

**CHIP TAYLOR & THE GRANDKIDS**

*Golden Kids Rules*  
(SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS)



TAYLOR'S MUSICAL CREDENTIALS, both as songwriter ("Angel of the Morning" "Wild Thing") and performer, are long

established, but his role as mentor became apparent recently as he coaxed an initially shy fiddle player named Carrie Rodriguez into joining him, resulting in a phenomenal success story. Now he has turned his attention and talent to his three granddaughters as they explore their unique feelings, transposed into musical messages.

The album begins with "Golden Kids' Rules," which provides a musical blueprint for navigating childhood, followed by the whimsical "I'm Just Thinkin' About What I'm Thinkin' About." "You Can Come & Play with Our Toys" is a reminder of what and how we should feel about those times when we can be too inwardly focused. Perhaps the most beautiful song in this album of lovely songs is the final one, "Now That Kristian and Anna Have Wed." Taylor's brother, actor Jon Voight, observes in the liner notes that this collaboration produced magical results, with which I heartily agree. A beautiful album for the grandkids/kids in your life! SCOTT PEAVLER

**JAMES LEE STANLEY AND CLIFF EBERHARDT**

*All Wood and Doors*  
(BEACHWOOD)



"WHAT IS NOW PROVED WAS once only imagined."  
—William Blake

What if the Doors had been a flock of Byrds or herd of Buffalo Springfield, or Jim Morrison joined CSN instead of Y? From the joyous choruses of "Break On Through" to a gloriously haunting, elegiac "The End," this musical masterpiece re-imagines, re-arranges and re-invents 12 Doors songs. Every enlightened track is stone immaculate.

Lush harmonies replace Mr. Mojo Risin's cock-sure, rock-god baritone and primal screams. "Touch Me" becomes a tender, romantic, love meditation. "Strange Days" is

bizarre, beautiful gypsy-reggae. "Take It As It Comes" owes Dave Brubeck five!

Stanley's versatile voice—low-down dirty to pure soaring falsetto—complements Eberhardt's passionate rasp impeccably and both play guitar masterfully. True lizard kings, they can do anything! The Doors' Robbie Krieger and John Densmore contributed to the musical mélange along with Monkee Peter Tork, Eagle Timothy B. Schmit, Wing Laurence Juber and others.

An *All Wood and Doors* tour promo reads "This just might very well be your new favorite recording...ever." That's not hubris or hyperbole; it's truth in advertising!

DENNIS MCDONOUGH

**BOY WELLS**

*Blue Skies Calling*  
(MARCEL MARSUPIAL)



ONE NIGHT A FEW YEARS ago, I had an interesting conversation with the late Stephen Bruton. Bruton asked, "Why

can't we have those radio stations like we had in the '70s when you'd hear Miles, Dylan, Clapton, the great soul bands, and even bluegrass in the same program? Everything is too categorized today." No need to reminisce any longer.

Largely unknown, accomplished guitarist and musical eclectic Boy Wells honed his sound mostly on southern rock. The nod to the Allman Brothers is evident not only in the album name but in Wells' Duane Allman-esque slide excursions. With that sound as an underpinning, *Blue Skies Calling* travels through blues, rock 'n' roll, country, bluegrass, jazz and more.

His mentor, growing up in the DC/Baltimore area, was the virtuoso guitarist Danny Gatton. After dealing with health issues and family tragedies, Wells moved to Austin in 2006 but returned home to record these sessions. His lead, slide and acoustic guitar front a stellar band that thrillingly takes us from the opening funk of "Mr. Coluzzi" to several blues tracks like "World Weary and Blue" and "Love In Vain." There are more surprises waiting. Go discover this talented artist and be amazed.

JIM HYNES

**CASH BOX KINGS**

*Holler and Stomp*  
(BLIND PIG)



YOU CAN'T HELP BUT FOLLOW the directions in the title of this album. The Cash Box Kings have been a big deal in the Midwest for some years, and I'm

expecting their star to flare brightly with this, their first release on Blind Pig. The music is evocative of some older blues luminaries, and leading the parade that hollered and stomped its way into my mind was Willie Dixon's Big Three Trio. The beat and phrasing in the Kings' music are also reminiscent of a stellar lineup that toured Europe in the 1960s in the American Folk Blues Festivals, with a strong representation of Chicago Blues, Willie Dixon included, and a style which can still be heard today in Chi-town. You'll start your own hollerin' and stompin' on the first cut and you won't slow down until this album ends.

LOU NOVACHECK

**THE DEEP DARK WOODS**

*The Place I Left Behind*  
(SUGAR HILL)



THIS QUINTET, HAILING from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, has been causing quite a buzz in Canada since they

released their first record in 2007. For its maiden release on Sugar Hill, the band has produced an atmospheric rumination on the places in which a person finds themselves: some that they want to be in, some that they don't and some that they love. In fact, sometimes that place is love itself. They are in it, leaving it or wishing they could be there again.

The album uses richly-layered instrumentation and plaintive vocals to create a sound that will be familiar to fans of the National. Like the National's recent releases, this album conjures feelings of loss and wanting.

My one complaint with the album is that with the exception of the slightly up-tempo "Dear John," there is a sameness to all of the songs that ultimately dilutes the overall effect. While the band has obvi-