

PERFORMING SONGWRITER – MARCH 2009

Michelle Malone's insurgence and tenacity find focus with *Debris*, her 10th disc to date and her most assertive. Despite a certain similarity to others whose sound is birthed in bluesy, rootsy regimens (Bonnie Raitt, Melissa Etheridge, Lucinda Williams even *Exile*-era Stones). Malone's authoritative presence exudes a spunk all her own that's evident from the opening surge of "Feather in a Hurricane," a searing rebuke fueled by Malone's riveting wail and sizzling slide guitar, through to "Yesterday's Make-Up" and "Restraining Order Blues," each a blend of sass and defiance. Waxing on the turbulence of toxic relationships, she tempers her tirades with soulful sentiments ("Marked," 14th Street and Mars") and ends the set with an ode to affirmation. "*Somewhere there is someone for everyone / No matter who it might be,*" she croons on the lofty "Candle for the Lonely." Given her confidence and conviction, she gives credence to the encouragement.