

## BILLBOARD

Since his debut as half of late-'80s country innovators Foster & Lloyd, Radney Foster has delighted in demolishing stereotypes, pulling much of the genre along in his wake. That influence has never been clearer than on this head-spinning collection. Foster remains a top-notch tunesmith and stunning lyricist. "Drunk on Love" swaggeringly echoes early, electric-era Bob Dylan, while numerous others ("Big Idea," "Half of My Mistakes") show what a pronounced effect he has had on contemporary country. With live, off-the-floor excitement and edge, as readily tender as tough, Foster strikes a perfect balance between clean mainstream and adventuresome alternative. Foster has not moved an inch toward the middle. It is the middle that has gradually, but surely, stretched itself onto turf he tilled years ago, and over which he continues to show himself a master. —Gordon Ely