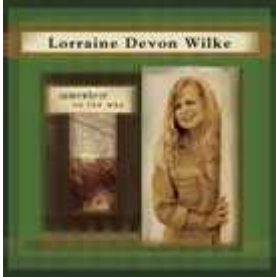


## Lorraine Devon Wilke - Somewhere On The Way

Written by Michael Sutton



There are two kinds of '80s rock & roll veterans - those who continue to pursue the path they had originally embarked upon, shifting trends be damned, or those who change gears. Only the keenest ears will be able to detect that singer/songwriter Lorraine Devon Wilke once fronted a New Wave band in the early '80s, even opening up for future industrialists Ministry. Having had the pleasure of hearing the unreleased recordings of Los Angeles group Devon, I can safely say that Wilke's solo debut has virtually nothing in common stylistically with her old work. Like Ian McNabb of the Icicle Works or John Griffith of the Red Rockers, Wilke has left her post-punk days behind for a sound embracing American roots rock. The result is a soulful, down-to-Earth record that rides a roller coaster of emotions.

The opening cut, "Drowning," begins the album on a downward spiral. The laidback acoustic intro is torn to shreds once Wilke rips into the chorus: "Somebody give me an anchor/Somebody throw me a line/Somebody tell me to breathe, I just might drown this time." The sense of urgency in her voice is vivid and compelling. Moreover, she is a disciplined singer, knowing when to reach the heights of emotion and when to cool down. "You Say I Say" continues her pain over a failed relationship, brittle guitars tracing every wound in her lyrics. But, despite the heartrending subject matter, these are not sad songs; rather, they are cathartic. Everybody, no matter what gender, has been through the crap that she sings about here. "Comfort Me" concludes the initial chapters of sorrow, and it is on this tune that Wilke's vocals sizzle with bluesy intensity.

By "Believer," Wilke has started the healing process. It's an exhilarating turning point on the LP, opening the doors to a brighter future. "My Good Good Man" is as tender and warm as the first few songs are ticked off and disconsolate. "I've sung so many harsh words/About the ones who've broken my heart," Wilke sings in a clever reference to the album's introductory tracks. It's a powerful moment, among the album's many highlights.

Somewhere On The Way has some of the best and cleanest production you'll hear on an independent release. The guitars and drums are crisp and every nuance in Wilke's voice is captured wonderfully. And, even when the lyrics are grim, the songs are catchy. Call it an album if you will. It actually resembles a good book; one with its share of tragedies but has a happy ending. There are records that are merely listened to and ones that are experienced; Somewhere On The Way is beyond that. It's a summary of what we've lived through, how we coped and eventually triumphed.

[www.lorrainedevonwilke.com](http://www.lorrainedevonwilke.com)

