



Champ Hood “**Bon Haven**” South Congress Records

Champ Hood passed away on November 3rd last year. He had been a fixture on the Austin music scene for over twenty years, initially as one third of Uncle Walt’s Band and latterly as the leader of the Threadgill Troubadours. Always in demand as a *sideman of choice* his *mighty fine* fiddle and guitar licks were the only calling card he ever needed. This recording was only part complete when he died. His long time buddy and fellow Troubadour, Marvin Dykhuis [Tish Hinojosa, Troubadour] co-produced this disc with local singer/songwriter Brad Bobisky. In fact Champ only plays guitar on the eleven tracks, five of which feature his *scat* vocal. Champ’s eighteen-year old son, Warren, who is rapidly gaining a reputation as *the Austin fiddle player on the rise* supplies those licks. I’m sure that I read somewhere that Warren begins attending Berkley School of Music this Fall. It’s hardly surprising that the album opens with Champ vocalising on Walter Hyatt’s “Going To New Orleans.” Hyatt, leader of Uncle Walt’s Band, perished in the Valu Jet plane crash in May 1996. The title cut penned by Champ is a prayer, and Hood also wrote “Chain Of Emotion” and “Sad As It Seems,” while Steve Runkle’s “Snowing Me Under” is the fifth vocal cut. Heaven knows Hood had time enough to make his own solo recording long before now, an endeavour in which local pickers and music business people alike would have fallen over themselves to be part of. As for his legacy, the two Threadgill Supper Session albums are the closest we’ll ever get to a solo album apart from “**Bon Haven**,” while his contributions to other artist’s recordings are legion, in extent and quality. The remaining *instrumental* cuts were penned by Champ, apart from Walter’s “Grab It And Growl” and the Jimmy Reed blues work-out “Baby What You Want Me To Do.” You could sit down and postulate the “*what might have been*” in terms of a *fully realised recording* had Champ not been taken from us. In the final analysis, it’s a blessing that we at least have “**Bon Haven**.” In life he was a sweet, gentle man and the music he played was always an expression of his boundless love.

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

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