



Mickey Newbury **"Winter Winds"** Long Hall/Mountain Retreat Records

In 1994 the now defunct label Winter Harvest Entertainment issued a *live* Mickey Newbury CD and video, each of fifty minute plus duration, titled **"Nights When I Am Sane."** The basic premise underlying **"Winter Winds"** is that recordings made at the foregoing concert have now been converted into a studio setting with the addition of bass, cello, mandolin and violins. The original release only featured the guitars of Mickey and Jack Williams picking on fourteen tracks, while this version contains sixteen. The latter is not the only variation, as half a dozen songs appear on **"Winter Winds"** that were not featured on the original disc. In order of appearance, they amount to "Ramblin' Blues," "Lie To Me Darlin'," "Juble Lee's Revival," "Angeline," "Poison Red Berries" and "Winter Winds Blow." Just like his friend, the late Townes Van Zandt, Newbury has, throughout his career, re-recorded many of his songs. San Francisco Mabel Joy," is one of those and probably his best known composition. It's also a movie in a song that features a San Francisco prostitute and a young drifter from rural Georgia. The drifter ends up in prison after he retaliates when attacked by one of her customers. Subsequently freed, he tries to find Mabel Joy only to be told in the final lines, *"She left this house four years today, They say she's lookin' for some Georgia farm boy."* While duplication may give the impression of writer's block and having nothing new to say, that conclusion totally misses the essence of Newbury and his unique compositions. This Houston bred Texan is the most soulful writer and interpreter of the country song that has ever lived. True, he may not have enjoyed the mega acclaim and status of, say, Willie Nelson, but commercial success is a mere function of dollars and cents. Even with reinterpretation, Mickey's songs are works of art that take on previously unheard nuances. **"Winter Winds"** is a collection of some that are *memorably* old, some that are *vitaly* new, and include many that possess Newbury's favourite lyrical shade - *blue*. Eternally beautiful, and oh so wonderfully *blue*.

Folkwax Rating 8 out of 10

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