

**Shawna Russell** ★★★

*Back Around*  
Our Land Records

Music is the family business for Shawna Russell, who is joined by her father and guitarist, Keith, and her uncle and bassist, Tim, on *Back Around*. The result for the Oklahoma native is a mini-album that blends country and heartland rock and spotlights her expressive vocals. The buoyant title track finds

Russell discovering a resiliency amid life on the road. “If the whole world turns against you,” she sings, “you can always come back home.” “Storm Birds,” a song dealing with the loss of a love in wartime, is a plaintive ballad that Russell delivers with a sense of vulnerability. “Slow Down in Oklahoma,” a country shuffle, explores the virtues of taking life at a slower pace, while “Learn to Live Again” finds Russell gaining the strength to make a fresh start. “No More Water” is the album’s darkest track with its tale of betrayal and spiritual desolation. “No more water/Nothing left to wash away my sins,” she declares. “Horse Shoe Bend,” the closing instrumental, is soothing blend of guitars that provides a musical balm for the soul. (7 songs, 25 minutes)

— **Tom Wilk**



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