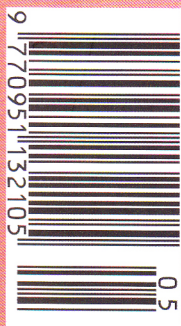


# fROOTS

Local Music From Out There



## **toumani diabate** the king of malian hard kora

abyssinia infinite • martin simpson  
zap mama • amira • juan de marcos  
joan francés tisner • the planets



# JEFFREY FOUCAULT

**Stripping Cane** Signature Sounds Recording  
Company SIG 1286

Produced by David Goodrich and recorded in rural Massachusetts, *Stripping Cane* is Foucault's long-awaited second album. What we have here is melancholy (a state of mind that matches Foucault's vocal sound), leavened by the occasional light-hearted moment. The acoustic blues *Mayfly* is one of the latter, and celebrates the 24-hour lifespan of this insect. The opening track, *Cross Of Flowers*, initially delivers stark images of untended things that are past their best and activities indulged in by the locals. Having already, in the opening three tracks, delivered a significant proportion of fine poetic visualisations, the title track is a tour-de-force. In terms of a basic meat and potatoes song, *Pearl Handled Pistol* finds this Wisconsin-bred history graduate revisiting the legend of General George Custer, Chief Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill Cody. If there's a lesson to be learned it's that, sadly, history repeats itself. Lyrically, *Tropic Of Cancer* is the Gordian knot of this collection, since it's practically impenetrable in terms of deciphering a storyline or theme. This rather fine, mostly acoustic, collection is completed by the melancholic love song *Don't Look For Me*, and a cover of John Fogerty's *Lodi*.

[www.signaturesounds.com](http://www.signaturesounds.com)

Arthur Wood

# DAVID FRANCEY

**The Waking Hour** Red House Records RHR  
CD 182

The fourth recording by Scottish-born, Canadian-bred folk musician, David Francey. His second and third solo efforts, *Far End Of Summer* (2001) and *Skating Rink* (2003), saw him pick up Canada's coveted Juno Award for Best Roots & Traditional Album. Self-produced, *The Waking Hour* is a collection of 13 Francey-penned originals, recorded in Nashville, Tennessee with assistance from Kevin Welch, Kieran Kane and Fats Kaplin, and the first of his albums to be officially released in America.

Possessed of a sprightly melody, *The Waking Hour* opener is a sad, reflective love song; *Ankle Tattoo* is a finely observed portrait of the small everyday events it's possible to witness in a bus station as well as the people you might expect to see. Elsewhere, *Wishing Well* amounts to a recollection of the crime and final punishment of the Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh. Francey's 9/11 song *Grim Cathedral* appeared on *Skating Rink*, and by way of continuity, *The Waking Hour* contains *Fourth Of July*. The title is a parody, while the lyric is an eyewitness account of the "sabre rattling" events he witnessed citizens of Madison, Ohio indulge in on September 11th 2002. As for his reflection upon the American government, it's Francey's contention that, "They want all of us up for the dancing/ All howling away at the moon", and goes on to reflect, with some sadness, "It's September and I can't help but think that/ It looks like the Fourth of July." In the closing track *Gone*, Francey sought inspiration from the proverb "Time will heal the wound," and added a few simple images bringing us full circle to the theme of the opening track.

*Arthur Wood*



# MARIA DUNN

**We Were Good People** Distant Whisper  
Music MARCD 03

Early in his career, Canadian folk musician James Keelaghan had an undeniable predilection for constructing lyrics that recorded historic events, particularly from the viewpoint of the North American working man – James didn't solely restrict his sights to the land north of the 49th Parallel. Dunn, an Alberta-based Canadian, is James's female alter ego, and a woman of eloquent social conscience, albeit that subjectively, Maria almost exclusively focuses upon events that occurred in Alberta.

*We Were Good People*, her third recording, finds the songs set historically, from the dawn of the 20th century through to the immediate aftermath of World War II. As Dunn's words unfold, most tell of the participants' daily struggle for survival. *We Were Good People* recalls the Edmonton Hunger March of 1932, while *Freedom Here* memorialises those blacks from the American South who settled in Alberta during the early 20th century. The segue of *In The Shadow Of The Rockies/ As I Walk Through Canada* and *From The Bread Line To The Front Line* draws upon events that occurred prior to and during World War I. The latter song recalls the depression that preceded the outbreak of war, during which time thousands became unemployed following the completion of the Cana-





*Maria Dunn*

dian railroads and other major construction projects. As the song title states, those hungry workers soon found themselves in a uniform and fighting for their country. *In The Shadow Of The Rockies/ As I Walk Through Canada* recalls the internment of Ukrainian Canadians, without recourse to law, during the first Great War. 90 years later, things haven't changed, particularly in relation to the activities of that nation located south of the 49th Parallel.

On a marginally lighter issue, *Mrs McClung's Address At Walker Theatre* recalls the evolution of the Canadian suffragette movement, and closes with the upbeat instrumental *Nellie's Jig*. The collection closes with a unionisation song, and a call to arms, *Troublemaker*. Dunn's thought-provoking album is available from Distant Whisper Music, P.O. Box 75063, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 6K1 and also from Festival Distribution Inc.

*Arthur Wood*



**👉 *Various These Times We're Living In***

(Red House Records RHR CD184) 16 songs selected by Red House Records President Bob Feldman, drawn from existing releases 1999-2005, so nothing here screams previously unreleased track or collector's item. Feldman's aim with this loosely thematic compilation is that folks will take the time to "stop and think on" with regard to "these times we're living in".