



MELBOURNE SINGER-SONGWRITER RELEASES LOST ALBUM MADE IN CHICAGO WITH THE LATE JAY BENNETT, MEMBERS OF WILCO AND THE LEGENDARY AL PERKINS

SHERRY RICH • DAKOTA AVENUE

Good songs keep. If they're made right they'll see your kids grow and mourn the passing of old friends. The ten songs on **DAKOTA AVENUE** have done both without leaving a shoebox under Sherry Rich's bed. After ten years, it's time they met the big old world they were made for.

"**DAKOTA AVENUE** is the place in Nashville where I lived and where all these songs were written," she says. "The album was recorded with Jay Bennett in Wilco's loft in Chicago between 1999 and 2001."

The tapes have been dormant so long because other projects have consumed her time — not least the Rich Family Album of classic country songs with her mother, '60s performer Noelene Rich, brother Rusty and husband Rick; three albums with her acclaimed kids' band, the Mudcakes, and writing with Ashley Naylor for a long-awaited second Grapes record.

"These songs were written in a very productive period when I first moved to the US in 1998, so they've been ready to go for awhile," Sherry says. "It took Jay's untimely death last year to put a fire under it... under me. Sadly he never got the chance to hear the project finished."

There's plenty to admire in the detail of **DAKOTA AVENUE**, beginning with the singing pedal steel of the great Al Perkins (of Flying Burritos fame), through the power pop dazzle of Pandora Mink to the wafting blue chiffon daydream of Same Old Paradise.

But these songs aren't the swishy kind that sink or swim in Shane O'Mara's glistening mix. As a writer, Sherry Rich has a way with mood and setting and longing that recalls the young Bob Dylan's famous intent "to stay a part of that stuff that don't change."

Hotel Song is great example: a song about the small things that harbour big feelings, set in some room on some highway that jogs a similar bittersweet memory in any traveller who can picture it's peeling wallpaper.

Hopeful Heart is another: not a recipe for a contented life, but a

question on behalf of every poor deluded soul who ever imagined they could see it coming in the beautiful haze "between happy hour and closing time."

The sucker punch, of course, is Sherry's voice, a low and easy drawl that weaves like a slow dancing partner with an alluring habit of falling off a key note like cigarette smoke off a painted lip.

The songs on **DAKOTA AVENUE** are co-writes with some of Nashville's finest: Tim Carroll, Will Kimbrough, Pat Buchanan and Bob DiPiero are all country and/or rock journeymen with their own roads and stories momentarily intersecting with Sherry's long trail from Bribie Island to Melbourne to the USA and back.

The band is no less stellar: Glenn Kotche, Pat Sansone and Leroy Bach have all done time in Wilco at some point. Mr Sherry Rich, Rick Plant, is a constant companion on a range of instruments. Another page would be required to fully describe the privilege of having the legendary steel and dobro player Al Perkins on board.

But as producer and co-writer of the lion's share of songs, it's Jay Bennett's spirit that looms largest over **DAKOTA AVENUE**.

"I see this record as a time capsule of my early days in Nashville and also a tribute to Jay and his incredible musicality" says Sherry. "He was at his creative best during these recordings and put in many hours of tireless dedication. He and the other musicians gave their time and sublime talents freely to make it happen."

If you need to ask why they would do that, you may be unaware of Sherry's extraordinary past, from the all-girl garage-pop sensation Girl Monstar in the late '80s to all-star roots-rock bands the Grievous Angels and Courtesy Move via her timeless collaboration with Ashley Naylor, The Grapes.

And if that's the case, now's a good time to track some of those albums down. Or you could leave it another ten years. Hers are the kind of songs that keep. — Michael Dwyer, Melbourne, April 2012

DAKOTA AVENUE is out now on **Pandora Mink Records** and is distributed by **Vitamin Records**.
Launch Date: **Saturday, 14 July** at **Caravan Music Club**, 95-97 Drummond Street, Oakleigh
For further gig information please visit www.sherryrich.com

For interviews, hi-res photos, CDs for airplay or review passes please ring Karen on 0400 527 365 or email kpublicity@optusnet.com.au.