

REVIEWS

RAY LAMONTAGNE AND THE PARIAH DOGS

*God Willin' & the Creek Don't Rise*

[RCA]

With three albums to his credit, Ray LaMontagne's soulful, rough-edged voice doesn't startle the way it did when it seemed to come fully formed out of nowhere on his 2004 debut, *Trouble*. That's not to say he sounds any less compelling on his fourth album, the first to also credit his band. It's a stirring collection of folk songs built around LaMontagne's voice, which at times sounds as if it's pouring out of him in a torrent. He sings with almost palpable anguish on the title track. He ratchets down the intensity on the sorrowful "New York City's Killing Me," but can't quite hide the urgency over the subtle jazz changes on "This Love Is Over," steel guitar sighing in the background. There are moments here when the sheer power of his voice threatens to overwhelm the song, and the resulting tension makes for riveting listening. —Eric R. Danton

'Riveting listening.'

