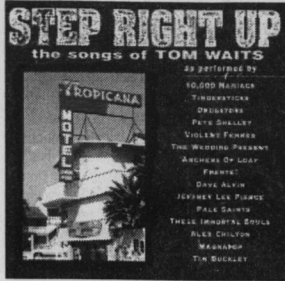


# 'Step Up' to Tom Waits Tribute Four New Albums Promise Little Flavor

When I first saw this disc, I thought, "Oh, look, a bunch of high-paid artists trying to pretend they've listened to Tom Waits for years." I'm jaded; after all, that's exactly what the new Leonard Cohen tribute, "Tower of Song," is like. Record labels figure it improves their artists' credibility to appear on a tribute album to a songwriter respected throughout the music industry.

### CLAIRE JARVIS

**Music Review**  
*Step Right Up: The Songs of Tom Waits*  
Manifest Records  
**B+**



tain their own sound while performing the songs of Tom Waits.

Waits is one of the best singers/songwriters of our time, and most of these artists find the balance between honoring that talent and completely appropriating Waits' sound.

Both American and British talents contributed to the album, as well as two Australian pop groups. Chapel Hill can rejoice in the inclusion of its own Archers of Loaf.

Several bands fronted by women are also represented, lending an interesting twist to Waits' lyrics, especially Magnapop's

"Christmas Card from a Hooker in Minneapolis." Perhaps the disc's main failing is that only pop groups are represented. The jazziest this compilation gets is the Tindersticks' cover of "Mocking Bird," and the closest to techno is Jeffrey Lee Pierce's "Pasties and a G-String."

Also included are some artists' comments on why they chosen to be a part of this collection.

Two of the songs were recorded previously: 10,000 Maniacs' version of "Hope That I Don't Fall In Love With You" and Tim Buckley's 1973 release, "Martha."

If I had to pick the best song here, it would be "Martha." Buckley was friends with Waits, and when *Closing Time* came out, Buckley recorded his version of "Martha" immediately. The whining guitar and Buckley's clear voice provide a great complement to Waits' lyrics.

Granted, there are some typical rock covers, but often Waits' brilliance comes through.

Perhaps that's the final point. Though the music of Tom Waits could inspire great profits for a record company, it inspires instead some of the best covers I've heard recently.

Here at the Diversions desk, we're swamped with all kinds of CDs. Labels mail them to us, I suppose under the impression that the typical college student and will lovingly and blindly embrace all indie rock with a colorful cover. We get some cool stuff, but before you rush over here trying to swipe the latest Oasis, Seven Mary Three or Joe Diffie, you should be warned that a lot of what we receive is — how shall I delicately put this? — crap. In an effort to inform you, the semi-interested public, as to some of our acquisitions, I recently unearthed a treasure trove of titles from the fathomless pit known as the Dive CD drawer.

### BRENT SIMON

**Music Review**  
*Salt*  
*The Brooklyn Side*  
*The Monkey and My First Child*  
**F, D+, B-**

First up is *Salt*, from Pacific Northwest rockers Clatter Bean. Now I like a little seasoning as much as the next person, but if I have to stomach this, I think I'll stick to the salt substitute from now on. This Issaquah quartet (that's near Seattle, grunge kids!) features three female members and a male drummer, which I guess makes them

the poor man's Breeders. It's super loud grunge-rock-by-numbers, and poorly done at that. Lead singer Jennifer Parkinson's crack addict monotone would be enough to drive you crazy by itself if the music itself wasn't so damn awful. Featuring, among other things, a song titled "Strange Rage of the Spider," this album should be avoided like a case of amoebic dysentery. The sole cool thing about this entire noise-fest is the CD itself, which features what appears to be an insane little pink and black dancing navy bean.

I soon stumbled across *The Brooklyn Side*, the sophomore effort from the Bottle Rockets. These "proud sons of Festus, Missouri" look like they all belong in a police lineup. "Hey, wait a second," you protest. "That's not constructive, intelligent criticism or even relevant to their musical ability." True, but I'm here to tell you that these guys could make more money playing child molester stunt doubles in TV movies-of-the-week than they ever could with their musical "talent." Resembling the bastardized cousins of ZZ Top, the Bottle Rockets offer up an assortment of numbers that are three parts beer-saturated good old boy rock, two parts cousin-dating country, and one part pure ass.

"Gravity Falls" is the only song worth a second listen, but half-baked lyrics almost lower it to the level of other efforts. Other titles include the painful mandolin and fiddle-flavored "Welfare Music" and "Idiot's Revenge," both of which pretty much aptly describe the Bottle Rockets' album as a whole.

