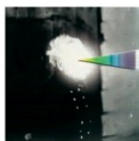


**A.C. Acoustics
UNDER-
STANDING
MUSIC**

Fire Records

★★★★

A weird but
wonderful album
that you can really rock out to



This 15-track album from A.C. Acoustics was a pleasant surprise. The indie-rock band has created a wonderful album with a real rock feel to it. Listening to the band it reminded me a lot of the likes of Biffy Clyro and Coldplay in some parts. The effortless vocals are soft and simple but it makes each song easy to listen to and sound simply brilliant!

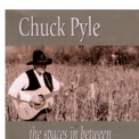
My favourite songs include *Luke One, Crush, Like Ribbons, B2* and *Lemon*. Each song is different from the last and always has a great melody to make the track fun and exciting. I can't really find any faults with the album other than a few of the songs being not quite to my liking but I will let this pass as the rest of the songs really make the album. *Dry Salvage (God Knows My Name)* is probably the worst song on the album because I found it a little bit weird. It begins with a scratchy sound before going into a calm gentle tune. The song then has no singing, just talking. It does this for most of the track but ends on a good note with a much heavier tune and a little bit of singing which really improves the song. I highly recommend UNDERSTANDING MUSIC. It is a fantastic album and I think one you can really rock out to! **AmyW**

**Chuck Pyle
THE SPACES
IN BETWEEN**

Zen Cowboy
Records

★★★★

Love, the wild
places and more
feature in another
fine song collection from Colorado's
favourite zen cowboy



THE SPACES IN BETWEEN is Colorado-based Pyle's eleventh album, and the third consecutive studio recording produced by John McVey. Producer and recording artist share a bond, in that they are both winners of the Kerrville Folk Festival's New Folk Songwriting Contest—the former in 1996, the latter in 1981.

An ethereal sounding grand piano gives way to a string section and Pyle's finger-picked acoustic guitar at the outset of the wonderfully surreal album opener *Dream Song*. The subjective content of *Love Will Find A Way* is pretty much explained by its title, and the lyric to the ensuing *Beckoning Sky* and *The Yellowstone*—both find the narrator journeying through the wilderness—are similarly relationship focused. Chuck injects a deal of humour into the two verses, chorus and bridge of the fashion statement *Picking Out My Outfit*—'I used to be a slave to old fashion, I used to tuck my shirt tail in, Now I'm into looking nonchalant, Like I came to mow the lawn.'

Should fly-fishing be one of your chosen pleasurable pastimes, you'll know the precise use of a *Copper*

**John Fullbright
LIVE AT THE BLUE DOOR**

Blue Door Records

★★★★☆

By my reckoning John Fullbright of Okemah, Oklahoma is one hell of a songwriter

Featuring one man, his acoustic guitar and the occasional use of harmonica, LIVE AT THE BLUE DOOR was recorded in concert on February 17 last year at Greg Johnson's Oklahoma City listening room (of the same name)—Greg is heard welcoming this youngster to the stage as the disc opens—and has been released on the venue's record label. All being well, later this year, we should see the arrival of twenty-two year old Fullbright's debut studio album on an Austin, Texas based record label. Fullbright was raised in Okemah, Oklahoma, Woody Guthrie's birthplace. Jimmy LaFave has played Okemah's mid-July WoodyFest since its inception in 1998 and in a mid-May interview, told me how in recent years he has observed John Fullbright's emergence as a travelling troubadour and songwriter to be reckoned with.

Whether intentional or not, a pre-WWII Okie headed west flavour pervades the first verse of *Moving*, the opening number. Therein, finding a vehicle broken down by the roadside, Fullbright's sympathetic narrator intimates: 'Stop and see whether I can lighten his load.' While introducing his second selection, *Tombstone*, John offers the insight that two figures, Okemah raised and now deceased: 'kinda moulded my life as it is'. Namely, his grandfather who: '...didn't care for music, worked with a hammer and a saw, Didn't owe nobody nothing, stayed on the right side of the law' and Woody Guthrie: '...he liked music, sang songs for the working man, Didn't owe nobody nothing, singing songs about the land.'

A love song sans (all) the usual platitudes, the *Unlocked Doors* melody hints that it could have been penned by Slaid Cleaves/Rod Picott, self-deprecation and the geography of Oklahoma are explored in the wryly worded *All The Time In The World*, while touching forbidden fruit is the foundation for the bluesy *Satan & St. Paul*—'I could use another twenty years to fix the last fifteen, but it never seems to work to my advantage.' The evening's evangelising continues with another eight breathtaking Fullbright originals, and this seventeen selection, fourteen song disc closes with John's rendition of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*.

