

## Mp3 Sara Cox - Crowded Is The New Lonely



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With a voice that's "a combination of melancholy, dreaminess, flexible, yet also powerful", Cox writes songs that are raw and wry, lovely and sad. 10 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Pop, ROCK: Americana Details: Though Sara Cox hasn't needed an introduction around these parts for many years, her last solo album, *Arrive*, introduced the rest of the world to the Portland area's premiere singer/songwriter. They learned what we've known all along: Sara Cox can write and sing with the best of 'em. *Arrive* received rave reviews from the likes of the Americana-centric magazines *Harp* and *No Depression*, and the European taste-making Web sites *Americana UK* (Great Britain) and *AltCountryNL* (Netherlands). Wait 'til they hear *Crowded is the New Lonely*, Cox's even better follow up to *Arrive*, which will be released in conjunction with a show in Portland at Space Gallery on June 9th. *Crowded is the New Lonely* delivers on all levels, as Cox effortlessly alternates her vocal style from countrified rocker to folkie across the album's 10 tracks. The recording is a family affair. With a confident and polished-but-not-slick sound achieved by Sara's producer/mixer/recording engineer (and guitarist/keyboardist/drummer/husband), Nate Schrock, the new album is stunning in its musical and thematic consistency. The vibe of *Crowded is the New Lonely* is relaxed and intimate throughout, with wonderful flourishes from the backing band: Schrock, Steve Jones (bass, backing vocals, and acoustic guitar), Carty Thompson (pedal steel), Megan Jo Wilson (backing vocals), and Chicky Stoltz (drums on four of the tunes). The opener, "Hijacked Soul," is a galloping what-if rumination featuring the kind of intelligent lyrics that made *Arrive* a global standout almost four years ago: About this time of year I think of you/and your friends and family and what they do/singin' songs about how Christ is born/while they stand around with their hearts all torn/I guess I'm human cuz I wonder what if it all had gone different that night/If you'd-a packed up/wrapped up all your gifts/headed home on that Christmas flight/Or whistled to me from afar/let me know how y'are/with your thoughts left all undone/and

your soul out on the run/hijacked soul out on the run. What follows are nine more unified songs with the adult themes one would expect from a woman who finds the time and space to write and record while raising young children. That she has played with these talented musicians for many years now (in The Coming Grass as well as on previous solo efforts) no doubt adds to the comfortably loose feel of the songs. Her assured vocals are matched stride for stride by the band's tight musicianship, which subtly calls attention to their talents without ever overshadowing Cox. Crowded is the New Lonely sounds and feels like family, in its playing and its themes. Take "I in Team," a slow meditation on the rewards of motherhood overshadowing the fatigue it often brings: Well the oldest one asks what I do for a living/Well I suppose I'm just living here/If you weren't so damn cute/long ago you'd a-been out on your ear/little guy/Well there's three of you now/which is one more than us/and five days a week/two of you head off on a bus/And here I am again/watching this baby girl grow. "Busted Sympathy" may be my favorite song on the album. It sounds like a robust Nanci Griffith tune, or a song penned by Lucinda Williams if she were the mother of three. Tight guitar licks, pedal steel and otherwise, emerge from within Cox's achingly honest lyrics: Oh God, What now?/I hear the sound over the dishwasher coming up through the trees/What could it be/that they have found?/Maybe an injury or a bird/with broken wings I drove around this tiny town today/I saw a girl I had not seen in many years/well the time it raced across her face/what was it in her eyes?/I only know it was not tears. "Busted Sympathy" probably won't be my favorite track for long. Each time I've listened to this album, a different song has unwrapped itself to reveal more layers and emerge as the new favorite. Like a growing family, over time these 10 songs develop in ways you'd never expect. And also like that growing family, the journey offers its own rewards. thebollard(Tom Flynn)

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