

Folk ROOTS

Transglobal Underground

Sabah Habas Mustapha
Cherish The Ladies
Balfa Toujours
Peru, Belize
Hank Dogs
more!

fROOTS #11

FREE! CD @ 17 tracks @ 75+ minutes!

Eliza Carthy @ Maryam Mursal @ Calic
Jennifer & Hazel Wrigley @ Dock Boggs
Naha Salec @ Sabah Habas Mustapha
Taraf De Haidouks @ Madain Ramdas
Spiro @ Rokia Traore @ Gjallarhorn
TJ Rehmi @ Skeleton @ Hank Dogs
Komwa Komwa String Band
Brian Peters

WIN!
Nic Jones
& Nusrat
CDs



TIM HARRISON

Bridges Northern Breeze NB0021

The real joy in album reviewing comes when you find that you can't take the darned creation off the deck. You want to play it for the rest of your life. And just to check that something is really happening, you succumb to playing it one more time. In any one year, this event may never happen. Sometimes, it's like an avalanche. So here we have Canadian, Tim Harrison. A recording artist for two decades his tally, to date, is a mere quartet of recordings. His credentials are not in doubt, since the late and much missed Stan Rogers produced Harrison's 1979 debut *Train Going East*, while [a young] Daniel Lanois was the engineer. Performances in many of the major venues and at folk festivals on both sides of the 47th parallel followed the album's appearance. Later, Harrison founded the Summerfolk Music Festival in Owen Sound, Ontario and was, subsequently, the artistic director of numerous other Canadian open air folk music events.

In human terms, life sometimes dictates that we burn them. On other occasions, we experience the call to [re-]build them. *Bridges* have a multitude of applications. So here's the rub – Tim Harrison's *Bridges* is a nine track tour-de-force of, sometimes Celtic flavoured, contemporary folk music. The shortest cut lasts over four and a half minutes, while three tracks exceed seven minutes duration. 'Addicted' hardly describes my current state of mind. Excluding the traditional *Carrickfergus*, Harrison penned the other chunks of twenty-four carat gold in this collection. Haunting life affirmative anthems, for listeners with a mind to reflect and the will to respond, encapsulates the music captured stunningly on this little silver ring. All the way, that is, from *Not For The Love Of The Money* to *Vital Spark*.

Available from Second Avenue Songs & Records, 479 Roswell Avenue, Suite 1, Toronto, Ontario M4R 2B6, Canada.

Arthur Wood.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Family Album Gadfly Records GADFLY 240

According to the press release, a portion of the proceeds from the sale of this release is being donated to several child advocacy organisations around the U.S. – which agencies, and precisely how much per disc, it doesn't say. What I've got to say, about the Gadfly label and some of its past releases isn't really for this review. Let's just say, Kate Wolf and *Breezes*.

Check the title of this collection, and the theme of the twelve songs becomes obvious. Seven of the tracks are drawn from the current Gadfly catalogue. Of the remaining selections, the David Massengill song *Rider On An Orphan Train* is a previously unreleased live recording drawn from the 1993 Greenwich Folk Festival (Gadfly have released three discs to date from that Rod MacDonald organised festival). Adie Gray's *Grandpa's Advice* comes from her 1995 set of the same name, Loudon Wainwright's *The Picture* is from his early '90s

History album, while Madison, Wisconsin based Peter and Lou Berryman pitch in with the quirky *Orange Cocoa Cake* from their 1995 self release *Don't Get Killed. Trouble Never Looked So Good* by Gerry Devine is previously unreleased.

Arthur Wood.

BILL STAINES

The First Million Miles, Volume II Rounder
CD 11580

On countless occasions, Nanci Griffith has publicly credited Bill Staines as the inspiration in terms of her performing and touring beyond the borders of her beloved Texas. As Staines contends in the sleeve notes of this set, "I am still on the road. It is, as it is with so many musicians, writers, and heartfelt vagabonds, all I know." Track three, *Sunny South*, from his 1988 Philo release *Redbird's Wing* is a musical extrapolation of the helpless, relentless and restless nature of those words.

Apart from a 1997 version of the traditional *Sweet Sunny South*, the nineteen tracks featured in this retrospective are culled from a quartet of Staines' releases, dating from 1981 onward. The featured albums being *Rodeo Rose* [1981], *Sandstone Cathedrals* and *Wild, Wild Heart* [1983] and *Redbird's Wing* [1988]. Staines is a, down to earth, twentieth century troubadour whose compositions, eighteen of which are featured here, capture the landscapes he has observed and the people he interacted with on that road. This man's work possesses a gentle simplicity and spirituality, which is nothing if not winning.

Arthur Wood

DENICE FRANKE

You Don't Know Me de nICE gIRL Music DF002

The decade of Denice Franke compositions featured on her second solo recording source from two distinct periods. Half a dozen songs were penned around a decade ago, while the remaining quartet is of 1996 and 1997 vintage. Long-time friend and songsmith, Eric Taylor, has masterminded the production of this project without adding his voice or guitar to the final commodity.

