

★ ★ ★

the yearlings (the yearlings)

The Yearlings, the Adelaide-based duo of Robyn Chalklen and Chris Parkinson, recorded this album live to tape "one hot muggy day" last November. It captures the raw spirit of traditional country music which often goes missing in the record business at the top end of town. The two met at a Tamworth country music festival when Parkinson was playing guitar with Jimmy Little and Chalklen was playing in her retro-cowgirl band Problem Pony. *The Yearlings* shows how fortunate was their meeting: they were born to play together. Both write, play acoustic guitar, sing and harmonise with an old-time fervour that is all



about the feeling that can be found in music rather than the money. These lonesome blues have been around a long time now – at least as long as Stephen Foster's 150-year-old *Oh, Susanna*, superbly sung here by Chalklen – and these songs speak of equally timeless concerns: of prayers, waters wide, leaving and grieving. Perhaps best of all is the co-written *That Old Hill*, written in memory of a friend. Like all the best lonesome songs, from Foster down to Townes Van Zandt and Gillian Welch, in the end it leaves you feeling you aren't so alone in this world after all.

noel mengel

★ ★ ★ **Mere mortal**

★ ★ **False prophet**

★ **Just crap**