

## Professor Louie & The Crowmatix

*Whispering Pines* (WOODSTOCK)

The one man keeping the flame of the Band alive is Professor Louie (Hurwitz). As co-producer, engineer and instrumentalist on the last three Band albums, he must have watched horrified as one of America's great institutions became no more. He and the Crowmatix have since backed up solo efforts by the late Rick Danko and Garth Hudson.

His rootsy folksy good-timey Crowmatix are on their seventh album in seven years. *Whispering Pines* comes complete with the Rock Of Ages Horns, the benevolent ghosts of Danko and Richard Manuel hovering in the air, the wisdom to choose outside material by Warren Zevon/Leonard Cohen/Bob Dylan; and the chops to pull it all off.

The title Band track is positively haunting, its lingering melody etched with sadness. The Professor made sure to



lead off the album with it before the fun starts (like church services before the softball game). Once that throat lump is

raised, it's on to Louie's wild Hammond organ jamming (Zevon's "Nighttime In The Switchin' Yard"), his exacting harmonies with Miss Marie (who later goes all Etta James on us with a ballbusting R&B version of Dylan's "Serve Somebody"), and his fluency on accordion as guest Artie Traum nimbly provides a gorgeous acoustic guitar solo on "Forever & Ever," a stately waltz. The closer is

fitting: Louie's "Melody Of Peace," recorded in the Czech Republic with the Prague Radio Symphony and Kuhn Choir.—MIKE GREENBLATT

ECNSDE  
JHN/KEG 2010