

## CD REVIEWS - THE NEW RELEASES

and busking for almost two decades. A traveller at heart he was a carefree drifter singer-songwriter, who spliced his lifestyle on the road with stints as an odd job man and guitar teacher to name but a few.

This album is the first appearance of Cole's moniker Groove Eddy, and with this he presents a collection of songs that fall into the blues, jazz and roots genres. The album alternates between these musical dispositions and while the instrumentation is cohesive, there are often lyrics that would better be left unsaid to allow a song to truly succeed. *Wildflower* is characterised by pastoral guitars strung with string arrangements, while Amber-Rose Hulme's female vocals provide colour. On *Things They Shouldn't Be This Way* there is a soulful weightiness aided by its tinges of blues and jazz, with Pink Floyd's psychedelia eerily echoing in *Only Love Can Heal*.

As the album opener *Funky indicates*, OVERLOAD is comprised of songs defined by jaunty bass lines, however, the light and often queasily sentimental lyrics only assist in hindrance. It is a record rescued by its musical capabilities: *Mopoke*, an instrumental that is the heart and life of the album, expertly displays Cole's ear for a melody. The mimicked sound of a hooting bird, quietly finger picked guitar over temperate drums creates perfect traditional country with a modern, electric guitar laced slant. Something Groove Eddy should certainly stick to. **Melanie McGovern**  
<http://www.eddiecole.com/>

### Hat Check Girl TENDERNESS

Galway Bay Music  
★★★★  
*Hypnotic, dreamy  
jazz pop from  
Messrs. Gallway  
and Gallup*



Pretty much concurrent with the release of WEATHER, Annie Gallup's eighth solo recording which she co-produced with Peter Gallway (Fifth Avenue Band, Ohio Knox), working as the duo Hat Check Girl the pair have released their debut set TENDERNESS. Peter Gallway was born and raised in New York City, and has at various times in his musical career lived and worked in the Big Apple, Maine and is currently on his second sojourn on America's California coast. Co-produced by Gallup and Gallway, four of the thirteen selections that grace TENDERNESS were penned by Annie, the remainder by the duo, except in the case of *The Crooked Way* by the duo and fellow singer-songwriter John McVey.

The pair launch this disc with their love themed tune *Tenderness*, coupled with two spoken narratives from Gallup. From WEATHER Gallup reprises *Bird*. The act of co-writing often results in dilution through the subordinating of each participant's identity, and apart from the aforementioned four Gallup originals, that's what afflicts much of TENDERNESS.

Employing a legion of instruments Gallway (electric guitars, baritone guitar, bass, keyboards, drum programming and percussion) and Gallup (electric guitar, lap steel) are the sole players and share the lead vocals. The penultimate song and co-write *World At Night* is a prime example of the hypnotic, dreamy jazz pop referred to in the tagline. **Arthur Wood**  
<http://hatcheckgirl.net/home.html>

### Hugh Blumenfeld DAD

Waterbug Records  
★★★★

*Sixteen songs  
specifically penned  
for grandfathers,  
fathers and sons*



One inner leaf of the gatefold card cover bears the legend: 'for my father & my sons,' and those six words pretty much define the intention of this collection of sixteen Blumenfeld penned originals. These days Dr. Blumenfeld practices family medicine in Hartford, Connecticut, but he continues to actively embrace music. DAD mainly features songs, lullabies actually, for youngsters—*NICU At Nite*, the up-tempo *Rock You*, and the humorous *Daddy I'm Awake*—alongside a few parent-themed songs for grown-ups. Among the latter category are *Cradle Song* and *I Knew A Boy*, although truth to tell the tunes for kids also totally worked for this adult/grandfather.

According to the Waterbug Records web site write-up for DAD: 'His interest in music and healing finally led him back to his early interest in medicine. He worked for Hartford Hospital's Integrative Medicine Department and did research on music and premises at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center's NICU before enrolling in medical school in 2003.' Which, I guess, pretty much explains the inspiration for *NICU At Nite*.

DAD reunites Blumenfeld with two long-time musical associates in, album producer David Seitz and Mark Dann (guitars, bass and ukulele). Friends since those heady 1980s/1990s Fast Folk days at the Speakeasy on MacDougal Street and other Greenwich Village venues, the group of eleven support musicians includes harmony vocalists Diane Chodkowski and (accomplished singer-songwriter in his own right) Rod MacDonald. **Arthur Wood**  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~h2jukebox/hughhouse.index.html>

### Hymn For Her LUCY & WAYNE AND THE AMERICAN STREAM

Self Release  
★★

*Heavy Metal  
influenced bluegrass album full of fuzzed  
guitars, homemade banjos and the  
occasional harmony*



Hymn For Her (H4H) are Lucy Tight and Wayne Waxing. They recorded all of the songs for LUCY & WAYNE and THE AMERICAN STREAM in the 16 foot Airstream trailer that they share with their dog and baby as they tour America; stopping overnight in an assortment of campgrounds and friends driveways between shows. The release was mixed by Jim Diamond who recorded the first White Stripes album.

