



Various Artists **"Respond II"** Signature Sounds Recording Company

Almost four years on from the appearance of **"Respond,"** winner of Billboard's *"1999 Album of the Year"* award, the second edition has arrived. Volume One raised in excess of \$100K for the Respond Inc. women's shelter in Somerville, Massachusetts and the material featured on the 2CD compilation was principally drawn from female artists resident in the New England area, particularly Boston. With **"Respond II"** the Signature Sounds Recording Company have geographically, spread their net much, much wider in terms of the artists contributing material to this 2CD, 32 track compilation. Considering the inclusion of, say, Angelique Kidjo and Ely Guerra, this release has taken on an international perspective. Some contributors are major league acts, while others remain on the brink of recognition at local or national level. In addition to Respond Inc., the San Francisco based Family Violence Prevention Fund [FVPV] will benefit from the sales of the latest disc[s].

As with its predecessor, a significant number of the tracks on **"Respond II"** have been released previously. The exceptions, in this instance, include a wonderfully engaging acoustic interpretation of Emily Saliers composition "She's Saving Me" from the Indigo Girls. A full studio version first appeared on the duo's 2002 album **"Become You."** As for the contributors, they don't all fall neatly within the acoustic singer/songwriter, folk or folk-rock parameter. For instance, Sleater-Kinney's "You're No Rock N' Roll Fun" is a back beat driven pop concoction drawn from their Y2K album **"All Hands On The Bad One,"** while "Good Things Come To Those Who Wait" from Boston based Toni Lynn Washington is a soulful and blues inspired number. With Kidjo's contribution, "Tumba," we enter the field of *world music*. In further pursuit of that genre, from south of the Rio Grande Mexican artist Ely Guerra delivers the sultry "Yo No."

In terms of those artists who will be of most interest to Folkwax readers, Joan Baez opens Side 1 with "Lily." Baez, of course, rose to international prominence following *legendary* early career performances at the *long-gone* Boston/Cambridge venue, Club 47. Elsewhere, on Disc 1, there are tunes from Jonatha Brooke, Ani DiFranco, Patty Griffin and Karaugh Brown. It's early days but, on "Buffalo," Brown sounds like a Dar Williams clone. Remaining in the clone groove, Susan Tedeschi's interpretation of her slow burning blues, "Looking For Answers," owes much, stylistically, to the sound of Bonnie Raitt. The link - during its final years as a venue, Raitt performed at Club 47 [X]. While folk influenced singer/songwriters are a little thin on the ground on Disc 1, the second volume more than compensates for any shortfall. Suzanne Vega's child abuse anthem, "Luka," complete with Shawn Colvin backing vocal is now some fifteen years young and launches Disc 2. Toshi Reagon follows with "Mountain Top" while her mom, Benice, and her band, Sweet Honey In The Rock, supply the penultimate cut "Run." Alt. country is represented here by Neko Case and, the unique voice of, Julie Miller. Miller's contribution, is the previously unreleased "Too Many Troubles." The rejuvenation of Dolly Parton's career, of late, has come via the release of a number of *back to basics* bluegrass inspired recordings. Here Parton performs her "Endless Stream Of Tears" supported by a stellar band of Nashville session players. Elsewhere on Disc 2 there are contributions from Canada's Sarah McLaughlin, Odetta, Boston based *up and coming* folkie Deb Talan and Signature's own Erin McKeown. The *world music* cuts on Disc 2 are supplied by Mili Bermejo [born in Argentina, raised in Mexico, and a professor at Boston's Berklee College of Music for two decades] and Bebel Gilberto [born in Brazil and daughter of the legendary João Gilberto].

This musically multi-flavoured, double disc collection equates to a magnificent feast of female talent, and is, fittingly, dedicated to the memory of the late Timothy White who was the Editor of Billboard when **"Respond"** was awarded the *"Album of the Year"* title. Now don't forget, **a)** or **b)**, but do it now.....

**Note. [#]** The history of Club 47 is stunningly related in word and photograph in the Jim Rooney/Eric Von Schmidt book “**Baby Let Me Follow You Down.**” A *must read* for any *self-respecting* folk music historian. Univ. of Massachusetts Press; ISBN: 0870239252; 2nd edition (July 1994).

Folkwax Rating 8 out of 10

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Kerrville Kronikles 12/02 & 01/03.