

# VICTORY REVIEW

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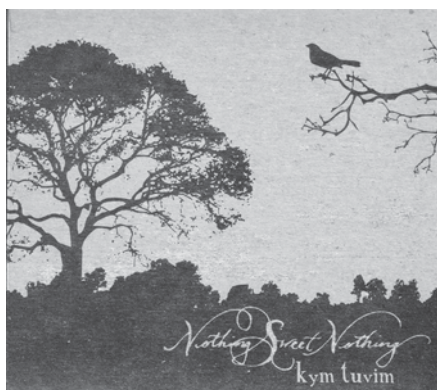
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truths behind conventional romantic topics with memorable musical skill and great eloquence. (Annie Scarborough)

*Local/Singer-Songwriter*

**KYM TUVIM: NOTHING SWEET NOTHING**  
Retrofit Records, 219 S. 61st St. Tacoma, WA  
98408 www.kymtuvim.com



If Nothing Sweet Nothing is anything, it is soulful. From the first track, “Mystery,” to the last, “Sweet Nothing,” this CD is deeply satisfying. Local talent Kym Tuvim is a gifted singer/songwriter who’s hooked up with some of Seattle’s finest for this recording. Tuvim’s singing and songwriting is being compared to Joan Armatrading, Traci Chapman, Joni Mitchell, Janis Ian, and Phoebe Snow. The musicianship on this CD matches Tuvim’s vocals in terms of its many layers of rich, bluesy, sensual evocativeness. I couldn’t pick a highlight. Every song shines and every song stands on its own. For personal reasons I liked the sad ballad “Reservoir,” but track 1, “Mystery,” pulls you in immediately with Tuvim’s sultry vocals and the pulsating rhythms of the pedal steel guitar and Hammond organ. “Birdsong” soars with Tuvim’s singing and rocks with the drumming of Chris Stromquist. Track 7, “The More I See You,” is a very pretty love song with a melody that floats on the air. It’s the only song on the CD not written by Tuvim, but her vocals do it justice. Tuvim writes as well as she sings; her lyrics are accessible but never clichéd. Maybe there is no end to the ways a love song can be written. Nothing Sweet Nothing is, after all, a CD of love songs, but there’s no shortage of variety here. The only thing consistent throughout this CD is the quality. This may be homegrown, but word of Kym Tuvim is out and she is beginning to get

the well-deserved national airplay and acclaim she deserves. (Heidi Fosner)

## BLUES

**ELEANOR ELLIS: COMIN’ A TIME**  
Patuxent Music  
www.pxrec.com, info@pxrec.com

Comin’ a Time is an 18-track tribute to the Piedmont style of blues as performed by longtime blues scholar and musician Eleanor Ellis. She covers Skip James, Memphis Minnie and Kansas Jack, Mississippi John Hurt, Blind Boy Fuller, Sleepy John Estes, and others in her heartfelt and well-rendered versions of blues classics learned in her travels and in the barbershop of Archie Edwards. Edwards was a teacher, barber, and bluesman who became close friends and performing partners with John Hurt and Skip James during their last days in Washington, DC. On Saturdays his barbershop became a blues house where local and traveling blues musicians would drop in to jam and tell stories. Ellis was a regular at the Saturday jam sessions, and after Edwards died she helped establish the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation, dedicated to preserving the musical heritage of the Piedmont Blues. This style, also known as East Coast blues, started in the area between the Atlantic Coastal Plain and Appalachian Mountains from central Georgia to central Virginia. The Piedmont guitar style combines intricate finger picking with a regular, alternating thumb bass line. There are some great tunes on this CD. Being a big fan of Skip James, I’m especially partial to track 3, “Cypress Grove,” and track 15, “Special Rider.” The bones, as played by Richard “Mr. Bones” Thomas, make the Sleepy John Estes song “Diving Duck” a personal favorite, and who doesn’t like a good version of Jim Jackson’s “Kansas City”? Fact is, Ellis does a fine job on all the tracks on Comin’ a Time. (Heidi Fosner)

**JOHN-ALEX MASON: TOWN AND COUNTRY**  
Naked Jaybird Music,  
available through www.CDBaby.com

Singer/guitarist John-Alex Mason is a musician with quite a love—not to mention a feel—for the blues. A Colorado resident, he, like many of us, discovered the many pleasures of blues as a teenager. Since then he has played with many

of the greats and has learned his craft well. This album shows him in fine form. All the sides are solo performances. He has two versions of the old Delta classic “Shake ‘Em on Down,” one electric and one acoustic. On the electric version he also plays bass drum, making it sound like a full band. He pulls this same trick on several other tunes. His rendition of Charlie Patton’s “Boll Weevil” is very impressive. John sounds like two guitars on this cut. He also does several Robert Johnson tunes, “Terraplane Blues” and “Milkcow Blues,” the latter being especially good. He has succeeded in making this song very much his own. On many of the songs he adds his own lyrics and does it very effectively. I don’t know if this is John’s first album but I hope it won’t be his last. (Lars Gandil)

**KEN WHITELEY: ONE WORLD DANCE**  
Pyramid Records

Canadian blues/roots musician Ken Whiteley has an impressive resume. He has played with a lot of people including Pete Seeger, John Hammond Jr., and Leon Redbone. He is also a prolific song writer as his new CD shows. Nine of the 12 songs included here are his. On the opening number “Everybody Has the Blues,” Ken plays pretty good piano. After that he sticks to guitars and leaves the keyboard chores to others. Of his own compositions, I liked the opener as well as “Lunch Counter Encounter” and the Latin-flavored title tune. The covers include a good version of the Son House classic “Death Letter Blues” and a really rousing “Two Wings.” All in all a good album which should please Ken’s many fans. (Lars Gandil)

## CAJUN

**LA BAND PASSE PARTOUT:**  
LOUISIANA CAJUN MUSIC  
Swallow Records

La Band Passe Partout was formed in 1990 by drummer Joe Lirette. They did three award-winning albums for the Swallow label in the 90’s. This is the first of the three, which is now on CD. The album notes say that they strived for a new sound, something that would attract young and old alike. Whether they succeeded is debatable. To my ear they sound pretty much the same as other Cajun bands. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing. I like the majority of Cajun bands I