Next up is Nil Lara, who donated not one, but two albums to our ever-swollen coffers and, in doing so, broke the pattern of suckiness that I feared I had encountered. *The Monkey and My First Child* offer eleven songs between them. The results are fairly nice, certainly rising above the other musical gems of the Dive CD drawer. Lara reminds me a little of Luka Bloom, whom no one really knows, but is cool just the same. He offers a nice blend of guitar and some simple arrangements, adding smooth, up-tempo vocals, alternately creating a sort of laid-back Caribbean salsa and a blues rock treatment of R&B. Basically, it's just a guy and his guitar, backed nicely in different numbers by electric guitar, soulful chants and up-tempo re-dubs. After the wine-inducing Clatter Bean and good old boy Bottle Rockets, Lara provided not only a pleasant diversion, but also a little salvation.

# Patrick Stewart Recites Vivaldi's 'Seasonal' Poetry

Acclaimed concertmaster, solo violinist and orchestra contractor, Arnie Roth shows the diversity of his talents through the quality and variety of his projects. His concert appearances with many of the world's most distinguished orchestras, including those in Dallas and San Francisco, have established Roth as an influential contributor to the instrumental performing arts. His latest endeavor, a recording of Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, is the culmination of years of devotion to music.

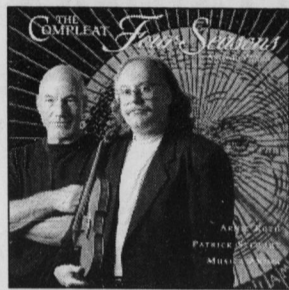
### DEAN HAIR

**Music Review**  
*The Four Seasons*  
**A**

"To listen as from the iron portals rush winds from south and north, all the winds in contest; such is winter, such the joy it brings."

### ANTONIO VIVALDI

Composer



son of winter: "To shiver icily in the freezing dark in the teeth of a cruel wind, to stamp your feet all the time, so chilled that your teeth chatter."

To remain in quiet contentment by the fireside while outside the rain pours in torrents; to walk on the ice, with slow steps in fear of falling, advance with care.

Then to step forth strongly, fall to the ground, and again run boldly on the ice until it cracks and breaks.

To listen as from the iron portals rush winds from south and north, all the winds in contest; such is winter, such the joy it brings."

A section of poetry precedes each movement in the work — with words such as

furious thunder and lightning, torrid heat in a blazing sun and to shiver icily in the freezing dark. The music becomes much more alive with the words, real and true to its time, season and setting.

At the end Stewart returns to read just the poems, minus musical accompaniment, his voice creating their own music for our ears to savor.

Stewart's voice along with the music forces upon its listener to create vivid images in one's mind, from "violent swarms of furious ants and flies" to "a fair spring sky in all of its glory."

Playing his 1733 violin, Roth and his orchestra (Musica Anima String Ensemble) alone deliver an exquisite performance well worth the price of the album.

Vivaldi's mood and scene is diligently captured through Roth's beautiful rendition coupled with the power and beauty of Stewart's voice.

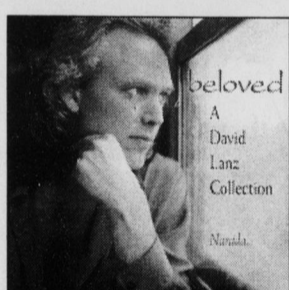
*The Four Seasons* has brought happiness to what is now literally millions of people all over the world — a situation which would have astonished Vivaldi, who considered himself, in many ways, to be "a modest cog in the universe." Beautiful and inspirational, Roth's *The Complete Four Seasons* begs to be played in a dimly lit room with a roaring fire after a hard day's work.

# David Lanz Mixes Old Favorites With Few New Pieces

The new release by pianist David Lanz, *Beloved*, combines his best prereleased works with a few new pieces to produce one of his best albums so far.

### KACEY KINARD

**Music Review**  
*Beloved*  
Narada Productions  
**B**



accompanies his piano, giving the music a rich, full sound.

Each song is dedicated to the music of a certain kind of romance. A few pieces are based on his marriage and Simple his wife, such as "Leaves on the Seine" and "Courage of the Wind."

Other romantic subjects include the

His romantic subjects include the beauty of earth, hope, reunion of mother and child, and reverie. Probably his most well-known piece is "Cristofori's Dream," written about the man who invented the piano.

piano. His performance is accompanied by strings, which lets the main instrument prevail. Through dynamics and arpeggios the song beautifully shows off the piano as a rich instrument.

The song written for Mother Earth, "Madre de la Tierra," was Lanz's first score written for a full orchestra. This piece sets one of the most romantic moods for the album. A piece that would be familiar to all is a variation of Pachelbel's "Canon in D major," a song frequently recorded on many nature music albums. Lanz does not follow the original score exactly, but instead plays variations on the main theme.

The album as a whole grapples with deep and profound romantic ideals, and Lanz accomplishes this through piano playing that touches the soul.

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