

Son of Katching Up #27

Various Artists "Signature Sounds 2000 Collection" Signature Sounds [Import]

Labels come. Labels go. Sometimes they enjoy purple patches. Celebrating five years in the public domain, and now sporting a catalogue of some thirty recordings, Signature has experienced a measured, but progressive rise in profile. I'd like to think that this purple patch began with the release of Mark Erelli's stunning eponymous, self titled, debut solo album in the Spring of '99.....but the truth is, Erica Wheeler's 1996 collection "**The Harvest**" is a favourably recalled early taste of glory for Signature. Wheeler's performance at the 1996 Kerrville festival left me, unimpressed. It happens. "**The Harvest**" arrived a few months later, possessing a whole new story. For some Jim Olsen's greatest coup, to date, lies in leasing Richard Shindell's latest recording, "**Somewhere Near Paterson.**" It was released Stateside in early February. Next in the queue, Carter & Grammer's "**Tanglewood Tree**" – which, frankly, is a revelation - and that's truly saying something, considering the praise heaped upon their 1998 independent debut, "**When I Go.**" Panning a folk/pop vein, "**The Trouble With Poets,**" Pete Mulvey's third stab at the holy grail is now with us. Somewhere over the horizon there's new recordings promised from Louise Taylor and Peter Nelson. Contributions from all of the foregoing acts are gathered here, along with cuts from Brooks Williams, Jim Henry [guitarist for The Burns Sisters], Tom Rozum [with Lawrie Lewis] and the now disbanded Salamander Crossing, plus a taste of Salamander lead singer Rani Arbo's new project, Daisy Mayhem. As if that weren't enough, there's an even unreleased Mark Erelli song. Praise be.....

Tim Grimm "Heart Land" Vault Records [Import]

This suite of mainly acoustic songs, his third, mostly talk of returning home, and of the simple pleasures of owning and working the land and the annual struggles that are part of rural life. The cycle of birth and death, the victories, the defeats, the getting by, the tears and laughter, joy and sorrow, the memories and treasures that family life brings – they're all woven into the honest fabric of the **Heart Land**. Available from **Vault Records, P.O. Box 2027, Columbus, Indiana 47201, U.S.A.**

Joni Mitchell "Both Sides Now" Reprise

There seems to come a time in every performer's life, when that person is driven by the *urge for going* to the extent of recording an album of covers. Some take on a thematic aura, and "**Both Sides Now**" is no exception to that path already taken. For instance, Linda Ronstadt's [& the Nelson Riddle Orchestra's] three-album flirtation with American pop standards was followed by two discs that explored the Mexican music of her ancestors. In 1973 the late Harry Nilsson, cut "**A Little Touch of Schmilsson in the Night**" – a collection of mostly pre-WWII pop standards, produced by Derek Taylor, with Gordon Jenkins conducting the thirty-nine piece orchestra. Mitchell's early career standards "Both Sides Now" and "A Case of You" – both sung here at a languid and thoughtful pace, compared to her original interpretations - are blended with ten cover tunes, the youngest of which, "You've Changed" by Bill Carey/Carl Fischer is a mere thirty-two years young. The oldest tune –

"Sometimes I'm Happy" – enjoyed its *fifteen minutes* back in 1925. In terms of greatest public familiarity, that probably falls to the cuts "Answer Me, My Love" and "Stormy Weather." According to Larry Klein's liner note – her ex co-produced the project with Mitchell - this cycle of songs traces *the ages of amour* from the innocence of untested, young love through to the despair of a love once won and wonderful, that is now irrevocably lost. Cultivated over the years, through the application of nicotine and distilled liquids, Mitchell's [now] smoky voice fits the tenor of the chosen material. As with Nilsson's musical experiment, Mitchell cut the major proportion of this collection in London. After all these years, does this tell us something.....

