



Peter Mayer “**Million Year Mind**” Blue Boat Records

By comparison, Mayer is a relative youngster – this is his fourth solo outing – yet **Million Year Mind** is a revelation, suffused with writing that confirms this native of Minnesota is a master storyteller. Imagine, if you will, songs that contemplate the evolution of mankind “*five million years ago*” in *Africa*, and the senseless and needless destruction of half a million lives witnessed by *Charlie Porter*, a soldier dressed in union blue. *Holy Now* is a recollection of a childhood structured by weekly church attendance, while, since the dawn of time, humankind has expressed an anxiety over, and a fascination with, the mind's capacity to conjure up evil with the arrival of *The Dark*. In *John's Garden*, there's a deft use of surreal humour as Mayer's talking pumpkins discuss the relative merits of rotting and dying on the vine, or grasping the *once in a lifetime* opportunity to shine, with a “*jack-o-lantern's heart*,” on Halloween. I doubt if Mayer intentionally saved the best for last, but *One More Circle* is a masterwork. Laura MacKenzie's border bagpipes and Marc Anderson's percussion set the tone of this Celtic flavoured anthem, in which the narrator contemplates humankind's will to survive “*On this planet home that holds our human race*.” You can probably deduce from the foregoing insight into some of Mayer's compositions, that the structure of each melody compliments the subject matter. *Africa*, for instance, closes with a chorus performed by a primary school choir recorded in Machakos, Kenya. **Million Year Mind**, is a collection that bears repeated listening.

Folkwax rating – 9 out of 10

Arthur Wood.
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