



The Gourds "**Shinebox**" Sugar Hill

Titled "**gogitchyershinebox**" and originally an eight-song mini-album, including five *live* cuts taken from a Dutch radio broadcast circa May 1998, the reissued version features five new studio tracks. The 1998 Watermelon Records release [Note. The subject, on this reissue, of an interestingly worded liner credit !] included Kevin Russell's song "Magnolia." That track has been dropped from this upgraded version, but fear not, since it had been included earlier that year on The Gourds sophomore album "**Stadium Blitzer**." Intended as a *live EP* for the fans, and now re-titled "**Shinebox**" this collection has been revived by Sugar Hill label in the States, while Glitterhouse [<http://www.glitterhouse.com/>] have now issued it in Europe.

Discounting the five *live* tracks, four of which are Jimmy Smith or Kevin Russell compositions, in truth, the remaining contents of this disc could be viewed as a Gourds *covers* album. A six-minute plus reading of Snoopy Doggy Dogg's "Gin & Juice" opens this disc, and The Gourds mandolin filled version is reminiscent of Creedence Clearwater Revival at their swampy best. A word of warning – if you want to remain a beneficiary of her will, don't play the Dogg song within earshot of your rich and sensitive maiden aunt. In the light of the joke about how many folks does it to screw in a light bulb, how come it took *ten* folks to *write* this acknowledged rap classic?

Another holdover, on this reissue, is David Bowie's 1972 anthem "Ziggy Stardust." The good time sounding Nils Lofgrin's penned "Everybody's Missing The Sun" first surfaced in 1971 on the "**Grin**" band album, while Townes' "Two Girls" is of a similar vintage having been included on Van Zandt's "**Live At The Old Quarter**" double album. It seems to me that Townes' songs have enjoyed more covers in the last five years than they did during his thirty-year long performing career. That says a lot about reflected glory. There's a song here titled "Omaha," but it ain't the Moby Grape composed classic of the same name. This title was penned in the early seventies by Billy Joe Shaver, and appeared on Waylon Jennings' 1973 release "**Honky Tonk Heroes**." The latter ten-song collection, featured nine Shaver compositions. Completing this collection are a couple of Trad. Arranged songs. Closing out at a tad under two minutes, "Dooley," the ballad of the bootlegger, is a banjo driven bluegrass burn-up from Max Johnson, while Jimmy Smith performs "Jones Oh Jones." The latter song was recorded by Paul Geremia on his 1973 Adelphi album "**Hard Life Rockin' Chair**."

Reflecting upon the source of the major proportion of the cover songs featured on "**Shinebox**," one question arises. What is it with The Gourds and the seventies songs? Oh yes, I almost forgot, the contents of this disc are pretty darned Gourdy!

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

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