

This is a well researched and atmospheric album, full of sultry, evocative acoustic arrangements with the fine singing of Patrizia Nasini reinvigorating the ancient texts. It is a wonderfully executed recording and is a fine example of the intriguing meeting of Italian and Arabic cultures, which has a heightened significance in the modern political environment.

www.milagroacustico.com

Michael Hingston

BAYOU SECO

Sunnyside Zerx 076

If you are looking for polished perfection, then look elsewhere. If you are fond of the rough raw excitement of an informed and varied survey of the traditional musics of the south and south-west USA then welcome aboard the Bayou Seco bandwagon.

The core of the band is fiddler Jeannie McLerie and fiddler and accordionist, Ken Keppeler, but they play with a wide variety of other musicians according to the function and the setting that they are in and a number of these appear on this album. Also shining through the album are the repertoire and styles of the many musicians they have met, played with and collected from, so there are lovely Cajun waltzes that they once played with Denis Magee, Spanish-tinged tunes from Cleofes Ortiz, the native American tunes from Elliott Johnson and the exquisite *Flor De Dahlia* learned from Antonia Apodoca.

The album is something of a hotchpotch of all the things that have influenced them over the last 25 years or so with lots of sparkling little vignettes like *Ma Petite Mignonne* with its close relationship to the *Hares On The Mountain! Twa Magicians* imagery. The outstanding moments come when Ken's Cajun accordion is in full cry and any time we hear Jeannie's exquisite and varied singing. www.bayouseco.com

Vic Smith

ELEANOR ELLIS

ComIn' A Time Patuxent CD-138

DAVID EVANS

Needy Time Inside Sounds ISC-0532

BERT DEIVERT

Takin' Sam's Advice Gravitation GRA026

LEROY JODIE PIERSON

Country Blues Gravel Road 101

Eleanor Ellis is an unsung heroine of the American acoustic country blues scene. I first met Eleanor when she was looking after and playing guitar with the wonderful Washington D.C. gospel singer Flora Molton on a European trip in 1987. Year in, year out, Eleanor has stuck her course, immersed deep in the bywaters of rural blues. Along the way she's matured into an individual artist as *Comin' A Time* amply illustrates. Opening with a flowing version of Mississippi John Hurt's *Take Me Back Baby*, the album closes seventeen tracks later with Memphis Minnie's *What's The Matter With The Mill* with guitarist Neil Harpe playing the Kansas Joe role. Harpe is present on a further three tracks including another Memphis Minnie, *Minnie Me And My Chauffeur*, while on other items Eleanor is backed variously by pianist Judy Luis-Watson, bassist Thomas Cox, bones player Richard Thomas and a succession of harmonica players: Pearl Bailes, Michael Baytop, Jay Summerour, and Phil Wiggins. Phil accompanies Eleanor on the excellent Flora Molton song *Sun's Gonna*

Shine One Day. In addition to *Take Me Back Baby*, Eleanor intersperses five other solo items adding variety to an already varied album. In recent years we've had UK visits from Rory Block, Mary Flower, and Del Rey – let's hope Eleanor makes it over soon.

www.pxrec.com

When it comes to blues scholarship, there's few to equal Dr David Evans (Professor of Music at Memphis State University), but any image of a dry and dusty academic is instantly dispelled when you hear Evans sing and play. His music pours out rough and ready with unbridled vigour and authenticity. He's met and known many of the blues greats and performed, toured, and recorded with Hammie Nixon, Jessie Mae Hemphill, Johnny Shines, and Robert Belfour, and while many elements of these musicians' styles are incorporated into his own, David Evans still comes across 100% his own man. He's also adept at writing new material in a traditional form – even being disposed towards a bit of agitprop, as on his post 9/11 *Bring The Boys Back Home* (propelled along with solid hill-country rhythm), his adaptation of Blind Lemon Jefferson's *Wartime Blues* with added verses, and the 'event' song *God Rode In The Windstorm* (about Hurricane Katrina) performed in gospel mode with backing from the legendary Spirit Of Memphis Quartet. Evans conscripts a host of other local Memphis musicians to add their expertise, including his own Last Chance Jug Band who help lighten proceedings on the uptempo numbers *Adam And Eve In The Garden Of Eden* and *Tappin' That Thing*. And if this wasn't enough, among the recently recorded tracks are some archive gems – two tracks from '64 and '67 feature Canned Heat's Al Wilson and there's a recording from '79 with Hammie Nixon playing kazoo and sharing vocals with David on *Bottle Up And Go* and they're both having a ball.

www.insidesounds.com,

www.myspace.com/uncledevidave

Hammie Nixon had a long-time partnership with guitarist/ mandolin player Yank Rachell. The spirit of Yank Rachell lives on in Bert Deivert, an American musician who currently lives in Sweden. He's a good guitar picker and excellent mandolin player who can sing too. *Takin' Sam's Advice* bursts forth with a lively rendition of Rachell's *Seems Like A Dream* with Deivert's mandolin bouncing fluidly all over the song. He immediately switches to guitar for *Big Road Blues* played with fellow guitarist Brian Kramer on slide. Apart from Kramer there's a mixture of nine other Swedish and American musicians helping Bert deliver the goods. Nina Anderberg finds just the right Mississippi Sheik touch on Bo Carter's *I Want*

Eleanor Ellis



Photo: Dave Peabody