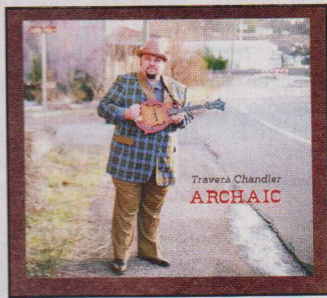


**TRAVERS CHANDLER**  
**ARCHAIC**

Patuxent Music  
CD-262



Travers Chandler's 2010 Patuxent Music debut roared out of the gate, filling the air with a hard-edged sound, some very-fine old style mandolin work and intense, emotional singing to match the intense, emotional stories his song

selection told. It was instantly engrossing and instantly likeable for anyone with a penchant for the earthy, bluesy bluegrass and country of fifty and sixty years ago. His return recording, while following in many of the same grooves that define his approach and sound, takes a little longer to grab hold. It will, if you let it, though even then perhaps not in the same way or with the same finality.

Why that is, I think, is that Chandler seems to have focused on certain aspects of his style—the hard-edged singing at one volume all through a song, for example—rather than maintaining the broader reach of his debut. That limiting of focus extends here to his song selection. While several of the songs are very good choices and rendered exceptionally well, others, though rendered equally well, seem to have a sameness or ordinariness about them. "In The Shadow Of A Lie," a slow, classic country tale of death and cheating and regret, certainly shines here, as does the 3/4 country "The Many Faces Of Charles Edward Brown" in which the ups and downs of a man's tragic life are reflected in his face. Bill Harrell and Charlie Moore's "High Society" provides a tuneful variant to most of what's programmed here and is a plus. "Mother Knows Best" and "Red Rover," one tragic, the other comic, along with jazzman Jimmie Lunceford's instrumental "Uptown Blues," are also very good. Merle Haggard's "Rambling Fever," is a good song, but doesn't quite work with Chandler's approach.

A little more variety would have made this good, well-played, well-sung record the near-equal of the debut. (Patuxent Music, P.O. Box 572, Rockville, MD 20848, [www.pxrec.com](http://www.pxrec.com).)JBV