



## SOULSIDES

Neither should *Soul Siders* sidestep the new **Robin McKelle** album. OK, we put the feature into the jazz section because a lot of the stylings on *Alterations*, a collection of covers of songs written by some of the artist's favourite female singer/songwriters, do tend towards the genre, but there's plenty of soul going down too and, to be fair, this woman often finds herself skirting the dividing lines between a number of music types. If you're in any doubt, maybe start with Robin's take on Sade's *No Ordinary Love*, which kicks off with stand-up bass and lifts into a Latin groove that Anita Baker might have dropped on us around the time of *Giving You The Best That I Got*. The redoubtable Shedrick Mitchell oversees arrangements and he's done an amazing job throughout. I'm loving the slinky version of Amy Winehouse's *Back To Black*, which opens proceedings and suffers not a jot from a slight lyric change early on [see feature elsewhere this issue]. Perhaps even better is an exquisitely intimate take on Billie Holiday's *Don't Explain*, where the delicate vocals and cascading piano/drum setting lend a palpable air of melancholy and desire to proceedings. More unexpected, maybe, is the striding slant afforded Dolly Parton's *Jolene* – it definitely works – but Joplin's *Mercedes Benz* is a snug fit for McKelle's familiar bluesier side and Joni Mitchell's *River* lends itself to the peaceful and reflective treatment it's given. Mind, it would be hard to ruin such a glorious piece of songwriting. A beautiful album from one of our most reliable artists.