Merlin Snider "Between" Barking Dog Music [Import]

In a world filled with vanity releases of the solo, self-financed variety, it's a relief to stumble across a songwriter that is a little contrary to ordinary. For a start, Merlin's [his given name at birth] acoustic driven originals, song to song, are underscored with discernible melodies. That's not to say that he hits the mark with every tune. On the plus side, there's the Fall recollection *All These Novembers* and *Joliet*, a sweet memory of his Illinois home and of the road that eventually allowed Snider to explore other worlds. The confusion that arrives with the coming of age, *Walking On The Water*, provide adequate evidence of a thoughtful mind at work. Praise for the latter, should be balanced with the forced attempt at cynical humour leavened with pathos, that is *Whoop Whoopee-Doo It's A Brand New Millennium*. Supported by a choir, seemingly of millennial proportions, topical songs are cursed by instant sell-by dates. *Where You've Gone*, the closing selection, features the *seemingly similar* chorus "I can't help but wonder where you've gone." Folk déjà vu. By the way, based on photographic evidence, Snider appears to be a thirty something, which goes a long way to explain the presence of the quality factor. Available from **Barking Dog Music, 1602 Newbury Road, P.O. Box 995, Newbury Park, California 91319-0995, U.S.A.**

Various Artists "Bob Harris presents....Volume 1" Assembly Records

According to the liner, the husky voiced broadcaster considers that there are only two types of music – *mainstream* and *non-mainstream*. The intention of this collection is to adventure into the nether regions of the latter area. It's a comment on the current state of *the game*, that the home-grown contributions amount to the traditional "The Wild Goose" from Kate Rusby and Sinead Lohan's interminable "No Mermaid," plus the pneumatic Ms Tzuke's "Tonight." Which kind of begs the question – what are the guys doing [musically, that is] on these islands ? Nada, it seems. Well, that's not quite factual, but is a cause for some thought. The Stateside cuts are a mix of solo and band contributions. "I'm still in love with you" from Steve Earle's 1999 bluegrass driven diversion "**The Mountain**" is blessed by the voice of the estimable Iris DeMent. The late Eva Cassidy vocally slays the listener with Sting's "Fields of Gold," while I still can't figure out the brouhaha surrounding Alison Krauss. Vocally, for me, she has always sounded like a young Dolly [Parton]. So...what. In the originality stakes, [and] as with Cassidy, Krauss' contribution, "Maybe," is the work of another writer. Munyon has been an overlooked major writing/performing talent, in my book, since I stumbled across him during his 1993 days as "**Code Name : Jumper.**" Despite *the bomber's* ravings, there's little *mystery* surrounding Austin's Todd Thibaud,

and with the onslaught of the genus, alt. country, bands like Whiskeytown are frankly, ten a penny. Bill Mallonee's Vigilantes of Love have always aimed at being melancholically different, while it's the Chicago based aggregation Dolly Varden who score major melodic points with their "The Dumbest Magnets." For the uninitiated this is a fair introduction to the *non-mainstream* – according to his Bobness, that is. The main drawback, is that there isn't a single track that comes ready packed with that *phew* factor.

Various Artists "The I-10 Chronicles" Back Porch/Virgin [Import]

Route 66 has been relegated to a road *hardly ever taken*, preserved in song and memory by Bobby Troup, while his Bobness took us on a reprise down Highway 61 back in August of '65. Now it's time to explore and eulogise, I-10 in song and melody. 2460 miles in length, it traverses those United States of America, West to East, from the Santa Monica, which almost qualifies as the *City of the Angels* [Los Angeles, California], to *The River City* [Jacksonville, Florida]. While there's no indication in the album title, you'll discover on page 6 of the liner booklet, that this thirteen-song trip begins on the west-coast and [that] "*Texas is the last stop on this leg of our journey.*" The latter comment doesn't even attempt to confirm whether this is going to be a series of two [or even more] releases. I won't bother repeating the myriad of connections, quoted in the liner booklet, that link the featured singers, players and songs.....let's just say that there's a few that are [much] less obvious, but, nonetheless, essential to the plot of this song saga. For instance, the writer of the opening song, "L.A. Freeway," was living *in exile* in California when he composed it. Like Bill & Bonnie Hearne, who perform it here, he is a Texan. The Hearne's have spent the last two decades partaking in their own *personal exile*, by living and working in New Mexico. While this episode of the journey purports to finish in Texas, the precise location is not pinpointed. It's somewhat amusing, therefore, to recall that Bill & Bonnie are looked upon as the *Ma & Pa* of the Kerrville Folk Festival. Fact - I-10 skirts the eastern extremity of that Texas Hill Country paradise. Just check the map on *lucky* page 13 of the liner booklet for proof. Guy Clark, the writer of "L.A. Freeway," also a long-time Kerrville favourite, wrote this *no depression* style classic, a mere two decades before the genre was invented. Another son of the Lone Star state, Willie Nelson, warbles on Fred Neil's "Everybody's Talkin'" – a song that rose to prominence in John Schlesinger's 1969 cult movie, "**Midnight Cowboy.**" The latter movie was set in New York [!], while Neil, born [and still based] in Florida, last made a recording in 1971. Having once composed and recorded a song titled "Dolphins," he has spent the ensuing years involved in projects concerned with the preservation of those aquatic mammals and their habitat. "New Mexico Rain" a long established must on any Bill & Bonnie set list, and penned by their nephew Michael Hearne, physically [and numerically] marks a halfway point on the journey. Meanwhile, newcomer Meredith Marshall's cover of "Across the Borderline," acknowledges the contribution of Mexican culture to the west coast, as well as the third coast. The number three, is a consist feature of this collection. As far as the contingent of female newcomers [to recording] are concerned, that trio is completed by Sarah Nicole who covers Bruce Robison's "He Don't Care About Me," while Cherokee Rose [Moore] performs her own "Yipi," partly sung in the Cherokee tongue. Robison's wife to be, Kelly Willis, included his tune on her 1996 A&M four cut EP

