

## **ALECIA NUGENT “HILLBILLY GODDESS” ROUNDER CD LINER NOTES**

By: Robert K. Oermann

Listening to Alecia Nugent is an addictive experience for me.

Her voice dances around in my head for days on end. The haunting overtones in her bluegrass harmonies, her glowing confidence with a lyric, the golden warmth of her phrasing and her triumphant-mountaineer exuberance are qualities I just can't get enough of. She can break my heart and make me clap my hands in joy, sometimes during the same performance. I am hopelessly and shamelessly under her spell.

As you may or may not know, this sublime Appalachian stylist isn't a mountain lass. She hails from central Louisiana. Hickory Grove, to be exact, which isn't close to any place even remotely famous. But a voice as precious as her's simply demanded to be discovered.

As Alecia sings in the sunny, upbeat “Nugent Family Band,” her upbringing was saturated with the sounds of bluegrass and gospel. Her father's Southland Bluegrass Band trained her in tradition. By the time she was in her teens, she was the group's lead singer.

Alecia was schooled in the sounds of The Stanley Brothers, Flatt & Scruggs, Jimmy Martin and other bluegrass masters. On her own, she developed a taste for country-music greats such as George Jones, Conway Twitty, Merle Haggard, Reba McEntire and Dolly Parton. That's why she can pull off a honky-tonk weeper like “Dyin' to Hold Her Again” as brilliantly as she can.

Her sublime harmony vocalists on that track are Bluegrass Male Vocalist of the Year, Bradley Walker and Alecia's producer, Carl Jackson. Carl has been in her cheerleading section for years. When Mississippi bluegrass promoter Johnny Stringer volunteered to bankroll Alecia's debut album in 2004, she turned to Carl for help. Carl had sung with her at a festival 15 years earlier and had never forgotten the sound of her extraordinary voice.

Carl not only co-wrote three tunes for Alecia Nugent, he produced the sterling-silver singer's reinterpretations of Flatt and Stanley classics, her delicious revival of Jenny Lou Carson's “Jealous Heart,” dynamic performances of tunes from the pens of Larry Cordle and Jerry Salley, among others, and even a bluegrass-ified arrangement of “But I Do,” an obscure bopper by the former Louisiana Hayride rockabilly act Tibby Edwards. Her performance of the last named was so perfect it has remained in my brain to this day.

Carl Jackson's endorsement attracted such stellar sidemen as Ronnie McCoury, Aubrey Haynie and Randy Kohrs to Alecia's debut disc, not to mention harmony vocals by the likes of Sonya Isaacs, Rebecca Lynn Howard and Rhonda Vincent. It also attracted the attention of famed WSM disc jockey Eddie Stubbs, who became a booster. And then it attracted Rounder Records.

In 2006, Rounder issued Alecia Nugent's "star making" album A Little Girl...A Big Four-Lane. Carl Jackson was once again in the producer's chair. Once more a group of bluegrass A-listers gathered for the project – Adam Steffey, Jim Van Cleve, Cia Cherryholmes, Rob Ickes, Doyle Lawson, Jamie Dailey and Alison Krauss among them. And once again, the repertoire was drawn from the finest country and bluegrass tunesmiths. Not the least of them were Dixie and Tom T. Hall, whose rippling, nostalgic "I Cried All the Way to Kentucky" was one of the album's many highlights.

When Alecia showcased those 2006 tunes in Nashville, I proclaimed her a "hillbilly goddess." That offhand nickname has now been transformed into the cute, toe-tapping title tune of her third Rounder album.

A Little Girl...A Big Four-Lane contained a dandy duet with Bradley Walker called "When It Comes Down to Us." Hillbilly Goddess has one, too, a classic-sounding heartbreaker titled "The Writing's All Over the Wall." As before, Alecia proves she can rip off a zippy bluegrass romp with ease – the feisty-female "Wrecking the Train" and the tongue-in-cheek "Cryin' All The Way To The Bank," to name just two examples on the new album.

But Hillbilly Goddess also plows some new ground. Alecia is digging into lyrics with more poetry, complexity and depth than ever before. This is particularly true in such ballads as "Wishin' Hard," "Already Home" and the delicately lovely "Don't Tell Me." Her story telling abilities are also better than ever on this collection. In "The Last Greyhound," her character can't wait to get on the last bus leaving town, then can't wait to be on the last one coming home. Even more vivid is "Just Another Alice," the tale of an aspiring country singer performing in the seedy bars of Broadway who may or may not be The Next Big Thing.

On this collection, Alecia emerges as a songwriter, as well. In addition to her autobiographical "Nugent Family Band," co-written with Dixie and Tom T. Hall, she was inspired to write the wry "Hillbilly Goddess" title tune with Sonya Kelly and her stalwart supporter Carl Jackson.

Alecia Nugent brings extraordinary believability to everything she sings. And once again, Carl Jackson has surrounded her with instrumentalists who underscore her emotions at every turn – Andy Leftwich, Tim Stafford, J.D. Crowe, Andy Falco, Rob Ickes and Adam Steffey among them.

So it comes down to this. Are you ready to have your heart busted into itty bitty pieces as this hillbilly goddess and her band of angels ache together on "Don't Tell Me?" Are you ready to let fly with a rebel yell when she finishes "Cryin' All the Way to the Bank?" Are you prepared to hang breathlessly onto every line of "Just Another Alice?" And are you ready and willing to fantasy-harmonize with her on "The Writing's All Over the Wall?"

If so, start listening to Alecia Nugent's Hillbilly Goddess right now. But be forewarned: she can be habit forming.

