

# fROOTS

Local Music From Out There

## MARTYN BENNETT

Highland Hardbeat

## BEN MANDELSON

That Mustapha Bloke

Sainkho Namtchylak

While & Matthews

Ethiopiques

Timor Tales

Papa Noel

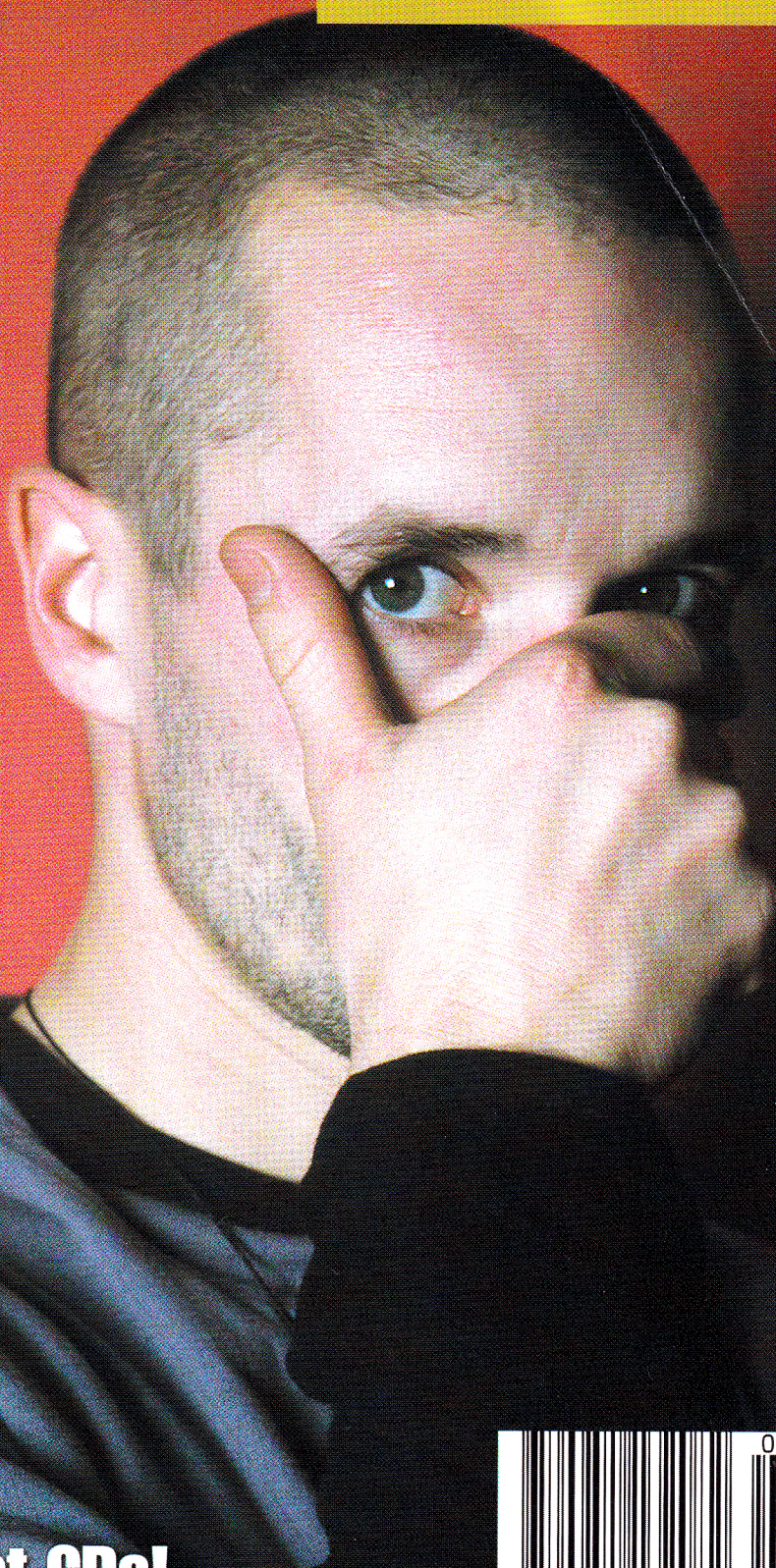
John Hiatt

Safarini

Da Lata

more!

