

tainly sound good on FM rock radio -- the soloing is focused and the vocals are right there. Other McCray penned tunes of note are "I Wonder," "Man On Bended Knees" and "Gone For Good," which seem to bring forth McCray's penchant for blending R&B, Blues, Gospel and Rock into his new vision for the blues.

Mixie is a "tight" little industry and Larry has developed many friends. Among them Warren Haynes (Allman Brothers and Government Mule) who contributes "Worried Down With The Blues." Throughout, it is plain that McCray is comfortable and capable in bridging the gap between blues and rock genres. Yet he's rooted in tradition and reaches back to show us his Delta blues roots via "Woman Across The River" by Leon Russell, "Same Old Blues" by Dan Nix and "I'm A Lover Not A Fighter" by Lazy Lester Johnson.

The good news is that Larry McCray is back, and the better news is that he's got a lot more music in 'em and a label willing to let it come out. For more information, contact House Of Blues Records.



I Wanna Be Kate: the songs of Kate Bush
Various Artists

Label:	Brown Star Records
Producer:	Various
Engineer:	Various
Recorded:	Various
Reviewer:	Robert F. Gabella

Perfection is rare indeed, but take the songs of Kate Bush -- a phenomenal artist in a class all her own, and hand them over to a group of talented local artists, and you have a tapestry of sound as rich as any ever recorded.

The disc opens with The Aluminum Group's soulful rendition of "L'Amour Lacks Something Like You," and from that moment forward, you know there's no turning back. Bush's earliest work, from "The Kick Inside" (toned down and wrung out beautifully by Victoria Storm) and "Kashka From Baghdad/Babushka" playfully charged at by The Plunging Necklines, is matched against more recent work like "You're The One" from *The Red Shoes*, tenderly reworked by Justin Roberts. The original version is heartwrenching, and has always held personal significance to me, but I was not at all put off by Roberts' syncopated rearrangement. And The J. Davis Trio puts "There Goes A Tenner" under a completely new light with a jazzy, hip-hop treatment including some all new lyrics. Yet on "Jig of Life," the wonderful Catherine Smitko remains faithful to the original Hounds of Love arrangement, but sparks things up with her vivid, brash contralto. What a treat!

There are many tender moments here. Syd Straw's broken, pleading, "The Man With The Child In His Eyes" (accompanied by Pat Dog's Dog Juhlin) is compelling, and Nera O'Connor's rendition of "The Saxophone Song" is an instant classic, with soaring vocals, wall-of-sound drums, and Dave Smith on the baritone sax.

On the opposite end of the sound spectrum is "Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)," an excellent, wacky, thrashed-out version by The Baltimores which is absolutely nothing like the original. It's more like Dead Milkmen meet They Might Be Giants meet Sonic Youth. In other words, loads of fun! Not to be outdone, Mouse tackles "Coffee Homeground" as if their life depends on the next cup, with Jerry McNeilly's vocal reminiscent of Patti Smith's "Space Monkey." In addition, McNeilly's guitar work is dark and powerful, lending a desperate ambience to the cut.

My Scarlet Lilies take its turn with an ethereal treatment of "Suspended in Gelfin." Here, guitar, drums and samples keep the pace as

Christy and Julie work magic with the most surreal elements of the lyric. The crashing cymbals and power chords are an impressive contrast to their gentle vocals. Trinkets of Joy work some magic with "Love and Anger," letting the jungle drums of Larry Brown build a well-paced tribute to the original. Also notable is Thomas Negovan's "And Dream Of Sheep" from The Ninth Wave side of Hounds Of Love (yes, I remember when HOI came out on vinyl and had two sides!). I wait at the end for "Under Ice" and "Waking The Witch," but these two songs never come. But so convincing is Negovan's string-laden treatment that I half expected them to follow.

A wonderful nightcap to the disc is the folksy, stirring "Not This Time," sung by Thomas Dunning and Your Boyfriends. Dunning, the creative force behind the production of this disc, pulls it all together on this anthem to defiance. It is with love and reverence that he assembled the songs and the artists on this tribute, and though Kate herself was not personally involved, you can bet she will blush at all the attention. For die-hard fans, or for the totally uninitiated, *I Wanna Be Kate* is a must have. In a year filled with excellent tributes and compilations, this ranks right up there with the best!

For more information, contact Brown Star Records 1060 W. Glenlake Avenue, Chicago, IL 60660-2997 or on the web at www.tezcat.com/~stunning/kate.



Reginald R. Robinson
Euphonic Sounds

Label:	Delmark Records
Producer:	Robert Koester
Engineer:	Paul Serrano
Studio:	Riverside Studios
Reviewer:	Odysseus Johnson

Reginald Robinson is quietly becoming the foremost contemporary practitioner of an American musical art form long felt to be dead -- ragtime piano. Sure, we all wax nostalgic when some Hollywood "genius" uses the art to effect on a soundtrack that catches our collective attention for all of ten minutes. What I'm talking about here is an African-American artist who has, through pure determination, set out on a crusade to bring ragtime and barrelhouse piano to its rightful birthplace as the progenitor of jazz music.

Euphonic Sounds is a 17-track collection that begins with "Joplin Song Fragment," a song painstakingly reconstructed from an original Scott Joplin score on deposit at Fisk University. This never before recorded tune serves as an offering from Robinson to his idol. "The Entertainer" and "Heliotrope Bouquet" are other included Joplin compositions where you marvel at the economy of their simplicity and are moved by the beauty of their melody (much the same way as with J.S. Bach's fugues).

The entire release would be quite compelling as an ongoing tribute by Robinson to Joplin, but that would diminish the impressive talent that this young artist has developed. Evolving a framework constructed by Scott Joplin and Louis Chauvin as his personal tutors, *Euphonic Sounds* leaves room for some experimentation. "Incognito" is a passionate duet, featuring vocalist Sondra Davis, and allows Robinson's playing to roam free of the ragtime constraints for just a minute, and is a heartfelt composition.

I certainly urge readers to purchase *Euphonic Sounds*, or the previously released *Sounds in Silhouette* or *The Strangman*. Truly, they are testaments to the timeless nature of ragtime piano music and the tireless pursuit in which Reginald Robinson has become its champion.