

## Constant Search for Respite

### Manx Marriner Mainline, *Hell Bound For Heaven* (Stony Plain 1404; 38:28 ★★★★★)

Working together off and on since the early 2000s but only now recording, Canadians Harry Manx and Steve Marriner enjoy as strong a rapport as any creative partners in roots music. An outstanding bluesman, Manx employs his distinctive singing voice and significant skills on several stringed instruments, including an Indian mohan veena, for music that finds resolve in sorrow. He has a gentle soul, prone to shining gospel light on blues darkness. Manx personalizes Charlie Patton's hardcore "Rattlesnake," while at the same time suggesting a sense of glorious release. Marriner, a less riveting singer, showcases his prowess as a guitarist and harmonica player on strong originals and choice covers. The two sometimes call on a drummer, an organ player or backup singers to thicken the sparse duo sound.

Ordering info: [stonyplainrecords.com](http://stonyplainrecords.com)

### Mighty Mike Schermer, *Bad Tattoo* (Finedog/VizzTone 61041; 51:30 ★★★★★)

A member of Marcia Ball's current band and previously employed by Elvin Bishop and other big names, Schermer maintains a solo career of considerable interest. His seventh album—a dozen originals of blues orientation infused with Texas rock, soul and country—is yet another winner. From Johnny "Guitar" Watson grooves to Sir Douglas Quintet Tex-Mex territory, the Californian adapts and controls his vocal and guitar lines with authority, never lacking for imaginative range. His unconventional singing brims with honesty. Also to Schermer's advantage is a smart, wry sense of humor.

Ordering info: [vizztone.com](http://vizztone.com)

### Baldori & Migliazza, *The Boogie Kings: Disturbing The Peace* (BluJazz/Spirit; 52:11 ★★★★★)

Bob Baldori and Arthur Migliazza, who have been collaborating for seven-plus years, embrace boogie-woogie piano with the conviction that they were placed on earth to memorialize greats like Albert Ammons and Jimmy Yancey. This studio romp manages to communicate the buoyant four-handed excitement of a live concert, its blitzes of cross-rhythms rumbling through a program of originals, boogie classics and New Orleans r&b. Eclectic Baldori capably wields a harmonica on Chicago standbys "Got My Mojo Working" and "Blues With A Feeling." *The Boogie Kings* also offers a few vocals, but just passably.

Ordering info: [boogiestomp.com](http://boogiestomp.com)

### The B.B. King Blues Band, *A Tribute To The King* (Ruf 1268; 60:16 ★★½)

With sincere appreciation for the music of B.B. King, three former bandmembers and three outsiders are joined by mercenaries like Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Joe Louis Walker and Diun-



Harry Manx (left) and Steve Marriner

na Greenleaf in a ghost band that reanimates King repertoire, while also debuting originals. The big deal is young Texan Michael Lee performing "The Thrill Is Gone," as he did on *The Voice*. He's passionate, but devoid of any of the emotional depth and seriousness of purpose natural to King. James "Boogaloo" Bolden, a trumpeter who spent about 30 years with King, supplies the most rewarding track, vocalizing his swinging r&b tune "Here Today Gone Tomorrow."

Ordering info: [bbkingbluesband.com](http://bbkingbluesband.com)

### Harpdog Brown, *For Love & Money*

(Dog House 6902; 54:39 ★★½) Brown looks for inspiration in Chicago blues and music of the late 1940s and early '50s that threaded blues, jazz, swing, boogie and jump. On his sixth release, the Vancouverite sings and plays harmonica with soul, expressivity and Tom Waits-graininess, finding the fun in creditable new songs about booze, reefer and quirky misfortune. The hip-cat vibe extends to well-chosen material by Memphis Slim, Louis Jordan and Wynonie Harris.

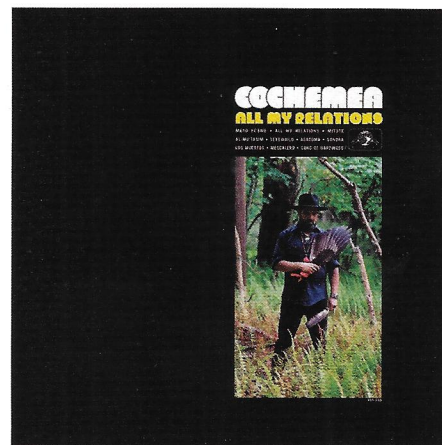
Ordering info: [harpdogbrown.com](http://harpdogbrown.com)

### Benny Turner & Cash McCall, *Going Back Home* (Nola Blue 007; 35:27 ★★★★★)

Septuagenarians Turner and McCall do an impressive job of rekindling the camaraderie they had decades ago when on the Chicago blues scene. (The former was the bass player in his brother Freddie King's band, among other things, and the latter was both an r&b one-hit wonder and a guitarist-songwriter at Chess.) Though making this album almost entirely in Memphis and New Orleans with the backing of soul-blues studio pros, the two sculpt confident vocal deliveries that are appropriate to Windy City fare, like "Spoonful," "Poison Ivy" and "It Hurts Me Too." Chicago harmonica star Billy Branch contributes to two tracks.

DB

Ordering info: [nola-blue.com](http://nola-blue.com)



## Cochemea *All My Relations*

DAPTONE 055

★★★★

After touring for 15 years with Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings, it's possible that the group's slick approach to songwriting rubbed off on saxophonist Cochemea Gastelum. On an album that sometimes can wander, the bandleader here uses cues from indigenous traditions to tie together this new work and his time in that funky ensemble.

On "Maso Ye'eme," *All My Relations'* opening track, Gastelum briefly rises above the ensemble's interplay to articulate an emphatic, longing refrain. Then a cascade of staccato drumming jolts up in the mix. The bandleader exchanges bars with the drummers before the song abruptly segues into the title track, where group improvisation remains the focus.

A few tracks, though, flirt with the poppy, melodic appeal of smooth jazz. On "Seyewailo," Gastelum does his best to get the electric saxophone to emote. It ends up sounding like the score to a lingering, soft-focus PG-13 movie scene of coitus between two big-haired actors partially obscured by silk curtains. Nonetheless, it's really good, buoyed by a bright, memorable melody and more driving percussion.

The last quarter of the album feels scattered, unfortunately. "Asatoma," "Sonora" and "Los Muertos" seem particularly incomplete, ambient percussion waiting for an enlivening idea. Thankfully, "Song Of Happiness" finishes the album strongly, its bridge building a potent harmonic tension—in welcome contrast to the preceding songs' more static nature—which resolves into a joyous major-key hymnal melody.

—Andrew Jones

**All My Relations:** Maso Ye'eme; All My Relations; Mitote; Al-Mu Tasim; Seyewailo; Asatoma; Sonora; Los Muertos; Mescalero; Song Of Happiness. (35:06)

**Personnel:** Cochemea Gastelum, alto saxophone, electric saxophone, flute, bass clarinet; Elizabeth Pupo-Walker, congas, bongos, cajón; Brian Wolfe, bass drum; Reinaldo De Jesus, congas, kanjira; Sunny Jain, tabla, dhof; Neil Ochoa, congas; Giancarlo Luiggi, shekere; Fernando Velez, congas; Bosco Mann, bass, guembri; Victor Axelrod, calivnet, pianet, talking drum.

Ordering info: [daptonerecords.com](http://daptonerecords.com)