

Serious About the Form

Seth Rosenbloom, *Keep On Turning* (HOLMZ; 38:37 ★★★½) Rosenbloom might turn out to be the truest blues singer and guitarist raised up in suburban Boston since Susan Tedeschi. Recording his Josh Smith-produced debut album in Los Angeles, the 26-year-old privileges real expressions of pleasure or emotional pain over contrived drama when delving into his own blues-rock songs (three of six originals co-written with Sonia Rae Taylor) and choice selections from the caches of Elmore James, B.B. King and Freddie King. He's serious about the form, content and fiber of his guitar solos. Still developing personality as a singer, Rosenbloom appears willing to commit to the power of the blues. Two horns, adding texture, join him and a rhythm section on a pair of tracks.

Ordering info: sethrosenbloom.com

Mary Lane, *Travelin' Woman (Woman Of The Blues)*; 35:00 ★★★ As the companion to Jessica Ynez Simmons' documentary, *I Can Only Be Mary Lane, Travelin' Woman* has the 83-year-old singer bidding for notice beyond the Chicago blues scene that's been her stomping ground for many years. She might not whip up the emotional intensity that she used to display in westside taverns, but she has character and understands how tonal inflections help get across the messages of "Leave That Wine Alone," "Let Me Into Your Heart" and eight more she penned with impresario Jim Tullio. Lane, who has had a life of hard knocks, does pretty well keeping up with the young guys in her No Static Blues Band, though the most memorable track is a duet with guest slide dobro expert Colin Linden, "Make Up Your Mind."

Ordering info: ormanmusicmedia.com

Beth Hart, *Live At The Royal Albert Hall* (Provogue 7567 7; 124:24 ★★★½) Hart, whose contralto can wield a strong wind, scores points for conviction. Onstage with her trio in front of 5,000-plus fans at London's famous concert hall, *The Californian*, Hart is so wired into her songs that it can be chilling to hear the renderings of work she's composed during a 20-year career. Poignant highlights from the double album include "Baddest Blues" (Billie Holiday's on her mind), "Sister Heroine" (memorializing her greatly missed sister), "Mama This One's For You" (she acquits herself well at the piano) and "Spirit Of God" (religion helps her). Long-serving band member Jon Nichols possesses a purposeful intensity on guitar, despite indulgences of blaring, tinnitus-inducing blues-rock that panders to the audience, like "Bang Bang Boom Boom." Available on CD, triple vinyl, DVD and Blu-ray.

Ordering info: bethhart.com



MARC PEARLMAN

In Layman Terms, *Strong Roots* (Endless Blues; 38:47 ★★★) As college undergrads studying music therapy, as well as heading a band, Virginians Logan and Cole Layman signal with their second release that they're getting plenty knowledgeable about the holistic properties of the blues. Logan isn't yet capable of deploying her voice as a vehicle of grit, but she's a decent entertainer with her intonation clear and her spirit bright. Passable original songs, good guitar work by Cole, and good jazz-blues trumpet and flugelhorn interjections from Hamed Barbarji.

Ordering info: 3inlaymanterms.com

Eric Schenkman, *Who Shot John?* (VizzTone 1263; 36:44 ★★★) Fronting a dynamite trio with bassist Shawn Kellerman and either drummer Cody Dickinson or Van Romaine, the Spin Doctors' singer-guitarist processes volumes of raw blues-rock energy and imagination on his third solo outing's 10 original songs. Cooling his jets, Schenkman shows a bluesman's soul on "Sign Of The Times." Even when his quest for ideas stops at Jimi Hendrix, Schenkman wins out as a non-conformist, railing against a herd mentality.

Ordering info: ericschenkman.com

Sleepy LaBeef, *Tomorrow Never Comes* (M.C. 0040; 52:22 ★★★) LaBeef has sizable presence, both physically and musically. His sonorous, commanding baritone voice and his marvelous guitar playing have exalted the spirit of listeners since the rockabilly 1950s. Unsurprisingly, his reissue of a 2000 studio recording made in Nashville teems with his verve and his consistency of invention. The "Human Jukebox" rejuvenates songs he loves by Big Joe Turner, Chuck Berry, Tony Joe White, Buddy Holly, Hank Williams and others. Maria Muldaur sings on two tracks. Not LaBeef's meatiest album ever, pardon the pun, but take it. **DB**

Ordering info: mc-records.com



Susan Weinert Rainbow Trio *Beyond The Rainbow*

TOUGH TONE 2308

★★★½

German guitarist Susan Weinert's 13th album, *Beyond The Rainbow*, joins the forces of her guitar playing at its expressive best with the classical chops of young pianist Sebastian Voltz and the lyrical bass playing of the band-leader's longtime partner in life and music, Martin Weinert, for eight tracks, all recorded live at a summer performance during the Studio Konzert series at Bauer Studios in Ludwigsburg.

The music shimmers and shines as it creates sonic dreamscapes in a finely balanced dialog in which none of the three musicians dominate the musical conversation, and all are able to add their voice, perspective and beauty, with piano and guitar texturing the tunes, their notes gently laid upon the bass solos.

The trio's original compositions—six composed by the bandleader—unfold as grooves are lightly tinged by world music-esque nuances. They also highlight the precision and clarity of Voltz's background as a classical concert pianist, his melodies weaving with an almost meditative quality to evoke what the titles portend—windmills, light, cranes and more. "Eisblume," which translates to English as "frost flowers" or "frost patterns," practically crackles as it evolves in seemingly random delicacy.

Don't let the lovely meandering of these tunes lull you into letting them slide into the background. This is vibrant, soulful and sophisticated music, and much like the cranes' flight that inspired "Die Kraniche," it delights ears and mind, gently lifting the spirit and allowing it to soar. —Catalina Maria Johnson

Beyond The Rainbow: Das Windrad; Eisblume; Chinatown; Licht; Provence; Mohnblume; A Day Like This; Die Kraniche. (54:01)
Personnel: Susan Weinert, guitar; Sebastian Voltz, piano; Martin Weinert, bass.

Ordering info: susanweinert.com