

Billboard

April 11, 2009

Road warrior Michelle Malone has been recording and touring (200 dates per year) for more than two decades, and her 10th release bears all the marks of a seasoned pro. Unapologetic, appealing performances? Check. Songs you want to hear more than once? Check. A balance of ballads, rockers and uptempo ditties? Check. The Atlanta-born singer/songwriter blends blues with country-fried folk-rock: A proper American cocktail that's best drunk straight-up. There's no studio trickery on "Debris," no overdone guitar sounds or heavy-handed production. Just Malone, her band, her voice—a more girlish Bonnie Raitt—and her songs, charming in their honesty and simplicity. "Undertow" rocks out with Malone's swampy slide guitar, "14th Street & Mars" waltzes through the pain of a relationship's end, and "Yesterday's Makeup," a reclamation of the morning-after walk of shame, deserves a place in every woman's library. —Kerri Mason