"**Fading Fast.**" Flaco Jiminez and David Hidalgo and Cuban musician, Eliades Ochoa are prominently featured throughout as supporting players, with Ochoa taking the lead vocal on "El Guateque De Don Tomas." Florida is probably the I-10 state that has been most influenced by Cuban music, but we'll let *the latter curiosity* slide meantime. "Eighteen Inches of Rain," a composition by that elder Canadian *statesman of song*, Ian Tyson, completes the three Bill & Bonnie selections, with Willie Nelson, typically, bending some solo guitar chords. Joe Ely reprises "Saint Valentine" from his 1995 album "**Letter To Laredo,**" while his revision of, the rocking closer, "Are You Listening Lucky" hails from "**Lord of the Highway.**" Ely's third contribution to the project is a cover of Charlie Calhoun's "Smack Dab in the Middle" – which melodically strays somewhat close to Tony Joe White's "Polk Salad Annie" - while the odd Pete Townsend inspired guitar riff is slipped in for added value. The latter song was a 1973, UK only, single hit for The King. And here's a real tasty piece of I-10 minutia, Presley and Priscilla were divorced in a Santa Monica courthouse hearing, October 9th 1973. As for [more] Brit pop, our opportunity to shine finally arrives with the Charlie Musselwhite cover of Peter Green's "Black Magic Woman." Oh yes, and *some* guy, vocalist for some *hot* band called Counting Crows, performs Warren Zevon's "Carmelita." Accidental or intentional, this is a consummate collection of *classic cruising music*, from intro to outro, served right off the top of the deck. Just gimme some wheels, a tank full of gas, an open road and a clear blue horizon.....and the will to drive, drive, drive. OK hon, just hit that repeat button.

Jack Hardy "Omens" 1-800-Prime-CD [Import]

The hidden track on this disc consists of a near twenty-minute long interview with Hardy, conducted by Suzanne Vega, that concentrates on the act and art of songwriting. Vega's early career performances were captured on the recordings made by The Fast Folk Musical Magazine, a publication Jack initiated in February 1982. Readers may wish to note that the Swiss, Brambus Records version of this album does not feature the interview segment. Including this new creation, since 1970, Jack has managed to record and release a dozen albums, initially on his own Great Divide label, and in recent times on Brambus and the New York based imprint, 1-800-Prime-CD. During the fifteen years that Fast Folk existed, Jack sublimated, somewhat, the pursuit of his own career as a performer on a national and international basis. For the last two decades, Hardy has undertaken a scholarly analysis of Celtic mythology and the work of Irish poets Clarence Mangin and William Butler Yeats. It could be argued that, as a result of his research, the imagery in Hardy's lyrics became hard to penetrate and decipher. In recent times Jack's work has become more accessible, underpinned by Celtic derived melodies. That's certainly the case on **Omen**. There's an element of tongue in cheek in the lyric of the opening cut, as Jack lists a panorama of historical events on which he reflects, *I Ought To Know*. The point being, I'm certain, that Jack is already intimately aware of the details of each [and every] one. One of the principal Celtic song forms is the love ballad. *I Can't Love You* and *Sile na gCioch (Sheila)* are conversational narratives. In the latter, the older [male] narrator dreams of a love that will transcend generations, even though "*tongues will go clickety-clack in time.*" Man's struggle with the salty brine is a long established folk theme. *In The Building Of The Boat*, recalls the superstition that a nail bent during the construction of a vessel

represents an omen of [future] disaster at sea. One man's resistance to the clearance of tenant farmers in the West of Ireland, by financially greedy landlords, results in the murder of *The Boney Bailiff*. Fleeing the emerald isle, the murderer/narrator resolves "*now I'll go and sin no more.*" Diverse and true to the already established tradition, best encapsulates the Hardy's achievement with **Omen**. Available from **1-800-Prime CD, 111 E. 14th Street, Suite 300, New York, NY 10003, U.S.A. and Fish Records, P.O. Box 148, Shrewsbury SY3 5WQ.**

