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Posted: October 18, 2010 06:08 PM

## [Meet Rising Alt-Country Singer Addie Brownlee](#)

"You walk east and I walk west, eventually we will meet, if not in this lifetime then the next..." lyrics this strong do not just come from sitting at a table with a pen and pad. Lyrics this strong come from the heart, from experience, from learning things the hard way. For Addie Brownlee, learning the hard way is about to pay off. She is part country, part folk and therefore places her in a genre that we music critics call "alt-country." Whatever Addie may be, she is all heart. Her songs lament places we all have been. With the CMJ music marathon this week, she is one of the new artists that are not to be missed. I had the opportunity to speak with Addie as we discussed her beginnings, roots and getting the attention of the likes of Martha Wainwright to work with her on her music. Take a look at my interview with Addie below.

**Salvatore Bono: You were born in Kansas, raised in Tennessee how did you end up in New York City?**

**Addie Brownlee:** I think I've always been heading to New York. I lived in Chicago for a few years after school, but I've always known I wanted to be here.

**SB: Did the change of atmosphere and location effect your music?**

**AB:** I didn't start writing until about 7 years ago, so New York is where it all started for me. Unless you count some of the stuff I wrote when I was 4 years old. My personal favorite from my "early" work is "Don't be sadish. Eat a radish." I guess that's more spoken word though.

**SB: Describe your music to someone who has never heard of you before?**

**AB:** I've been told my voice is reminiscent of Dusty Springfield. I love the comparison, and I love the imagery that her name evokes. My music has a lot of earth and water imagery. It's Americana, Alt/Country, Singer/Songwriter.

**SB: Who are some of your influences?**

**AB:** Far and away my biggest influence is Dolly Parton. I covered a song of her's recently, and someone after the show stopped me and said, "My love for Dolly Parton is *not* ironic." That's exactly how I feel! She's one of the greatest songwriters in history, one of the savviest business people and a generous philanthropist. A friend and I always say "WWDD, What Would Dolly Do?"

**SB: How do you stand apart from other New York City singer songwriters?**

**AB:** I just feel lucky to be making music in New York. There is so much good stuff coming out of the city.

**SB: With the release of your debut, *Back When We Were Christians*, did you feel any vindication once it was finished?**

**AB:** When I released "Back When We Were Christians" in 2005 I felt so many things. I had a very wonderful time with my dad in the studio. He recorded that album. It was emotional for both of us; those were my first songs, and he was so patient and thoughtful through the whole thing.

**SB: What was it like finally recording your debut after all these years?**

**AB** Recording the latest EP *East of Leaving* has been equally rewarding. Brad Albetta, my producer, really did a pretty spectacular job of guiding but not pushing me, and really encouraged me to take the reins. He quite frankly worked his tail off.

**SB: Martha Wainwright appears on your song "Sea Legs," what was it like working with her? How did you get her to appear on your album?**

**AB:** We just asked! I'm a big, *big* Martha Wainwright fan, so when I listen to "Sea Legs" I sort of think I'm dreaming!

**SB: Your music has a lot of religious imagery and influence to it. Are you strong in your beliefs and choose to sing about them or the total opposite?**

**AB:** I'm an atheist, but was raised an evangelical Christian, so certain images just come out!

**SB: Your live shows have garnered you much praise, how do you respond to this acclaim? What do you do in concert that surprises most fans?**

**AB:** That's nice of you to say about the live shows! I love it when the audience is ready to interact with me. People connecting with me or something I've written, really keep the songs fresh for me. On the best of nights I guess it's like we're just experiencing them together.

**SB: Who would you love to play with and why?**

**AB:** Dolly of course! And Bobbie Gentry, one of the first female country artists to write and produce her own material. Patty Griffin, Ryan Adams: what amazing songwriters.

**SB: Where do you go from here?**

**AB:** I'm just going to keep writing! I'm heading to the UK and Europe in November. I can't wait.

For Addie's CMJ schedule, tour listings and music head on over to her site [www.addiebrownlee.com](http://www.addiebrownlee.com).

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