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The Pilgrim: A Celebration of Kris Kristofferson
American Roots

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By David McPherson
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Rhodes Scholar, military man, poet, actor and teller of acoustically-inclined tales, Kris Kristofferson has worn all these hats and more over his storied career. The Nashville Outlaw has paid his dues in spades. Here the passionate pilgrim gets his due back. While his songs have been covered repeatedly, there's never been a true tribute that equals this country troubadour's talent, until now. This recording is a gift to Kris from his musical family, both inside and outside the Nashville scene. Fellow Highwaymen Willie Nelson, Jessi Colter, and the other remaining members of his one-time super-group's offspring — Rosanne Cash and Shooter Jennings — were givens to contribute songs and all give powerful performances with the highlight being Jennings's ghostly version of "The Silver Tongued Devil & I." Produced by Grammy-winner Randy Scruggs, the remaining 16 songs, done by the likes of Rodney Crowell and Gretchen Wilson, mine Kristofferson's vast catalogue. From the opening ode by the sweet old soul Emmylou Harris on "The Pilgrim: Chapter 33," accompanied by Sam Bush, Jon Randall, Byron House and Scruggs, to the funky R&B version of "Me and Bobby McGee" done by Brian McKnight, The Pilgrim is one of the best roots records of 2006.