Tish Hinojosa "**Sign Of Truth**" Rounder/Continental Record Services [Import]
The Banded Geckos "**Gecko Canyon**" Spanish Omelet Productions [Import]

Four years on from Tish's exploration of the music of her ancestral Mexico, for adolescents - **Cado Nino [Every Child]** and for adults - **Sonar Del Laberinto [Dreaming From The Labyrinth]**, Hinojosa returns with an easy listening pop/folk concoction that mirrors her early career A&M recording, **Homeland**. Although every aspect of this recording is appealingly and adeptly executed, an air of "*Haven't we heard this before ?*" pervades **Sign Of Truth**. Providing instrumental support are long-time *road buddies*, Marvin Dykhuis [guitar] and Chip Dolan [organ, accordion], while a cast of the usual Austin [Texas] suspects add further depth to the sound. Dykhuis and Hinojosa share the production credits and Marvin also assisted in composing the music for *Mona Lisa By The Rio Grande*. With music by Dolan and lyrics co-written with his boss, the closing *Song For The Journey* is akin in spirit and pace to a modern-day *Auld Lang Syne*. The melody to Tish's *Roses Around My Feet* possesses similarities to Lennon & McCartney's *I Will*, while the opening line of a lyric that professes "*I'm feeling like a fence post*" smacks of insufficient editing. Of course, it would be too much to expect Hinojosa to totally abandon her roots and *Fire In Winter* amounts to a hardcore tango. Available in the UK via **Proper Distribution**.

Four, self-released albums in one and a half decades implies products that have been carefully hand crafted. **Gecko Canyon** is the first collection to feature only original material by The Banded Geckos - aka Tim and Evelyne Taylor, while the front of the liner booklet features Evelyne's painting of the *hollow* Arizona landmark. Kicking off in the Houston, Texas suburb of Bellaire, for most of the past decade, the Taylor's have been residents of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Swing rhythms, vocal harmony and humour have underpinned their previous, acoustic folk, approach and those elements reappear here in tunes such as *Cartoon Music*. *The Love Is Gone*, maintains Evelyne's penchant for penning odes of the heart, while Tim's *Ode To Camelot* brings a serious note to their *oeuvre*. The latter song reviews the [historical] events that led up to, and followed, that fateful day in late November 1963 in Dallas, Texas, and intelligently poses more questions than it attempts to answer. **Gecko Canyon** contains fourteen good reasons to contact **Spanish Omelet Productions, 1704 Llano, Suite B #102, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505, U.S.A.**

Ray Bonneville "**Rough Luck**" 1-800-Prime-CD [Import]

Ray introduces Prime CD's new Primal Audiophile Series to the planet, with thirteen of his accessible, blues tinged tunes and a *left foot* that keeps time like a metronome. The series aims to capture performers in an *in concert* environment. Available from **1-800-Prime CD, 111 E. 14th Street, Suite**

300, New York, NY 10003, U.S.A. and Fish Records, P.O. Box 148, Shrewsbury SY3 5WQ.

Kimmie Rhodes "**Rich From The Journey**" Sunbird Records [Import]

