



May 2010

REVIEWS



TIFT MERRITT

See You on the Moon

[Fantasy]

From the first downbeat of the opening track, "Mixtape," Tift Merritt's latest boasts songwriting far deeper and more visceral than anything she's done to date. Set against a sparse combo

arrangement and some darting Gamble & Huff-worthy strings, Merritt lays out a love letter without sounding the least bit mawkish. From there on out she opts for a sparser sound that's no less effective. The jangly "Engine to Turn" is a melodic ode to making a fresh start, and the acoustic ballad "Things That Everybody Does" boasts an intimate, spontaneous quality that serves as a reminder of how evocative and underrated a singer Merritt is. On the somber "Feel of the World," she channels her own grandfather to deal with her grandmother's death, and details the aching sense of loss felt by survivors. The somber mood continues on the title tune, which recalls a lost friend in painful detail, and the stirring finale "After Today" is a cry from the heart about a seemingly hopeless situation. So incisive is Merritt's writing on *Moon* that commendable covers of Emitt Rhodes' "Live Till You Die" and Kenny Loggins' "Danny's Song" feel more like distractions than additions. Overall, *See You on the Moon* is a breakthrough from a singer-songwriter who is, in her own low-key way, just discovering the depths of her talent. —Bob Cannon