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Issue 275

Reviews

Amanda Shires

My Piece of Land SILVER KNIFE

It seems logical that **Amanda Shires** would be thinking about domesticity lately. She and husband Jason Isbell are raising a baby daughter while keeping pace with careers that find the family separated for months at a time. Consequently, it's little wonder then that her striking new album, *My Piece of Land*, places a heavy focus on themes that center around the home and the hearth. Several of its songs make direct reference–"My Love (The Storm)," "When You're Gone," "You Are My Home" and especially "Mineral Wells," named for the little Texas town where she lived as a child. Nevertheless, it was the need to find the safety and security that eluded her after her parents' divorce that inspires this material, which finds her focusing on immediate concerns. In that sense, the album provides a link between past and present. It's a poignant collection to be sure, but the optimism in Shires' delivery mutes any sense of remorse, making the material sound tender rather than troubled, offering a wistful view of an imperfect past that allows hope for the future. Shires' best solo work to date, *My Piece of Land* makes it clear that she's no longer residing in her husband's shadow.

Lee Zimmerman