The depth and breadth of (mostly acoustic) sounds embraced is breathtaking. Supported by her own guitar as well as the cream of Austin and Houston pickers, Franke's vocal performances span the rainbow from, upbeat and optimistic through to haunting and despondent. They are, without doubt, ten gems that each shine in their chosen setting. *Saints*, the first cut on this collection, starts with the gently fragile "You smile and reach for my hand and say hello," while Eric Demmer's saxophone underpins the narrator's thoughts about the lost possibilities of (her) life. In *How'd You Know*, which immediately follows, there's a cross reference to the poetry of Robert Frost. My personal favourite for the replay button is the near six minutes that constitutes the mini-movie *Rainy Night Detroit*.

Those supporting players and vocalists include Paul Percy (percussion), Glenn Fukunaga (piano), Gene Elders (violin), Ian Matthews (OK, Scunthorpe isn't in Texas, but he gets the vote by current residency) and Mike Sumler (piano). Available from de nICE gIRL Music, P.O. Box 540682, Houston, Texas 77254-0682, U.S.A.

Arthur Wood

JULIE GOLD

Dream Loud Gadfly Records GADFLY 239

DEBI SMITH

More Than Once Shanachie 8032

By Gold's own admission, in the liner notes, these recordings are demo quality. Basically, it's a mix of piano and voice with occasional embellishments. Guitar, drums, harmony vocals, synthetic strings et al. Now over a decade old, *From A Distance*, has been her passport to fame [and fortune] as well as her albatross. None of Gold's other compositions that are featured here, there are eleven, match the universality or [maudlin] sentiment of the aforementioned work. Frankly, her material possesses an easy listening quality that smarts of Midler, Streisand and Broadway, while her voice lacks range.

Heaven knows I struggled with the contents of this disc for ages. Recorded and co-produced by Dan Green at his Amerisound Studios in Columbus, Ohio, there were times when I'd have sworn that his wife, Sally Fingerett [and a member of the Bitchin' Babes with Debi], was the lead vocalist. That apart, this disc opens with a segue of the traditional Shenandoah and Smith's own Virginia. The thirteen other Smith creations which complete this set, vary between the down-to-earth honesty of *Mother's Hands* [that first saw the light of day on the Babes 1995 set, *Charge It ! Fax It ! Don't Ask Me What's For Dinner !*], the melodic Rickenbacker jangle of *First Choice*, the heartfelt punch-line in the final verse of *Italy And France*, the almost traditional sounding opus *Old River*, as well as the too precious, *Sleep*. This panoramic musical mixture, draws upon the various facets of Debi's career to date. Nothing more, and nothing less.

Arthur Wood

ALLEN DOBB


Horses And Hills Resource Records 7-79041-1005-2


Dobb's eleven vignettes mainly take a cowboy/ranching theme, while his lyrics are reminiscent of the depth, panoramic style and quality that Tom Russell has instilled in his work for what seems a lifetime. Curious, therefore, that this is Dobb's debut solo effort, following two discs of world fusion music with his brother Cameron as part of the band Dobb and Dumela. As for the melodies that Dobb employs, there's much here that is reminiscent of Dan Fogelberg's catalogue, although Dobb's voice has more depth than Fogelberg's, sometimes, ethereal whisper. Is it unintentionally coincidental that one of the songs here is titled *Fool's Gold*, since that was the name of Fogelberg's mid-'70s road band? While also bearing some resemblance to Ian Tyson's canon, there's also a flavour of alternative country, roots, left field, whatever about Dobb's material and presentation. Available from Resource Records, 2803 West 4th Avenue, P.O. Box 74656, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6K 4P4.

Arthur Wood

👤 **Leonardo *Lustron*** (DuneDisc/One Man Clapping OMC 0013). Tepid, direction-less acoustic strum-along, that requires serious lyrical editing and is most certainly not a DaVinci. By at least a million light years! 2032 N. Racine, Chicago, Il 60614, U.S.A.

👉 **Abner Burnett Calavera** (Worpt WORPT002) His first new material for two decades includes other worldly sounding instrumentals and folk/blues tinged songs wherein the lyrics occasionally rhyme. For added familiarity, the Texan covers Mancini's *The Day Of Wine And Roses*. A curio or just a plain curiosity? Worpt UK, 71 Hunmanby Avenue, Manchester M15 5FF

 **Margo Hennebach *Big Love*** (1-800
Prime CD PCD042) Even the closing, non
credited track *Hold Me Close* fails to add
anything that rises above the ordinary on, this,
Hennebach's third solo effort. The misnomer,
there's even a cut titled *Something So Special*.
111 E 14th Street, Suite 300, NYC 10003, U.S.A.

 **Grit Laskin *Earthly Concerns*** (Borealis BCD 111) Three mainly mandolin led toe-tappin' instrumentals, a trio of lyrically conversational songs (ie. wordy, and way too thoughtful), plus a tilt at the topical with titles such *Hi Sal, Have You Checked Your E-mail?* Acoustic throughout, but way too heavy in the lyric stakes. 67 Mowat Avenue, Suite 233, Toronto, Ontario M6k 3E3, Canada.