



Greg Trooper "**Between A House And A Hard Place**" Mucky Duck Records

This sixteen-song, seventeen track *live* recording is subtitled "**Live at Pine Hill Farm.**" The Farm is located in Duke Forest near Durham, North Carolina and the recording was made at this *former* house concert venue on June 17th 2000. McGonigel's Muck Duck, a long-established Houston listening room, have issued the disc although at the time of writing this review it wasn't mentioned on their web site. Nashville based Michael McAdam [electric and acoustic guitar, mandolin, vocals] of the Richmond, Virginia multi-piece Good Humor Band – circa 1974 to 1983, and still going strong with one annual reunion gig – tastefully supports Trooper's guitar, harmonica and vocal where required.

Although copyright of the recording is given as 2001 on the liner, the disc first became available on Greg's web site in November last year. As for the aforementioned sixteen songs, a dozen [*] have appeared on Trooper's previous albums "**We Won't Dance**" - 2 cuts, "**Everywhere**" - 3 cuts, "**Noises In The Hallway**" - 1 cut, "**Popular Demons**" - 4 cuts and "**Straight Down Rain**" - 2 cuts. In fact the release of "**Straight Down Rain**" was still some nine months in the future when this concert took place. Eric "Roscoe" Ambel, a long time picking buddy and musical associate of Greg's produced the recording.

If you've been doing your arithmetic, the foregoing *cut count* only totals twelve. That said, the album opens with Steve Gardner's introduction – count *one* cut - and towards the end of the disc, Greg covers the circa 1976, Warren Zevon penned classic "Carmelita." McAdam's electric support work on "Hannah's Dreams" is particularly sensitive, and Trooper follows it with the lyrically amusing, previously unrecorded "So French." Just as Trooper is about launch into the opening line, the hinge of an opening door squeaks, causing Greg to remark "*We're recording in here...[pause].....Seasoned pro, huh ?*" Well, that's what it sounded like! When ringing applause follows in the wake of the latter song Greg chimes in with "*Aw thanks, so you like those stupid songs.*" I'd say that, in career terms, one recorded version of the foregoing song is adequate. Which brings us to the remaining pair of previously unheard Greg Trooper tunes. Humour also underpins "Take The Gun Out Of Your Mouth," and Trooper introduces the song with a deft [but naughty] aside "*This is a new one. We believe we've got a hold on this one for – I think it's Faith Hill. Somebody like that.*" "Another Shitty Saturday Night," a blue-collar, fun-filled epic soon descends into an audience singalong on the chorus. Elsewhere on this collection, there are memorable renditions of Trooper's "Ireland" – written for, and about, his wife and occasional song writing partner – Claire Mullally, "Biologically Blue," "Everywhere" and more.

Trooper's next studio recording, produced by Phil Madeira [who was also at the helm for "**Straight Down Rain**"], is due later this year from the Durham, NC imprint Sugar Hill Records. It seems to me that there's one heck of a lot of *lomas* in that neck of the Carolinas.

Note.

[*] – Listed relative to the album that they originally appeared on.

Folkwax Rating 6 out of 10

Arthur Wood
Kerrville Kronikles 02/03