

MUSIC SCENE

Michael Hurley



Ancestral Swamp - Gnomosong Music

Ancestral Swamp

MUSIC REVIEWED BY BOB JONES

Michael Hurley recorded his first album for Folkways Records in 1965 using the same recording equipment that Leadbelly used to record his last session. He has released 20 records over the years, but has always been a bit too strange for conventional folk music fans, and maybe for rock

music fans as well. Recently, though, his career has seen a bit of a revival by what is called the Freak Folk movement. Devendra Banhart, one of the bigger names in freak folk, has released Hurley's Ancestral Swamp on his Gnomosong label. It is a primitive record that features mostly Hurley accompanying himself on his guitar, and it feels like it could have been recorded in a living room. Hurley pens most of his songs but on this release he covers Blind Willie McTell's "Dying Crapshooter Blues," singing about "nine men going to the graveyard and only eight come back." On his own "She got a Mathematic," Hurley tells about a woman who "got a schematic, and could get a reaction/ no name she ever told me, but I guess that she don't need one." Over the years, Hurley has had a small but rabid fan base, with some of his out-of-print records selling for hundreds of dollars online. It's nice to see that he has been "discovered" by a younger generation and heralded as the pioneer he is. ■

Original Broadway Cast



LoveMusik - Ghostlight Records

LoveMusik

MUSIC REVIEWED BY BOB JONES

"Mack the Knife" may be the only Kurt Weill song to make it into the popular American standards songbook, but the influence that Weill has had on popular avant-garde music (if that is not an

oxymoron) can't be underestimated. The original "Mack the Knife," sung in German, is a very slow dirge, with very little in common with the Bobby Darin version. LoveMusik is a Broadway play that tells the story of the marriage between Lotte Lenya and Kurt Weill as told through Weill's music. There are 27 tracks of music and dialogue featured on this recording, and when you cut through the big showtune arrangements on LoveMusik, there is a pretty good feel for the original recordings. "Alabama Song" (recorded by The Doors) starts with a stage call for Lotte Lenya and then Donna Murphy, who plays the part of Lenya, nails it. "Speak Low" is performed by Michael Cerveris, who plays Weill, with Murphy in the roll of Lenya. It opens the cast recording and may help bring this classic song to a broader audience. LoveMusik is in English but the music still retains the feel of the great German Master. ■

Bob Jones is founder of Silver Platter CDs EST1998 in Fort Myers.
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