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## MAVERICK

### CD REVIEWS - THE NEW RELEASES

#### Brock Zeman YA AIN'T CRAZY HENNY PENNY

Mud Music Records #2

★★★☆☆

*Soulful and rootsy singer-songwriter with a mainly acoustic approach*

These Canadian artists just keep coming out of the woodwork. Gravel-voiced singer-songwriter Brock Zeman is from Carleton Place, Ontario and is something of a road warrior clocking up close on 300 gigs a year. He has several albums to his credit, but this one finds him in a slightly different style to those previous ones, being more acoustic-based, but with the same thoughtful story-telling style raised to a higher, more personal level. Seven of these ten tracks were recorded in Brock's shack some three years ago, the rest were completed in the summer of 2010. Originally this was conceived as a Christmas gift for his family, but gradually grew into a fully-fledged album and we should be grateful for that as songs like *Dust & Dirt*, the story of one boy's love for *Percy's Daughter* deserve to be heard by as many people as possible.

He possesses a lived-in-vocal style and the sympathetic accompaniment provided by Blair Hogan (acoustic, electric guitars, organ, piano) plus Joel Williams (electric guitar), Steve Foley and Peter Bigras (drums) along with harmony vocalists Cindy St Michael, Cindy Dire and Brayden Robin is just right for his excellent songs. Okay, there's a Steve Earle vibe to *Gone*, but it sounds mighty good with a great storyline and there's plenty of originality to be found in *A Song To A Girl* and *Never Step On A Train*. **Alan Cackett**

[www.brockzeman.com](http://www.brockzeman.com)



#### Bruce Roper ACCIDENTAL ENGLISH

Waterbug Records

★★★★

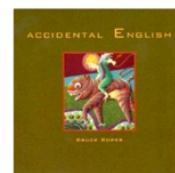
*Roper's ACCIDENTAL ENGLISH reprises Lehrer and Forster*

Roper is the male factor in the quirky three-piece Chicago folk trio Sons Of The Never Wrong.

Possessing the duration of almost seventy seconds the first selection, *Midlife*, sets the tone for this song collection and therein a mature male recalls past, mainly unsuccessful, encounters with love. While listening to *ACCIDENTAL ENGLISH* Roper's consistently sly use of language palpably leavened with melancholy, brought to mind the compositional approach of Tom Lehrer and his current-day counterpart John Forster.

The rhythm established at the outset of *Viewpoint* bears a distinct Neil Young stamp. *The Man Has No Heart* lyric—"Some say a heart is just like a wheel"—paraphrases Anna McGarrigle's *Heart Like A Wheel*, while the melody, similarly, strays a little too close for comfort. In the main the songs retain a gentle ballad pace throughout, supported unobtrusively by piano, organ, guitar, mandolin, bass, drums and cello. **Arthur Wood**

<http://waterbug.com/catalog/index.php?cPath=133>



#### Clive Gregson BITTERSWEET

Fulfill Records

★★★★

*BITTERSWEET, a hook-laden collection of Gregson originals*

Recent years have been something of a bonanza for long-time Clive Gregson fans, what with the release of Any Trouble's reunion disc *LIFE IN REVERSE* back in 2007, and last year's pair of download-only albums *I LOVE THIS TOWN, TAKE ONE* (demos for Clive's 1996 solo release) and *FORWARD INTO REVERSE* (Any Trouble reunion demos). And while we're on the subject, let's not forget *THE BEST OF CLIVE GREGSON* (2009). However, all in all, the bottom line remains that the fourteen-song *BITTERSWEET* is Clive's first solo musical statement featuring new material since *LONG SHORT STORY* (2004). I guess after seven years, it was time to scratch that itch.

What you are always guaranteed with Clive is hook-laden melodies, albeit allied to a career-long reliance on lyrics that focus on the many shades and states of love. Provided that you accept the aforementioned formula, then *BITTERSWEET* is another 'does not disappoint' collection that opens with the album title song. Therein the narrator reflects: 'I wish I could reach you now, I'd try to pull you back somehow,' although in truth Gregson is referencing from a handful of years ago, a traumatic



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