



Genre Hopping

Seven new CDs, seven genres, the best of the pile in one fell swoop.

FUNK: *Funk Road* (Catbone/MVD Audio) by **Mutiny** is commandeered by longtime Parliament/Funkadelic drummer "Bigfoot" Brailey whose worldview goes beyond George Clinton's to incorporate soul, electro, rap and jazz.

JAZZ: *Trios* (ECM), by pianist/composer **Carla Bley**, tenor and soprano saxophonist Andy Sheppard and bassist Steve Swallow, is alternately ambient, atmospheric and spooky, an hour of mysterious with the eccentrically brilliant Bley playing the Monk role.

BLUES: *The Blind Owl* (Severn/City Hall), by Canned Heat guitarist, harmonica player and singer/songwriter **Alan Wilson**, who joined the long list of the rock star "27 Club" when he died in 1970 at the height of this great boogie band's notoriety, is a two-disc retrospective. Instantly identifiable is "Goin' Up The Country" (a rewrite of the 1928 "Bulldoze Blues" by Henry Thomas), a song that will forevermore be thought of in the same breath as the 1969 Woodstock festival, at which they played. He had an eerie high-pitched wail of a voice like Skip James, and his elongated jam inventions here are well worth investigating.

SOUNDTRACK: *Boardwalk Empire Volume #2* is a totally satisfying trip back to the songs popular during the 1920s Prohibition Era when alcohol was illegal, thus giving rise to the mob. These are new recordings of a hot Dixieland-charged big-band, Vince Giordano & The Nighthawks, backing a glittering array of vocalists like David Johansen (his alter ego Buster Poindexter lives again on "Strut Miss Lizzie"), Elvis Costello ("It Had

To Be You"), Liza Minnelli (stealing the show with "You've Got To See Mama Ev'ry Night Or You Won't See Mama At All"), Leon Redbone ("Baby Won't You Please Come Home"), Neko Case ("Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out"), Rufus Wainwright ("Jimbo Jambo"), Loudon Wainwright III ("The Prisoner's Song") and Patti Smith ("I Ain't Got Nobody"), just to name eight, all submerging their individual personalities to be in service to the song. Hell, I thought Hank Williams wrote "Lovesick Blues!" Nope. Those crazy revelers in The Roaring Twenties really had it goin' on. Their music rocked before rock. This has to be one of the best CDs of the year from the best show on TV.

ROCK 'N' ROLL: Although you wouldn't know it if you watched this year's MTV Video Music Awards, rock 'n' roll does, indeed, still exist. You just have a look a little harder to find it. *Some Day* (self-released), by **Steve Krase**, is the real deal. A veteran of the Houston music scene for the last 20 years, Krase blows a badass blues harp like Magic Dick of The J. Geils Band. His younger brother David writes the kind of rock

'n' roll songs that stick to the brain like "Put The Cokane Down" and "I'm A Rocker." Backed by a bevy of Texas stalwarts on rampaging guitars, bass, organ, piano, honking sax and drums, Krase lets it all hang out on 12 tracks of blues-based jive 'n' wail. Dig the revved-up Stones-like cover of the Muddy Waters hit "Why People Like That." Thrill to the great version of the Dr. Feelgood classic "She Does It Right." You got your "Textistential Blues." You got track after track of pure three-chord shimmy and shake. All you need is the sawdust on the floor and big plume of cigarette smoke making everybody's eyes water. Oh, and maybe a fistfight or two.

FOLK: **Woody Guthrie** was born 100 years ago and still towers over the folk music scene today. Hell, his "This Land Is Your Land," written as an answer song to the horrible "God Bless America" (which he hated, as do I), should be our national anthem instead of that other horrible song. *Woody Guthrie At 100: Live At The Kennedy Center* (Legacy) is a CD/DVD package of Donovan, Rosanne Cash, Lucinda Williams, Judy Collins, Ani DiFranco, Jackson Browne, John Mellencamp, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Old Crow Medicine Show, Ry Cooder and others singing Woody songs. That's all you need to know.

BLUEGRASS: *Lonely Comes Easy* (Rebel) by **Chris Jones & The Night Riders** is the best damn bluegrass album in years. Why more young jam-band fans don't get behind the intricate speed-zip chops of bluegrass music—with its high lonesome harmonies and complex finger-pickin' on an array of organic acoustic stringed instruments—is beyond me. It's perfect. Hey, all you String Cheese Incident fans, check this stuff out!

