



The View From Here – a review by Jim Hatlo

Guitarist Craig Dobbins paints his new release, *The View From Here*, with a soft, lush musical palette. It's a view well worth drinking in.

Dobbins, long a prominent fixture in the world of fingerstyle guitar, is a noted teacher and a recognized authority on artists like Chet Atkins and Jerry Reed. He plays with the assurance of a performer who has nothing left to prove.

There are no pyrotechnics on *The View From Here*. Dobbins puts all his energy, without wasting a note, into arrangements that are elegantly simple and quietly captivating. As with all great art, there are layered nuances – starting within the selections themselves, and extending out to the pacing of the entire album.

You can cherry-pick tracks on *The View From Here* and have a great listening experience. (Try the poignant “Just A Dream” – and remember to exhale at the end.) But if you take them in sequence, you get a fuller appreciation of Dobbins’ skill as an arranger.

He interleaves tunes evoking the Merle Travis, Chet Atkins fingerstyle tradition – like “Raspail” and “Low Down” – with sonorous, chorused tracks (the title song, and “When You Go”) and gems of eloquent understatement like “Laney’s Theme” and (a welcome reprise from an earlier Dobbins album) “Bound for Britain.”

Dobbins is confident enough to include three selections other artists might have steered clear of, as having been dangerously overdone: Jim Croce’s “Time In A Bottle,” the 1971 Bread hit “If,” and the well-worn “Amazing Grace.” He finds something fresh and moving in each one.

There is a serene quality to Dobbins’ work from start to finish: Unhurried, uncomplicated, and uncompromising. Every brush stroke is rendered thoughtfully and masterfully. The result is a *View* you won’t forget.

- Jim Hatlo, media consultant and music journalist (*Frets* magazine)