Rhodes' tentative, mid-eighties beginnings with the Jackalope Brothers [featuring husband, Joe Gracey], were followed by a couple of fine, late eighties albums issued by the long gone UK imprint, Heartland Records. That trio of, previously vinyl only, recordings were reprised last year by a compilation CD. While Lubbock's male musical mafia has, consistently, far outweighed the female one, Carol Jo Pierce and Kimmie count among the handful of contestants that worthily represent their gender. That said, in 1994, with the appearance of her **West Texas Heaven**, on New Rose, Kimmie ascended to the college of "*all time great Texas songwriters.*" All her recordings, to date, have been produced by, or co-produced with, Joe Gracey. This album is produced by her son, Gabe. Based on onstage evidence gleaned at last year's Kerrville Folk Festival, young Gabe Rhodes is a classy guitar picker, and, no doubt, the tip of another generation of phenomenal Texas musicians. **Rich From The Journey** opens with the title track, one of a quartet of Rhodes only composed originals, the others having been co-written with Gabe, Kevin Savigar, Beth Nielsen Chapman, Bob Reagan, Walt Wilkins, John Keller and Kevin McCormick. If the only *keeper of the flame* on this collection were the title track, a stunningly spiritual and positive paean to *living a full life*, this recording would be a thoroughly worthwhile investment. As it stands, it is only the opening opus in a truly magical song odyssey, although the journey peaks on those tracks that are entirely Rhodes' vision. That is, unless your co-conspirator is named, Chapman. Much of the material on **Rich For the Journey** praises the gift of life, *Thank You For Another Day* and *Shine All Your Light* being prime examples. No self-respecting Texas artist would cut an album without including a train song, hence *Big 'Ol Train*, or fail to acknowledge the rich musical culture that percolates from south of the border, *Espiritu Santo Bay*. According to the liner, from that great electronic web in the sky, there's even the opportunity to download the video of a thirteenth song, *Heart Of A Believer*. When the end result vastly outweighs the sound of silence, six years amounts to the mere blink of an eye. Based on that premise, the definition of **Rich From The Journey** is without a doubt, for all the tomorrows to come.....and I didn't even mention that Gillian [Welch] and Dave [Rawlings] contribute to *God's Acre*. Available from **Sunbird Records, P.O. Box 90183, Austin, Texas 78709, U.S.A.**

NewGrange "**Same**" Compass Records [Import]

This six-piece supergroup comprises Philip Aaberg [Peter Gabriel, Elvin Bishop], Darol Anger [David Grisman, Turtle Island String Quartet], Mike Marshall [David Grisman, Montreux Band, Psychograss], Alison Brown [Alison Krauss, solo], Tom O'Brien [Hot Rize, solo], and Todd Phillips [The New South]. Take my word - *that's one hell of a team of pedigree pickers*. The material covered is a mix of Grange arranged, traditional tunes and covers, with a handful of originals by band members thrown in for good measure. The playing is stellar, the intertwining of the instruments is awesome, and whether it's jazz, folk or whatever, the sound is designed for effect. As for the soul of this record, it's darned hard to locate. Great pickin', but by any other name this is folk rock'n'roll, aka bluegrass.

And more notes than should be humanely allowed in one place at any one time.

Chuck Suchy "Different Line Of Time" Little Bluestem Records [Import]

The familiar and natural grace that pervades Suchy's folk styled compositions is undoubtedly inspired by this North Dakota farmer's love of the land. **Different Line Of Time** is an acoustic opportunity to drift away, at least temporarily, to a place where the workload is physically and constantly hard, but the lifestyle is, thankfully, far simpler than that experienced by urban jungle dwellers. The closing cut of this low-key delight, *Simply Fly*, perfectly captures the concept. Available from **Little Bluestem Records, 4845 20th Avenue, Mandan, North Dakota 58554, U.S.A.**

Trout Fishing In America "Closer To The Truth" Trout Records [Import]

Vince Bell's classic *The Sun And Moon And Stars* is the only cover here, and closes the ninth release by this Arkansas based vocal, guitar n' bass, so called, *power* duo. The twelve other selections co-penned by the eight-one inch high, Ezra Idlet, and his less vertically erect partner, Keith Grimwood, find the pair ploughing the familiar blues/pop/bluegrass/country groove that has brought them numerous, live and recording, awards Stateside over the last two decades. Released, as always, on their own label, star pickers Vassar Clements [fiddle], Jerry Douglas [dobro], Tim O'Brien [mandolin] and Mickey Raphael [harmonica], aid and abet the pair with some top-drawer instrumental contributions. Congratulations are due for the feat of including the less than phonetically pliable name of my [Scottish] birthplace in the lyric of *Alberta Postcard*, for the pop smarts of the Caribbean flavoured *Dangerous*, and the words of wisdom in, *But I Do*. As for the humorously irreverent *After You've Gone*, it amply endorses why they are a mayor *live* act Stateside. Available from **P.O. Box 914, Prairie Grove, Arkansas 72753 - 0914, U.S.A.**

Ramblin' Jack Elliott "The Long Ride" Hightone Records [Import]

Bill Staines "October's Hill" Red House Records [Import]
Carolyn Hester "A Tom Paxton Tribute" Road Goes On Forever Records [Import]

