

Allan Harris *Cross That River*



LOVE
PRODUCTIONS
RECORDS

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"The voice of a benign storyteller, a deeply romantic true believer with a heroic vision of American history and the African-American contribution." (NY Times)

Reviews



MUSIC ROW, Robert K. Oermann "Harris is an African American who has penned a song cycle telling the story of black cowboys in history. Its evocative title tune tells the tale of a slave yearning to be free out west. His richly burnished vocal is backed by beautifully played acoustic instruments. This excellent music will be part of the Kennedy Center's first country music festival, coordinated by the Country Music Hall of Fame."

WASHINGTON POST, Mike Joyce "Although Allan Harris is best known as a jazz vocalist ... he's no stranger to Southern rock, R&B, blues, country and blue-grass. "Cross That River" is his most ambitious album yet, a country-before-it-was-cool song cycle inspired by the oft-overlooked history of the African American cowboy."

COUNTRY MUSIC WEEKLY, Chris Neal "This head-turning concept album about a 19th-century slave who becomes a cowboy grabs you from the opening line (Mama said a white man be comin' in the morning / Gonna drag Big Daddy away) and never lets go. Cross That River demands your attention."

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, Nick Cristiano "Cross That River succeeds magnificently with a song cycle about African American cowboys starting in the Civil War era. With the music echoing country, gospel, Spanish, R&B and Celtic strains, Harris mixes vividly authentic portraits of fictional individuals like Blue, an escaped slave, with broader tales of symbolically powerful historical groups ("Buffalo Soldiers," "Black Seminoles"). And his silky, open-hearted vocals embody the undying human spirit captured in these songs."

VINTAGE GUITAR, JH "The idea and sound here are so unique it's nigh impossible to draw comparisons, but the highlights include "Diamond Jimmy," an amazing tale of betrayal with great jazzy acoustic guitar by Harris, and amazing background vocals. "Mule Skinner" is brutal in its frankness, with an eerie lyric and melody; guitars and violins ride the music out to great effect. While those two songs are a highlight, there are no bad songs."

ASPEN MAGAZINE, Lois Smith Bradley "Harris decided to make a country music CD partly because it symbolizes unity and blurred boundaries. "I wanted to show that we, as people of color, were part of the romance of

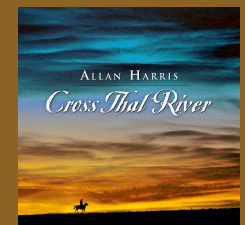
the West, too," Harris says. "We didn't just pick cotton and serve drinks on the train and wash clothes. We were part of this magical thing called the American West."

CBS NEWS, Cindy Hsu "Cross That River should be seen by all people; it is a fantastic and uplifting American story."

JAZZIZ "Cross That River ... a narrative about black cowboys that has as little to do with jazz music as does its subject matter. Dobro and mandolin provide much of the instrumental flavor, the accompanying fiddle playing won't be mistaken for anything by Stephane Grappelli, and Harris' impressionistic crooning draws primarily from folk and blues, with just an occasional hint of jazz flair. The results are strong, particularly for such a major stylistic departure."

BACK STAGE by Ruthie Fierberg "Cross That River" ranks as a highlight of the festival. Its accessible presentation of history combined with a tumultuous emotional experience achieves the highest level of musical theater storytelling. This vital fusion of American music styles and groundbreaking talent fosters the evolution of musical theater as an art form."

Cross That River
is a Chamber
Music of America
grant recipient



Past performances:

Feb 2006 CBS NY interviews Allan Harris about Cross That River, NYC

February 21 - CD Release Concert at the Blue Note, NYC

March 24 - CBS DC interviews Allan Harris about Cross That River at the Kennedy Center

March 25 - Performance at Kennedy Center as part of their first historic 2 week Country Music Festival, DC

June 27- Aspen Writers' Festival – Belly Up 9:00 PM Lyrically Speaking, Launch of new program – Allan Harris - Performance/Interview –The writing of Cross That River representing Black Western writers

June 29 Performance of Cross That River Aspen Writers' Festival Campfire Stories at the T Lazy 7 Ranch

July 2006 Chamber Music America Grant \$12,000 awarded to Cross That River to present 10 performance/lectures in schools and other facilities in Harlem

August 6 - NPR "All Things Considered - Weekend Edition" airs Allan Harris interview/performance of songs from Cross That River

Sept./Oct - Recording of 2nd CD in the Cross That River Series Cry of the Thunderbird

December 2006 - 3 songs licensed by Oklahoma State funded by National Geographic for history of Black West.

October 17, 2007 - Performance at MASS MOca, Massachusetts

Feb 6 - New Jersey State Theatre performances for schools. Study Guide developed

Feb-April - Tour of 10 Schools and Children's facilities in Harlem & a performance on Harlem Stage.

October 21–24, 2008 - The Kennedy Center – performances for Distance Learning Broadcast to schools across America and a performance at the Jazz Club

July 28 – 31 - The Eugene O'Neill Cabaret and Theatre Festival, 1 week workshop

September 1–18, 2009 - Allan Harris One Man Show of Cross That River - 3 week run – Strater Theatre, Durango, CO



October 12 – 18 Cross That River, the Musical debuts at the New York Musical Theatre Festival (6 performances - Sponsored in part by Ted's Montana Grill). Donna McKechnie signs on as choreographer...Clear Channel features billboard on Times Square...Ted's Montana Grill sponsors opening and closing parties for the show

February 23 - 28 - Savannah Musical Festival tour of 10 schools and a performance in the First Bryan Baptist Church

February 25 - 28, 2010 - School performances of Cross That River in Hilton Head High School

July 20 - 28, 2013 - Theatre Aspen features a workshop and public reading of Cross That River with cast members from Les Miserable

September 8 - 13 ASCAP Musical Theatre Festival selects Cross That River for it's Lincoln, Nebraska debut season at the Lied Performing Arts Center



"Harris noticed most of the Westerns he watched lacked one thing: a person of color. The oversight inspired Harris, now a successful New York-based jazz vocalist, to create and write Cross That River, which tells the story of African-American cowboys." (Savannah Tribune)

www.allanharris.com

