



Art Garfunkel, Buddy Mondlock & Maia Sharp **“Everything Waits To Be Noticed”** Manhattan Records

This album leaps out of the speakers with the opening, happy-go-lucky, youthful hop, skip and step of “Bounce,” a song co-penned in London by Scot, Graham Lyle [#] (of the sixties British pop duo Gallagher & Lyle), and the American born producer of this album, Billy Mann. The opening lines “*Spin that wheel, Just let go, Where she falls, Nobody knows*” are topically appropriate, since three decades back this collection would have been a Top 10 Album Chart certainty, with built-in longevity. No doubt whatsoever. These days, who can tell ? The success, this year, of Nora Jones’ easy listening, major label solo debut at least raises the spectre of, *maybe*.....

If, at the closing of the latter paragraph, you interpret the slightest hint that the contents are in any way *retro*, let me merely add that the thirteen tracks are a totally modern, harmonious marriage of three beautifully interwoven voices. Just over fifty minutes in duration, along the way the trio stylistically sample pop, folk, country and mellow jazz rhythms. Though it may not totally fall within the remit of what is a *Folkwax album*, I’d suggest that *the listener* merely suspend all expectation of this collection being a major source of “contemporary folk” styled lyrics – there are a few interesting exceptions - and merely allow the sound of three voices, raised in song, to wash over them. In that regard, this album is a pure and joy filled listening experience.

When Mondlock told me about this project in Kerrville during the Fall 2001 folk festival, I was left with the impression that the lyrics were to be solely based on Garfunkel’s words, verbatim – taken from his 1989 book of prose poems **“Still Water”** (published by E.P. Dutton, New York: ISBN 0-525-24795-5) – and set to music created by the trio. I’d be lying if I said I felt no apprehension at the prospect as, somewhere, many years ago, I’d picked up a copy of Garfunkel’s tome. The *rhyme schemes* were unconventional. Garfunkel’s name is, in fact, only appended to six tunes, and in those instances, in concert, with varying combinations of Messrs. Mondlock, Sharp, Mann and Pierce Pettis. Furthermore Garfunkel’s prose poems appear to have been a source, only, for *words* and *ideas*. For instance, on page 27 of **“Still Water,”** Prose Poem 17 opens with “*I forget the thread New York makes through my life -*,” and a few lines later “*Fifty-third and Winter of ’62.*” The foregoing re-appear in the Garfunkel, Mondlock, Sharp collaboration “The Thread” as the song title, plus the opening line, “*At the corner of 53rd and the summer of ’62.*” Got the idea- ? Maybe by adding that the foregoing poem goes on to mention “*Park Avenue; St. Bartholomew’s; the Waldorf Astoria and the new scar on her neck,*” all of which resurface in the lyric, then maybe you will have grasped the writing process employed.

There are a small number of full-on Simon & Garfunkel sounding moments – the acoustic guitar opening to the album title track (Garfunkel, Mondlock, Sharp), and some of vocal the harmonies on Richard Julian’s “Young And Free.” The latter is hardly surprising considering that *the G* is a member of this estimable vocal trio. None of the foregoing detracts from the series of thoroughly infectious and eminently listenable performances that Mann has elicited from the participants. Once enamoured, you – the listener - merely keep pressing the repeat button. What’s more there’s no risk of hazardous after effects from this particular addiction.

Returning again to the title track, the fleeting images conjured up by the lyric are akin to watching an old, flickering, magic lantern projector. The listener is allowed to exercise personal *free will* by creating a story to link the disparate images – “*28 geese in sudden flight,*” “*the last star on the edge of night,*” “*a single button undone*” and so on and on. What’s more, in this life, it is a truism that “*Everything waits to be noticed,*” furthermore “*Everything wants to be noticed.*” If only, for a mere fleeting moment.....

Mondlock's "The Kid" is an image filled tribute to daydreamers everywhere – "*I'm the kid who ran away with the circus*" – and surely one of the finest contemporary folk songs penned during the past two decades. I first ran across the tune in 1989 [where else, but in Kerrville !!!!], and since then it has been covered by Peter, Paul & Mary and Cry 3. Hell, it's one of the finest songs written during that time, period. Here, the three voices rise and fall as this *boyhood adventure* gradually unfolds. Reflecting upon the aftermath, the lyric of "Perfect Moment" (Garfunkel, Mondlock, Pettis) draws inspiration from the old maxim "*to have loved once, is better than not having loved at all.*" Mondlock's voice leads off "Turn, Don't Turn Away" (Garfunkel, Mondlock, Mann) and the tune peaks with Sharp's jazzy, soprano sax instrumental improvisation, while the upbeat "How Did You Know?" (Garfunkel, Mann, Sharp) is a joyful and effervescent evocation of finding love. Opening with eerie sounds that give way to Garfunkel's voice, the Lisa Aschmann/Tom Kimmel co-write "What I Love About Rain," may, subjectively, be yet another love song, but it features a wistful, hook-laden melody topped by vocal harmonies that are simply sublime. The Mondlock/Garth Brooks co-write "Every Now And Then" dates from Brooks' 1992 collection "**The Chase**," and this album closes with a *big ballad*, "Another Only One," from the pen of Maia Sharp and Christopher Faizi.

Perchance to dream – is this wonderful creation the first of many trio collaborations by Garfunkel, Mondlock and Sharp? Recall, if you will, for a moment, what the Cry 3 collective did for the solo careers of Messrs. Shindell, Kaplansky and Williams.

NOTE.

[#] Circa 1975, Garfunkel enjoyed chart success with the Gallagher & Lyle composition "Breakaway."

Folkwax Rating 8 out of 10

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