

John Batdorf and James Lee Stanley- *All Wood and Stones II*

(Beachwood Recordings)

Having each etched individual identities as venerable folkies over the past couple of decades, John Batdorf and James Lee Stanley have found viable common ground by banding together for a series of covers albums in which they render venerable rock classics with acoustic accompaniment, thus creating something new and unexpected out of the already familiar. Their third entry in this series, a revisit to the Rolling Stones catalogue they tapped on the first All Wood and Stones recording (they've also applied similar treatment to the work of the Doors), finds them culling classics they missed the first time around, and coming up with equally intriguing results. While it may be hard to imagine "Miss You," "Jumping Jack Flash," "Get Off My Cloud" and "Sympathy for the Devil" rendered with the tenderness usually associated with coffeehouse pickers, the covers somehow work, in part because they retain the signature riffs -- albeit it toned down or slowed down -- and partly because they bring the lyrics into clearer focus. In fact, eliminating Mick Jagger's arrogant snarl goes a long way towards bringing out the poetry and nuance in words most of us have wrestled with in the past. So while there's little reason to suspect these versions will ever become the standard fare, at least as a curiosity they do provide an interesting respite. (www.allwoodandstones.com)

- Lee Zimmerman