

# Folk ROOTS

World Rooting...

## Eleftheria Arvanitaki

Plus:

Lhasa

Zanzibar

Watersons

Last Forever

Regis Gizavo

Amampondo

George Telek

World Circuit

Black Umfolosi

Native American

Alexander D. Great

and lots more!





# JOAN BAEZ

## **Gone From Danger** Grapevine GRACD 223

Reinvention is a skill that few of us possess. Normally, it's a case of those statutory fifteen minutes of fame prior to oblivion. For Joan Baez, remaining in the frame has been a four decade long crusade, founded on her skill as a finder and interpreter of songs. The crossroads have been many, with paths not taken and political battles won or valiantly fought.

Mid-career, Joan turned her hand to songwriting, though it is not her strongest suit. *Lilly*, her only composition on *Gone From Danger*, was co-written with Sharon Rice and the album production duo, Wally Wilson and Kenny Greenberg. They were also responsible for her 1992 set, *Play Me Backwards*. The other nine tracks on *Gone From Danger* source from five song poets, four of whom are working musicians Stateside. Ireland's Sinead Lohan, the exception to the latter, is a writer still searching for an identity. *No Mermaid* and *Who Do You Think I Am*, the latter being the title of Lohan's 1995 Grapevine debut, are the most vague and least focused contributions here. Betty Elders, opening act on Joan's forthcoming U.K. tour, supplies an ominous tale about child abuse, *Crack In The Mirror*. Dar Williams and Richard Shindell tunes are respectively covered on two and three occasions here. They currently have three solo albums each in print, and are two of the finest wordsmiths currently working in the genre.

Dar's bittersweet love song, *February*, and Richard's *Reunion Hill* are fitting examples of their work. Mark Addison from *The Borrowers* completes the Stateside quartet of scribes, with *Mercy Bound*. If imitation is one of the greatest forms of flattery, maybe it's worthwhile recalling that, once upon a time, Joan was one of the first channels by which planet Earth discovered the writing of Robert Zimmerman.

*Arthur Wood*



# JIM WHITE

**(The Mysterious Tale Of How I Shouted)  
Wrong-Eyed Jesus!** Luaka Bop/Warner Bros.  
9362-46472-2

White spent twenty three years living on the margins of a Pentecostal community in the Florida panhandle, has been a pro surfer, a fashion model in Milan – the one in Italy – and a New York cab driver. The majority of the 20 page liner booklet is given over to a story penned by White, which also gives the album its full title. Subjectively, the tale embraces teenage drug abuse, sex, religion, child molesting, hippie culture and surrealism.

As for the music, White delivers at worst, incomplete, simplistic melodies and stream of consciousness spoken lyrics. "I'd lick a spittoon, I'd wear all the underwear in a sauna" gives a flavour of White's competence in the latter area. And the press sheet proudly boasted that White was a polymath! At best, he's reminiscent of a sub-standard Robbie Robertson or John Trudell.

For no obvious reason, on a number of cuts White and producer Paul Rabjohns have even resorted to distorting the vocal. If it's *meant to entice the listener to pay closer attention, it fails. Miserably.*



White was aided on this project by long time Tom Waits collaborator Ralph Carney, and former Talking Head, David Byrne, was one of the Executive Producers. The foregoing says much about this new frontier style, impressionistic recording. If this recording is perceived as a shining new way forward for music, leave me behind when the last plane flies out. For instance... the vocal on the closing track, *The Road That Leads To Heaven*, fades at around five minutes. Three silence filled minutes later, the listener is treated to a further sixty seconds of discordant sounds, while in the background a voice repeats and repeats "Hey can't you hear me? Let me in." Not a snowballs chance in hell, Jim.

*Arthur Wood*



Stylistically the Woody's have been compared to '70s country rock aggregations such as Poco, Eagles and Pure Prairie League. In other words, this is time warp music from a simpler era. The manner in which their rather effective harmonies intertwine, ably supported by crystal clear acoustic guitar sounds, is reminiscent of the non-electric version of Crosby, Stills and Nash. At their best, that is. Lyrically, for instance, their songs portray well-oiled bar-room philosophers and the advice they offer, and the stillness which proceeds those Gulf Coast winds of the tornado variety. Sadly to relate, elsewhere, there's seemingly countless tales centred around that male/female relationship situation. Purely for the restrained percussion and uncredited accordion, *Uncommon Sense* makes for the best track in this retro pack.

Available from 2123a South 2nd Street,  
Jacksonville Beach, Florida 32250, U.S.A.

*Arthur Wood*