



## Chuck Brodsky **"Two Sets"** Waterbug Records

Following a string of six studio albums, Brodsky returns with a live collection thereby replicating the format of his 1991, cassette only, solo debut **"Live From Spam City."** Recorded, in this instance, at venues in Dublin, Ireland and Sautee, Georgia as well as his adopted home of Asheville, North Carolina, **"Two Sets"** is a double disc featuring twenty-five Brodsky originals including a pair of tunes new to his oeuvre.

A consummate storyteller – my favourite form of song lyric – Chuck's cleverly worded vignettes can span the cradle to the grave or simply focus on one of life's minor episodes. The Disc 1 opener "He Came To Our Town" adopts the latter approach, wherein Chuck cleverly neither identifies the party colour nor the incumbents name, but astutely grasps the positive [and mainly negative] aspects of a "visit" by a campaigning politician – *"Things went back to normal, but it took two or three days, The homeless returned to livin' outside, And the flowers that got planted all wilted and died."* Annually, come late May, you'll more than likely find Chuck's tent pitched on the Quiet Valley Ranch campgrounds, and "Bill & Annie" is a bittersweet tale of love found at the wrong time as related [to Chuck] by a Texas Hill Country peach vender.

Anyone familiar with Brodsky's back catalogue will know that he is an avid baseball fan and a lifelong supporter of the Philadelphia Phillies. "Doc Ellis No No" which appeared on **"The Baseball Ballads"** [2002] is a real trip [LSD, that is], while Chuck's 1998 American football themed "Radio" appeared on the soundtrack of the 2003 movie of the same name. "A Toast To The Women In The Holler" recounts how, with music, we pass down a 'living legacy' to the next generation, and in his spoken introduction to "Dangerous Times" [from **"Color Came One Day"** [2004]] Brodsky remembers the instance where a set of guitar strings were removed from his guitar case during a post 9/11 airport security search and then handed to a stewardess on the plane [+]. In an aside to the stewardess, Chuck astutely encapsulated this manifest form of hysteria with the insight *"If you think those are dangerous, you ought to hear the songs."*

Spanning the invasion of an unnamed European country during WWII through to an unspecified post-conflict date - probably decades later – in the new number "Lili's Braids" the sole survivor of a Jewish family returns to his birthplace to reclaim locks of his sister's hair [given to sympathetic neighbours for safe keeping, her hair had been cut prior to her being taken away by the Germans]. While the latter is a fiction possessed of truth and tragedy, "Old Song Handed Down" was inspired by Chuck's discovery that there was a violin player in his Russian ancestral line. Lessons for life are learned by a father and son in "The Point," and from the same collection - **"Tulips For Lunch"** [2006] - Brodsky prefaces "The Man Who Blew Kisses" with the recollection of how he observed, from the stage of the Stan Rogers Festival in Canso, Nova Scotia, this mentally impaired but very animated grown-up. For a number of years now Brodsky has annually toured Ireland and in a Country Leitrim bar he discovered the tradition of "The 9:30 Pint." The first disc closes with the amusing new tune "Armitage Shanks," a tribute to the porcelain [receptacle] manufacturer [\*] and the product in which we daily drain our liquid intake.

Disc 2 also offers a wide-ranging selection of tunes from Brodsky's back catalogue and opens with "Take It Out Back" a 'tongue-in-cheek' comment on the disposal of trash, follows with "The Come Heres And The Been Heres" an amusing reflection upon being new to the 'hood and moves on with "Trees Falling" a positive and negative take on land development vs. the [natural] environment. Elsewhere Chuck recalls his days as a fruit picker in Northern California ["La Migra Viene"], childhood baseball hero Richie Allen ["Letters In The Dirt"], parody's compensation culture ["Talk To My Lawyer"] and includes the delightful

waltz-paced 'unexpected' love story "Two Left Feet." While introducing "We Are Each Other's Angels" – penned in 1981, and finally recorded nearly a decade and a half later - he informs the audience that it's his oldest composition as well as his mom's favourite. Brodsky's reflection on intolerance ["Our Gods"], corrupt politicians ["The Boys In The Back Room"], as well as the self-explanatory "On Christmas I Got Nothing" and "The Goodbye Kid" also appear on **"Two Sets."** Prior to this release Chuck had cut "Blow 'Em Away," his 'irony filled' take on American gun culture, on three occasions beginning with the aforementioned **"Live From Spam City."** Folks his name is Chuck Brodsky, and if you pay close attention his lyrics will also blow you away.....

Intimately familiar with the 'full story' behind these highly literate songs, many continue to induce severe bouts of the chills – goose bumps, raised arm hairs, eye moisture and more - the latter surely ongoing testimony that these songs will survive generations. Seasoned Brodsky followers will be charmed by the between songs intros, live interpretations and two new numbers. If you're not familiar with Brodsky's back catalogue, **"Two Sets"** is a perfect primer.....hooked, you **will** purchase the predecessors.

#### **Note.**

[+] – Arriving at his destination Chuck was handed his strings.

[\*] - Armitage Shanks is a British manufacturer of bathroom fixtures and plumbing supplies. Founded in 1817 by Thomas Bond in Armitage, Staffordshire, in 1969 Armitage merged with competitor Shanks Holdings. In February 1999 the company was purchased by American Standard Companies for \$430M.

#### **Arthur Wood.**

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"He Came To Our Town" **"Last Of The Old Time"** [2000]

"Bill & Annie" **"Letters In The Dirt"** [1996]

Intro "Doc Ellis No No" **"The Baseball Ballads"** [2002]

Intro "Radio" **"Radio"** [1998]

"A Toast To The Women In The Holler" **"Tulips For Lunch"** [2006]

Intro "Dangerous Times" **"Color Came One Day"** [2004]

"Lili's Braids" **new**

"Old Song Handed Down" **"Tulips For Lunch"**

"The Point" **"Tulips For Lunch"**

Intro "The Man Who Blew Kisses" **"Tulips For Lunch"**

Intro "The 9:30 Pint" **"Color Came One Day"**

"Armitage Shanks" **new**

"Take It Out Back" **"Last Of The Old Time"** *"Irate Letter"*

"The Come Heres And The Been Heres" **"Radio"**

"Trees Falling" **"Color Came One Day"**

Intro "La Migra Viene" **"Radio"**

Intro "Letters In The Dirt" **"Letters In The Dirt"**

"Talk To My Lawyer" **"Live From Spam City"** [1991]/**"Letters In The Dirt"** *"Parent Pressure"*

"Two Left Feet" **"Tulips For Lunch"**

Intro "We Are Each Other's Angels" **"A Fingerpainter's Murals"** [1995]

"Our Gods" **"Radio"**

"The Boys In The Back Room" **"Last Of The Old Time"**

Intro "On Christmas I Got Nothing" **"Radio"**

"The Goodbye Kid" **"Letters In The Dirt"**

"Blow 'Em Away" **"Live From Spam City"/"A Fingerpainter's Murals"/"Radio"**