No pressure intended and still a little ways down the road, on the evidence of LIVE AT THE BLUE DOOR, Fullbright's studio debut—he's equally adept on piano and accordion—will undoubtedly find him alluded to (by DJs and writers) as the latest folk troubadour in the mould of _____ (you enter the name). All future hype apart, Fullbright is without a doubt an American original. **AW**
<http://www.myspace.com/johnrussellfullbright>



John. That said, Pyle's angling anthem of the same name is underpinned by a brisk Celtic beat with occasional injection from an Irish whistle that almost sounds like a Native American flute. The album title appears in the *Beckoning Sky* lyric, and resurfaces in the endless horizon themed *Wide Open*. Founded on a loping beat the latter country-pop song, set in Wyoming, is quite simply fare at which Chuck Pyle altogether excels.

Gray wolf packs were re-introduced to Yellowstone National Park during 1995, and that occurrence furnished the inspiration for the environmental commentary *Alpha No. 9*, albeit that it involves a conversation between two wolves—one old, the other young and still learning about life. *Chickadee*, complete with vocal input by the songbird, and *Surfin'* amount to subjectively lighter musical fare, and THE SPACES IN BETWEEN closes with the relationship themed numbers *In Love With Love* and *Remember Someone's Near*. **AW**
<http://www.chuckpyle.com/>

**The Cornell
Hurd Band
A BAD YEAR
FOR LOVE**

Behemoth Records

BEH 1021

★★★★☆

In no way does
this album fail
to deliver



Having first heard this band perform *You Put It There* featuring Marti Brom on vocals on Mark Lamarr's Saturday night, BBC Radio 2 session with the Boxcar Preachers in March 2006 the quality heard on that very song is something which is present on each and every one of this album's whopping seventeen songs. Based in Austin, Texas the band was formed in 1977 and has toured throughout North America and even ventured into Canada. The

band is fronted by the wonderful lead vocalist Cornell Hurd who leads his ten-person band with such ease.

Of the extensive track listing, *The Color of Dead Leaves* is one of the best examples of this outfit's talent. Energetically played, it includes some very impressive instrumentations that seem to knock you off your chair and blow you away. It is on *I Won't Apologize for Loving You* which demonstrates the old-timey, Bob Wills-esque qualities this band has. Perfect for getting the audience off their bar stools and onto the dance floor for a fine two-step, this song not only possesses a vigorous spirit but it rightly demonstrates Cornell's ability to lead his troops on a journey of musical extravagance.

In all, several instruments are used for the production of this album which include piano, fiddle, mandolin and steel guitar to name a few. Seeing this band perform live is a very good reason for travelling to Austin and if you do find yourself in The Live Music Capital of the World then seeing one of the Cornell Hurd Band's gigs would be one heck of a show to attend. **RH**
www.cornellhurdband.com

**Joe Jencks
LINKS IN A
CHAIN**

Turtle Bear Music

★★★★

Heritage, be
it familial or
musical, forms
the lyrical backbone of Jencks'
seventh solo outing



Titling this acoustic folk collection LINKS IN A CHAIN is deliberate, since a decade into his career as a travelling musician Jencks felt the time was right to pay tribute to fellow singer-songwriters who have influenced him musically. Those songwriters take care of half of the album's one dozen selections, the others being

Jencks-penned originals. In terms of running order divided equally, bar one exception, the latter bookend the former.

Lineage is obviously important to this writer and that becomes apparent in the opening, album title song. Sat on the front porch swing with his maternal grandmother, the latter offers insights into how she and her daughter survived the Great Depression, a period of war and more. In the second verse Jencks, stood at his parents' grave, recalls their marriage 'forty years, seven children, and some well worn wedding rings.' Pursuing further those (familial) ties to their source, Jencks visits his ancestral homeland in *On Eireann's Shore*. The chorus of the latter song includes the lines: 'But the one who holds my truest heart, She lies far from Eireann's shore', the third selection *Love Is The Reason* having undoubtedly been penned for his beloved.

The cover songs include *Get Together*, a 1969 number five US pop hit for The Youngbloods, which was penned by the late Chet Powers aka Dino Valenti. In terms of (other) folk giants no longer with us, Joe offers Phil Ochs' *Bracero* and Bob Gibson's *Let The Band Play Dixie*. Ochs composed a song titled *Joe Hill*, but the version covered by Joe is that of Alfred Hayes' poem *I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night* to which Earl Robinson subsequently set music. Native American heritage is explored in Rod MacDonald's *White Buffalo*, and the sixth cover is the late Mark Spittal's *Turning Lead Into Gold*. Pretty much bookend the foregoing covers, journeying from the Rockies to the Pacific coast *Late September Moon* recalls love in the approaching autumn, *Crossing Over* is a paean that questions why: '...we waste our wealth, on the machinery of war' and, finally, there's the bittersweet childhood recollection *Fireflies*. **AW**
<http://www.joejencks.com/>