



Euphoria “**Euphoria**” Beatball Records

With some clarity I can recall the nineteen sixties and, musically speaking, one of the delights of that *sonically rich* decade was the work of harmony groups such as the Mamas & Papas, Association, Spanky & Our Gang, Sunshine Company and Harpers Bizarre. In fact if you were to dig a little deeper you’d uncover treasures such as California’s The Ballroom which rose from the ashes of the Minnesota based Goldebriars [*]. One member of the latter bands went on to found the *harmony in excess* groups Sagittarius and The Millennium. Curt Boettcher, the person of whom I speak, spun off this mortal coil in the summer of 1987, largely unsung even though during his lifetime he worked on productions by the Beach Boys and Elton John.

The latter part of the foregoing paragraph has nothing to do with the line-up of the quartet Euphoria, while the spirit of the latter paragraph in terms of praising what has come to be pigeon-holed as sunshine pop, has everything to do with this review. The album “**Euphoria**” was originally released in 1969 on the short lived MGM subsidiary label, Heritage Records. The recording was produced by the label owner, Jerry Ross, who had enjoyed chart hits with Keith [“98.6” - # 7], Bobby Hebb [“Sunny” - # 2] and Spanky & Our Gang [“Sunday Will Never Be The Same” - # 9]. Euphoria was composed of Wendy and Roger Becket, plus Tom Pacheco and his then partner Sharon Alexander. I had been aware of the existence of this recording for [too] many years, having been a Pacheco convert since discovering his two mid-seventies RCA albums early the following decade, although it never seemed likely that this [long lost and obscure] album would surface on CD. Enter the South Korean label, Beatball Records, which has, to date, issued this and a number of other interesting folk connected artefacts [including, a couple of the “**Mud Acres**” recordings and John Herald’s “**John Herald**”].

In terms of musical approach, Euphoria was definitely a sunshine pop – I’d prefer folk/rock – outfit. This eleven song collection features nine Pacheco originals, plus covers of Rowland Barter’s [#] “Sitting In A Rockin’ Chair” followed immediately by Ritchie Adams and Mark Barkan’s “Ride The Magic Carpet” [later, they composed the “Banana Splits” theme!]. It appears that, much to Tom’s chagrin, Ross added string to the tracks after the vocal sessions were completed, and the group went its separate ways soon after the disc was released. As a listening experience, there’s no better way of absorbing the multi-layered harmonies on this folk/rock disc than to allow the sound to simply wash over you. The CD liner booklet provides scant detail of the session players or instruments used, but on a number of tracks an autoharp can clearly be heard. If you love the music of some/any of the musical aggregations I mentioned in the opening paragraph, you can’t go wrong with some Euphoria in your life. Forced to pick out a couple of Pacheco tracks, I’d mention the opening cut “There Is Now” [%], the waltz paced, sad tale of the reclusive “Seldom Seen Slim” and the happy go lucky “Sun And Shadow.”

This reissue is housed in a card gatefold sleeve and is accompanied by a 16-page booklet, featuring an extensive essay on Euphoria and Tom Pacheco subsequent musical adventures, penned by English music historian John Tobler. This album is available by contacting Beatball Records at austin@beatballrecords.com In addition it’s currently available in the States by mail order from Massachusetts based Forced Exposure at <http://www.forcedexposure.com/artists/euphoria.html>

Note.

[*] - The Goldebriars cut three albums two of which were officially released. Despite the plethora of Boettcher associated CD reissues of recent years, no Goldebriars discs have ever made it to CD. *To date, that is.*

[#] – English based Barter later formed his own company and worked as a graphic designer.

[%] – The British indie dance music duo Saint Etienne included a version of this song on their latest *mix compilation*, “**The Trip!**” [2004]. The 2CD collection also contains renditions of Spanky’s “Like To Get To Know You,” the Mamas & Papas “Shooting Star” and “Dark Is The Bark” by The Left Banke.

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 11/04