

Anne McCue – Roll (2004)

Written by bluesever

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01. *I Want You Back* 04:29 02. *Nobody's Sleeping* 04:41 03. *Stupid* 04:36 04. *Crazy Beautiful Child* 03:48 05. *Hangman* 06:17 06. *50 Dollar Whore* 02:54 07. *Tiny Little Song* 04:31 08. *Milkman's Daughter* 05:19 09. *Roll* 05:55 10. *Gandhi* 03:05 11. *Where The Darkness Grows* 06:35 12. *Ballad Of An Outlaw Woman* 06:24 13. *Machine Gun* 09:21

Personnel: Anne McCue - Banjo, Composer, Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Electric), Lap Steel Guitar, Organ (Hammond), Primary Artist, Producer, Vocals Carl Byron - Accordion, Organ (Hammond), Wurlitzer Dusty Wakeman - Bass, Mixing, Organ (Hammond), Producer, Vocals (Background) Eric Gardner – Drums David Raven - Drums, Loops, Percussion Mike Stinson - Drums

For her American debut, Australian singer/songwriter Anne McCue delivers a diverse and long disc. Enthusiastically supported by Lucinda Williams, McCue generally justifies the ringing endorsement from the No Depression standard bearer. *Roll* is a rootsy, introspective, and thought-provoking singer/songwriter effort that isn't as essential as Ms. Williams' backing would imply, but is certainly impressive. Kick-started by three of its best songs, "I Want You Back," "Nobody's Sleeping," and "Stupid" are all engaging mid-tempo, swampy Americana rockers with ringing, somewhat Byrds-like guitars and singalong choruses that immediately lodge in the listener's brain. While the remainder of the album is no embarrassment, it's inconsistent. Like Sheryl Crow, McCue's voice can be gutsy, sensitive, or seductive, and although her songs are undeniably well constructed, some are hampered by lyrics that are either obvious or seem forced. She commendably breaks out of the strummy mode on "Mr. Hangman," a stripped-down, ghostly rocker with a sizzling electric slide guitar solo (played by McCue) right out of the Robbie Krieger/Doors style book. The title track chugs along on an insistent Stonesy rocking beat, with McCue's distorted guitar adding grit. A closing version of Hendrix's "Machine Gun" also showcases her tough six-string attack, but the powerful, overdriven tune doesn't fit with the rest of this less aggressive and bluesy album. The lovely "When the Darkness Grows" -- where McCue's voice sounds remarkably like Indigo Girl Emily Saliers' -- is arguably the disc's most sensitive track but, at over six minutes, could use some pruning. If the album were trimmed of its excess and edited to about 40 minutes, it would make for a magnificent listen. McCue is a talented singer/songwriter whose best songs show she's capable of eventually

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breaking out of the crowded Americana pack. Roll won't accomplish that, but it's a stirring, dignified, and confident work by a promising, up-and-coming talent. --- Hal Horowitz, Rovi

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