



Caitlin Cary is the former fiddle player with Whiskeytown, a solo artist and current member of Tres Chicas. Thad Cockrell is the son of a preacher man and solo artist with two cds to his credit. They are not exactly superstars but they prove on the new cd "Begonias" the old adage that the sum of the parts can be greater than the whole. This album of duets is a stunning work of real country music. I say real because it's the only way I can differentiate between the Kenny Chesney and Brooks & Dunn type of country and the kind that I actually like. This cd goes a long way toward widening the gap between the two types of music.

Cary & Cockrell began working together on her first solo album, writing the song "Please Break My Heart", which they update as a duet on "Begonias." The harmonies they provide each other are just incredible, drawing inevitable comparisons to Gram Parsons and Emmylou Harris. When their two voices join together, you almost get distracted from the great instrumentation and excellent song writing that is going on. Almost. It's mostly acoustic guitars, pedal steel, producer Brad Jones' understated organ fills and Cary's fiddle weaving gloriously in and out of the mix.

The album is mostly original songs but there is an amazing update of the Percy Sledge classic "Warm & Tender Love" that makes you forget the original was not a country song. "Party Time" is straight up honky-tonk and "Don't Make It Better" reminds me an old Poco song called "You Better Think Twice." There are times when Cockrell's voice recalls Ryan Adams and makes you think of what could have been if Whiskeytown had continued. Unlike Adams' music though, you don't have to wade through filler to get to the good stuff. It's all good!