

MUSIC SCENE

The Avett Brothers



Emotionalism - Ramseur Records

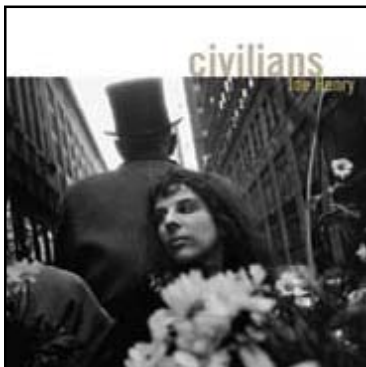
Emotionalism

MUSIC REVIEWED BY BOB JONES

The banjo is a prominent instrument on Avett Brothers records and they have played bluegrass festivals but they have more in common with The Beatles than Bill Monroe. The songs on Emotionalism take a front seat to speedy solos. North Caroli-

na-based, The Avett Brothers are an unpredictable pop group whose songs end abruptly when you think that it should go to another chorus and when the first two songs are decidedly modern pop tunes the third song "Paranoia In B flat Major" sounds like a vaudeville inspired seventies AM radio hit. "Will You Return?" has the feel of the Beatles song "There's a Place" with similar chord progressions and vocal harmonies. One of the more singer/songwriter-style tunes, "The Ballad of Love and Hate" has the opening lines "Love writes a letter and sends it to Hate, my vacations over, I'm coming home late." Emotionalism is the best Avett brothers record to date, some of the lyrics are a bit predictable, but the overall feel of the record glosses this over and who knows, it may have been intentional. With the banjo, they will be put into the Americana box, it's a good thing that it is a big box. ■

Joe Henry



Civilians - Anti Records

Civilians

MUSIC REVIEWED BY BOB JONES

Joe Henry has always had the large shadow of his sister-in-law (Madonna) hanging over his shoulder but he has managed to make quite a name for himself as a producer as well as an artist. Henry has been busy in the

production over the last few years producing records by Solomon Burke, Aimee Mann, Ani DiFranco, and Bettye Lavette. On first listen it is clear Henry, like Bob Dylan and many other artists, has been listening to a lot of Tom Waits records. It has that herky jerky feel but by calling in Bill Frisell and Van Dyke Parks, Civilians has the musicianship to back it up. "Our Song" tells about the narrator's encounter seeing Willie Mays while he shops in an Arizona Home Depot and he, Mays, is saying to his wife "this was my country, this was my song, somewhere in the middle there it started badly and it's ended wrong." Joe Henry has always been a favorite for critics and geeks and it would be hard to say that Civilians will win him a wider audience but after four years without putting out a record of his own, it is clear that Joe Henry has not lost his touch. ■

Bob Jones is founder of Silver Platter CDs EST1998 in Fort Myers. For info or to suggest music, email recordreviews@comcast.net

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