WIN! An Chang Project CDs!





# SALAMANDER CROSSING

**Henry Street – A Retrospective** Signature  
Sounds SIG 1261

Underneath Henry Street in North Amherst, Massachusetts, there's a series of tunnels that allow the local salamander population to commute in safety, hence this aggregation found their performing name in 1991. At various times a trio or quartet, they finally called it a day last year.


While still a fledgling label, circa 1995, Signature Sounds distributed their self-titled debut and during the following year the quartet's second disc, *Passion Train* appeared. Time has confirmed their third set, *Bottleneck Dreams*, to be their swan song. Recorded in Nashville and produced by Canadian Colin Linden, the latter collection was released by Signature Sounds two years ago. This double CD collection brings together the first two Salamander recordings and then some. Disc one is enhanced by the addition of the traditional *Dona Nobis Pacem (Peace On Earth)*, while songs composed by Claudia Schmidt, John Gorka and Gillian Welch, plus the traditional *Wade In The Water* flesh out disc two.

Never prolific (as writers), in terms of recording original material, Salamander Crossing was an acoustic marriage that explored material drawn from bluegrass, pop and folk sources during their honeymoon period. In that regard, a high-energy version of Lennon & McCartney's *Things We Said Today* lies comfortably alongside the closing and ethereal rendition of Shawn Colvin's *Shotgun Down The Avalanche*. With *Passion Train* came a road wise maturity and an inclination to experiment with material from other genres. Originally, circa 1987, a medium paced ballad on Springsteen's *Tunnel Of Love*, *Two Faces* became for the Salamander's, a fiddle driven bluegrass anthem.

One minor criticism – someone at the label failed to check the artwork prior to production. Not one, but both track listings are numerically wayward! Available from Fish Records, P.O. Box 148, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 5WQ.

*Arthur Wood*

👉 **David Rovics *Live At Club Passim*** (own label) Politically inspired songs – an Ochs for the new millennium? – balance precariously with humorous throwaways like *The Alligator Song*. With *Song For My Broken Heart*, Rovics delivers the real thing. PO Box 995, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 USA.

 **Lui Collins *Leaving Fort Knox*** (Molly Gamblin Music MGM 1006) A marriage of traditional and contemporary folk styles though the material is entirely original including a cover of Dana Robinson's *Loose The Ties*. Accompanying herself on guitar and banjo, Lui rings the changes by performing (her) *Saudade* partly in Portuguese and English, while ballads such as *The Dark Silkie* and *Song Of The Waters* are traditional in construction and performance. Molly Gamblin Music, PO Box 4005, Ashfield, MA 01330, USA or [www.luicollins.com](http://www.luicollins.com).



**👉 Robin Dale Ford *Ain't That Skippin' & Flyin'*** (10th Planet Records 10-003) From Alaska, Ford delivers a banjo driven contemporary folk recording of a dozen of her own songs. Rarely strays into bluegrass pickin' mode, except on the title track. With a sweet, joyful voice reminiscent of Parton/Krauss, the spirited opener *Hangin' By A Wire* sets the tone for a pleasant, though hardly classic, recording. PO Box 10114, Fairbanks, AK 99710, USA

*Robin Dale Ford*



Photo: Paul Morley



👉 **Dana Robinson** *The Trade* (Threshold Music TM006) Book ended by a couple of traditional songs, respectively *Pat Do This* and *Little Sadie*, most of Robinson's third solo effort is self composed originals. Mainly recorded in Nashville, it's pleasant, but hardly apocalyptic. *Troy* is probably the best cut here. Threshold Music, PO Box 165, Northampton, MA 01061, USA