Robert K. Oermann  
Nashville, Tennessee

**Alecia Nugent**  
**Hillbilly Goddess**  
**Track Listing:**

1. Wrecking The Train (Mike Ward, Lonnie Levelle, Amanda Williams)
2. Don't Tell Me ( Buddy & Julie Miller ) Guest vocalist: Bradley Walker
3. Hillbilly Goddess (Alecia Nugent, Carl Jackson, Sonya Kelly)
4. Just Another Alice (Ladd Smith, Don Goodman) Guest vocalist: Valerie Storey
5. The Last Greyhound (Tim Stafford, Craig Market) Guest vocalist: Sonya Isaacs
6. Cryin' All The Way To The Bank (Carl Jackson, Rebecca Lynn Howard)
7. Dyin' To Hold Her Again (Jerry Salley, Joanie Keller-Johnson)
8. Nugent Family Band (Alecia Nugent, Tom T. & Dixie Hall)
9. Wishin' Hard (Tim O'Brien)
10. The Writing's All Over The Wall (Larry Cordle, Connie Leigh) Guest vocalist: Bradley Walker
11. Already Home (Tanya Leah, Gregory Lynch) Guest vocalist: Sonya Isaacs

**HILLBILLY GODDESS**

**Produced by: Carl Jackson**  
**Recording Engineers: Luke Wooten, John Caldwell**  
**Mixing Engineer: Luke Wooten**  
**Assistant Engineer: Kyle Manner**  
**Mastering Engineer: Luke Wooten**  
**Recorded at: Station West, Nashville, TN**

***WRECKIN' THE TRAIN***

*(Mike Ward) – Colonel Rebel Music, ASCAP*

*(Lonnie Levelle) - This Is Hit, Inc. Admin by Magic Mustang Music, ASCAP*

*(Amanda Williams) - This Is Hit, Inc. Admin by Magic Mustang Music, ASCAP*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Banjo – Thomas Wywrot  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddle – Andy Leftwich  
Dobro – Rob Ickes  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Tenor Vocal – Jennifer Strickland  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

***DON'T TELL ME***

*(Buddy Miller) - Bughouse/Music of Windswept (ASCAP)*

*(Julie Miller) - Bughouse/Music of Windswept (ASCAP)*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddles – Andy Leftwich  
Dobro – Rob Ickes  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Tenor Vocal – Jennifer Strickland  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

*HILLBILLY GODDESS (With special guest J.D. Crowe)*  
*(Carl Jackson) – Colonel Rebel Music ASCAP*  
*(Alecia Nugent) – Hillbilly Goddess Music, ASCAP*  
*(Sonya Kelly) – Moving Through Music, SESAC*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Banjo – J. D. Crowe  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddle – Andy Leftwich  
Dobro – Rob Ickes  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Tenor Vocal – Jennifer Strickland  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

*JUST ANOTHER ALICE*  
*(Ladd Smith) – Argill's Music, ASCAP*  
*(Don Goodman) – Circle South Music, BMI*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddle – Andy Leftwich  
Piano – Catherine Marx  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Tenor Vocal – Valerie Storey  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

*THE LAST GREYHOUND*  
*(Tim Stafford) – Daniel House Music, BMI*  
*(Craig Market) – Drop D Publishing, BMI*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddle – Andy Leftwich  
Piano – Catherine Marx  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Tenor Vocal – Sonya Isaacs  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

*CRYIN' ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK*

*(Carl Jackson) – Colonel Rebel Music, ASCAP*

*(Rebecca Lynn Howard) – EMI April Music, ASCAP*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Banjo – Thomas Wywrot  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddle – Andy Leftwich  
Dobro – Rob Ickes  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Low Tenor Vocal – Carl Jackson  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

*DYIN' TO HOLD HER AGAIN*

*(Jerry Salley) – Sea Keeper Music / Foray Music, SESAC*

*(Joanie Keller-Johnson) – Magic Mustang, Inc. / Long Lil' Doggie Publishing,*

*BMI*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddles – Andy Leftwich  
Dobro – Rob Ickes  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Low Tenor Vocal – Bradley Walker  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

*THE NUGENT FAMILY BAND*

*(Tom T. Hall) – More Homegrown Music, ASCAP*

*(Dixie Hall) – More Homegrown Music, ASCAP*

*(Alecia Nugent) – Hillbilly Goddess Music, ASCAP*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco

Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Banjo – Thomas Wywrot  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddle – Andy Leftwich  
Dobro – Rob Ickes  
Piano – Catherine Marx  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Tenor Vocal – Jennifer Strickland  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

*WISHIN' HARD*

*(Tim O'Brien) - Cornbread Nation ASCAP  
Scout And Jem Songs ASCAP*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddle – Andy Leftwich  
Weissenborn Guitar – Rob Ickes  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Tenor Vocal – Jennifer Strickland  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson

*THE WRITING'S ALL OVER THE WALL (Duet with special guest Bradley Walker)*

*(Larry Cordle) – EMI Blackwood Music, Inc., BMI  
New Songs of Sea Gayle, BMI*

*(Connie Leigh) – Graham Sullivan Music BMI*

Acoustic Guitar – Andy Falco  
Acoustic Guitar – Tim Stafford  
Mandolin – Adam Steffey  
Fiddle – Andy Leftwich  
Dobro – Rob Ickes  
Piano – Catherine Marx  
Bass – Kevin Grantt  
Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Duet Vocal – Bradley Walker  
Harmony Vocal – Carl Jackson

*ALREADY HOME*

*(Tanya Leah) - Sony/ATV Melody / Songs of Note, Inc. / Titania Music, BMI*

*(Gregory Lynch) - Gregory Lynch Music, BMI*

Piano – Catherine Marx  
Dobro – Rob Ickes  
Fiddles – Andy Leftwich

Lead Vocal – Alecia Nugent  
Tenor Vocal – Sonya Isaacs  
Baritone Vocal – Carl Jackson