Produced by Roy Rogers, the musical one who still lives among us, the line-up of vocal road buddies on Jack's *semi-western flavoured*, acoustic journey, **The Long Ride**, include Tom Russell [and his guitar pickin' sidekick, Andy Hardin], Maria Muldaur, Dave Van Ronk and Dave Alvin. Woody's *Ranger's Command*, Tom Waits' *Pony* and Russell's *The Sky Above And The Mud Below* feature among the tunes that [directly] focus on the cowboy lifestyle. Co-written by Elliott and Rogers, *Now He's Just Dust In The Wind* and *True Blue Jeans* further explore the genre. When it comes to picking a song to duet with the husky voiced, acoustic blues legend, Van Ronk, *St. James Infirmary* was the logical choice. As for Jack's *Cup Of Coffee*, it can best be described as a spoken travelogue, concerning a reunion at Russell's El Paso, Texas home. Sadly, the narrative, which also features Tom, only succeeds in sounding pretentious. Maybe that was the point ! Available from in the UK from **Topic/Direct Distribution**. Staines' voice always sounds familiar and comforting to these ears. This twelve song, self-produced collection is evenly split between Staines created originals and covers. Some might say that Staines gentle, refined, generally

acoustic, country/folk style is middle of the road, even *passe*. Consistency and constancy are, however, his greatest weapons. There's no risk of Staines taking a tangential change of direction musically. In the liner note, Bill describes October as being "a time of harvest" and a "signal that another year is winding down." By intention, **October's Hill** is a reflection on his life; one that is perceived as a rich, joy filled journey. In that regard, Staines' far from being a doom-laden trip, *On The Road Again*, is a paeon to the contention that *home is where the heart truly lies*. In, *Dear Friend*, the opening cut, Staines praises the joy of friendship, while, without a whiff of grief, *Some Distant Hill* recalls a long lost love. The covers include Joe South's 1969 hit song *The Games People Play*, *Virginia's Reel* crafted by the pen of Guy Clark and the Rod McKuen evergreen *Love's Been Good To Me*. A line from the latter song provides the album with its title. By way of laying the autumnal theme to rest, the album closes with the children's *harvest-time* hymn, *All Things Bright And Beautiful*. Available in the UK from **Koch Distribution**. As the title of her latest canon suggests, the high flying voice of Hester tackles the songs of a writer that she has been proud to call a friend for nearly forty years. Over the thirteen song featured, Paxton's familiar *Ramblin' Boy*, *Last Thing On My Mind* and *I Can't Help But Wonder Where I'm Bound* rub shoulders with, for instance, *Come Away With Me*, a song that Tom has yet to record. The standouts here are, *(He's Forgotten) The Names Of Trees* written for those who succumb to Alzheimer's Disease with the earnest wish that [one day] a cure is found, and *A Long Way From Your Mountain*. Available in the UK from **Topic/Direct Distribution**.

Hugh Blumenfeld with Doris Ackerman & Shane Shanahan "Big Red" Brambus Records [Import]

You're on a concert tour of Switzerland and have a couple of *free* days, so it's only natural that you would choose to cut an album – of mostly new songs, some old and even include a pair that you borrowed. Back home in the New World, Dr. Blumenfeld has cut a quartet of albums over the last dozen years. They're [currently] available via the New York based imprint, Prime CD. On **Big Red** Hugh's acoustic guitar and voice is augmented by percussionist Shane Shanahan, with vocal support supplied by *local* chanteuse, Doris Ackerman. As far as the thirteen tracks are concerned, the end result is a case of effective simplicity. Opening with the album title track, in the liner Blumenfeld comments that "In New England, autumn comes like a great fire. Everything is consumed." Having witnessed the *Big Red*, the writer truly captures every nuance of the third season, as it turns and prepares for year end. Elsewhere Hugh's, *Bring Stones* celebrates the arrival of the new year and sibling rivalry as youngsters matures into adult admiration in *Brothers*. The closing *Loony @ The Muni* provides the opportunity for the three participants to indulge in some lyrical and melodic levity, concerning a bar-room gig that gets progressively wilder the longer it lasts. The cover songs amount to the amusing artistic anthem, *Paul Cezanne*, written by Five Chinese Brothers alumni, Tom Meltzer, while Blumenfeld's wife, Andrea Gaines, penned *Snow Grain Stone* – the three verses explore transience [snow], growth and sustenance [grain] and the natural earth [stone]. Blumenfeld's compositions mark him out as an astute observer whose poetic allegories draw on the events of everyday life. Available from **Brambus Records, P.O. Box 44, CH-7004 Chur, Switzerland**.