

March 1, 2011

*spotlight*



*albums*

## Williams' fans 'Blessed' with more soulful blues

**Lucinda Williams, *Blessed***

★★★ AMERICANA

After delivering such artistic triumphs as 1992's *Sweet Old World* and 1998's *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road*, Lucinda Williams could have spent years struggling with the familiar career curse of competing against her past.

At 58, the Southern singer is in peak form. Her songwriting has only sharpened over time. The years have added grit to a soulful, sandpapery voice, enhancing the vehicle for her bluesy, countrified, heartache-drenched tunes. Her undiminished abilities to spin a story, sling a venomous line and craft a gorgeous melody are amply evident on

*Blessed*, her 10th album and her first since 2008's *Little Honey*.

In 12 new songs, Williams' wisdom, emotional depth and evocative language shine through. Co-produced by Don Was, who shares Williams' taste for a rootsy simplicity, *Blessed* opens with the stinging kiss-off *Buttercup* and ends on the moving *Kiss Like Your Kiss*, bookends that underscore her emotional range. In between are powerful tunes that address love strained by war (*Soldier's Song*), the suicide of friend Vic Chesnutt (*Seeing Black*) and romantic webs. — Edna Gundersen

>>Download: *Soldier's Song, The Awakening, Kiss Like Your Kiss, To Be Loved, Seeing Black*