In the Press Release a fan is quoted as saying that H4H are 'The Ramones of bluegrass'. I disagree even though I heard a lot of influences throughout the frenetic banjo/harmonica driven tunes such as the opener *Slips*, but the leather jacketed punk rockers was not one of them. The overriding influence for me was Led Zeppelin in their 3rd Album era. Too many songs reminded me of *Bron Yr Stomp* and *Hats Off To Harper*.

Not everything is Led Zep coloured; the slide drenched *Grave* is pure Dave Edmund's *Who's That Knocking*. Unfortunately most of the songs fail to live up to the very high standards of their influences. While LUCY & WAYNE is initially interesting, I soon found myself playing 'spot the original'. In *Montana* it was too easy, as the main guitar riffs start out based on Led Zep's Rock'n'Roll then evolve into something from mid 1970s Deep Purple!

There are some songs here which manage to rise above H4H wearing their influences on their sleeves. *Cave* is a catchy banjo riff based tune which also features some fine singing by Lucy Tight as does the album closer *Odette* where the pounding banjos, guitars, drums and bass finally quit to allow some rather beautiful unaccompanied singing. **John Jobling**  
[www.hymnforher.com](http://www.hymnforher.com)

### John Shipe VILLAIN

Involushun Records  
★★★★

*Harnesses an  
energy whilst  
embracing a rare  
mix of Americana  
and pop...*



John Shipe has had a timely career starting in the 1980s and taking him from genre to genre where he confesses that he 'sucked'. In 2005 he created his last rock record and since then has focused on a new sound—a rare mix between Americana and pop that has proven his worth as a songsmith and really cemented his existence on the scene in America. VILLAIN follows YELLOW HOUSE, which won him an extraordinary amount of praise and chart success all over the world. VILLAIN opens with *Lion*, which proves to be a wonderful introduction to John Shipe's sound and his talented vocal style. The songs are well-constructed but seem to drift by to some extent. However there are some standout tracks such as *Love Belongs To Everyone* that claims a character of its own, a song with a charging vibe that

harnesses an energy that can be found in the mechanics of the song but also in its lyrical content. *Hard To Believe* is sung with Halie Loren and is a beautiful duet, their vocals really balance each other out, while the song explores a difficult relationship. Overall VILLAIN is a good record, but one that for me just didn't strike a chord. **Laura Bethell**  
[www.johnshipe.com](http://www.johnshipe.com)

### Johnny Clegg HUMAN

Applesseed  
Recordings  
★★★★☆

*A stunning  
and influential  
collection...*



Award-winning South African singer-songwriter Johnny Clegg was recently awarded an honorary doctorate for his contribution to music. He has a wonderful voice, a vocal that is strong and mesmerising, with a silky soft undertone. That really comes through on the opening track *Love In The Time of Gaza*, a song written after watching footage on the war in Gaza, when the camera caught a shot of a young man who was shyly speaking to a girl he was with and never even noticed the camera crew or the carnage unfolding around them. It's a story about the power of love and really explores Johnny Clegg's talent as a songwriter. *Asilazi* is a beautifully crafted song about the fact that South Africans feel that they have not benefited economically from the sixteen years of democracy and know they are facing tough times ahead. A writer of this stature, his album is much like reading a book—there is so much wonderful content in this record. The overall tone is balanced—even the songs that are about disaster and destruction find love or happiness, and the tracks really create a stunning and influential collection.

**Laura Bethell**

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

### Johnny Mathis LET IT BE ME:

MATHIS IN  
NASHVILLE  
Columbia Records  
★★★★☆

*Quality pop-  
country with some  
of Nashville's finest lending support*



Well it's taken pop crooner Mathis more than fifty years to make the trip to Nashville to record. He follows in the footsteps of Andy Williams, Perry Como, Engelbert Humperdinck and countless others. It's not a 'country' album, despite contributions from Vince Gill, Alison Krauss, lashings of pedal steel and such classic country songs as *Crazy*, *Make the World Go Away* and *I Can't Stop Loving You*. As a lush, easy-listening pop album it is faultless and immensely listenable. You just cannot fault the Mathis voice, it is one of the most distinctive voices of the past fifty-odd years, up there with the likes of Nat King Cole, Andy Williams,