



Eric Andersen "**Beat Avenue**" Appleseed Recordings

"**Beat Avenue**" is a 2CD collection of Anderson originals, and the twenty-six minute plus album title track opens Disc 2. The only other Disc 2 cut being the ten minute long tale of the "Blue Rockin' Chair."

Disc 1 opens with the hard rocking "Ain't No Time To Bleed," with Phoebe Snow delivering a truly soulful backing vocal. The lyric depicts battle scarred lands, draws upon Native American themes [*"The sacred hoop hangs in the sky"*] and mentions the Biblical locations Jericho and Jerusalem. Following reference to "*Joan of arc stripped off her armor*" and "*Jesus pawned his cross*" Andersen draws the conclusion "*So much sold down the river, How much do pawnshops cost?*" New Hampshire based fiddler, Joyce Andersen, takes a lead role in "Before Everything Changed," a tale of lost love and, practically, the loss of the will to live that ensues. Summing up his life, the narrator states "*My bed's a worn-out boxing ring, My life's a rundown gym,*" before adding "*What once was Charles Bukowski, Is now Emily Dickinson.*" In other words, having once been openly gregarious the narrator has, to all intents and purposes, withdrawn from society.

The question "*Was it love or was it crazy ?*" is posed numerous times in "Song Of You And Me," as an episodic love affair is recalled in travelogue form, featuring scenes in Germany, France, Sweden, Greece [Crete], Switzerland and the States. Subjectively, "Shape Of A Broken Heart," "Still Looking For You" and "Salt On Your Skin" also plough through facets of the male/female conundrum. Eric Andersen co-wrote "Run Away" with Nashville based writer Lisa Stewart. That pair met in September 2000 when Andersen, Stewart and SONiA [of Disappear Fear] recorded a "**Songwriters Session**" for Nashville radio station WPLN. A road trip through Tennessee and Mississippi "Run Away" opens with the lines, "*Dreamin' of the I-40, That ribbon of old blacktop.*" In an attempt to make sense of his life, the narrator in "Great Pyramid" journeys through the holy lands, visiting known Biblical sites as well as the locations of [possible] mythical occurrences. Disc 1 closes with the slow paced shuffle beat of "Feel Like Comin' Home," as a tireless wanderer announces that he is finally "*comin' home.*"

In 1989 Andersen issued a collection titled "**Ghosts Upon The Road**" that featured an eleven minute long title track. Autobiographical, the lyric recalled events from Eric's life during the winter of 1964 when he lived in Cambridge, Mass. and Boston, through to the following summer spent in New York's Lower East Side. "Beat Avenue," the song, covers the twenty-four hour period following the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy in Dallas at 12.30pm [C.S.T.] on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1963. Delivered in a husky spoken voice, underscored by a jazzy late-night sounding soundtrack, Andersen, who was in San Francisco on that fateful day, opens with "*It was high noon in the neighbourhood, city fell in shock.*" In this nine-verse epic, apart from the assassination, one of the main events recalled, happened that evening. Andersen accompanied Tina and David Meltzer to a poetry reading and [a subsequent post-reading] party. At the poetry reading Eric met [and in some instances, heard] Allan Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Michael McClure and Neal Cassady, the hero of Jack Kerouac's novel "**On The Road.**" "Blue Rockin' Chair," which follows, is a slow "*my woman done me wrong*" blues number wherein the narrator relates "*Now I'm lookin' for a woman, who's lookin' for a low-down man.*"

"**Beat Avenue**" was recorded in New York City and the support musicians include guitarist Eric Bazilian [The Hooters], drummer Shawn Pelton [Saturday Night Live Band, Sheryl Crow, Shawn Colvin], bassist Mark Egan [Pat Methany Group] and on keyboards Garth Hudson of The Band. Apart from Snow, the background vocalists include Lucy Kaplansky and Eric's daughter, singer/songwriter Sari Andersen.

Folkwax Rating 8 out of 10

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