fallen": fallin' in love, out of love, into the gutter, and so on. In other words, her interests are the timeless themes of country music: real life experiences that actually involve real people. Of the twelve songs here, Audrey herself wrote all but two.

The covers are the Fred Eaglesmith homage to Hank Williams, "Alcohol and Pills", and the old standard, "Jackson", on which Audrey duets with Austin's own Dale Watson. Although it was chosen as much for convenience as anything else, "Jackson" sits happily amongst the themes explored by Audrey on her own tunes.

With a combination of humour, pathos and cut-to-the-heart emotion, Audrey's collection of tunes encapsulates what real life is all about. First class musicianship from some of Australia's finest players (ably assisted by transplanted American Larry Muboberac) only adds to the class of this production. Audrey is a modern woman who sings songs about real life in the way that classic country songs have always managed to capture. Easily the best and most exciting local release so far this year, this album heralds the arrival of Audrey as a quality artist in her own right and one who threatens to turn the local industry on its head.

Ken Date, Radio 2RRR, krdcountry.com, Aust.