

Two Sets

Chuck Brodsky

Waterbug Records - WBG 84

Available from Chuck Brodsky's web site.

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange

by Mark S. Tucker

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Chuck Brodsky's a folkie through and through, spinning out down-in-the-dust tales of the common man...except when slinging bullets and arrows at injustice, as in the intro cut He Came to Our Town, inveighing against political reptiles and smooth-talkers. The guy plays a fine guitar but the stories are the point, and the composer tells of the upsets, happinesses, contentments, curiosities, frustrations, and novelties of life in its endless expected and unexpected sidepaths and turns. Dock Ellis, for instance, relates the humorous true yarn of a pro baseball player who'd just discovered LSD...and pitched a no-hitter under the influence.

This 2-CD set was taken from gigs in North Carolina, Georgia, and Ireland, live of course, and plainly shows the minstrel's role in Brodsky's low-key but attractive style. Once he begins letting the line out, every fish is hooked and reeled in, happy to be gaffed and waiting for the next length of filigree to play out, shimmering in the sun. The audience hoots, whistles, applauds, and laughs as each unexpected turn in the road takes them down familiarity with a twist.

There's a time for cynicism and a time for joy, but Chuck Brodsky tends to walk the middle, finding warmth in the foibles and weaknesses of human beings as well as solace and hope in their strengths and common spirit. Yes, it's feel-good work, but not of the Reader's Digest variety—rather of a non-judgemental understanding that we're all trapped in circumstances

often beyond our control. 9:30 Pint readily demonstrates the situation, sympathetic to individuals meshed within a concatenation of events they never had much of a say in the creation of.

I chose this disc because the guy who runs this site spoke well of Brodsky. Sometimes I agree with Dave's overviews, sometimes I don't (in fact, I look for certain somewhat negative adjectives for discs as indications that I'll like what he doesn't—our tastes have differences, after all), but this was a great choice, much like watching a good European movie imbued with the kind of humanist spirit too many American flicks completely ignore or artificialize. There's no fakery here at all, just lots of great listening for a good long while.

Track List:

Disc 1 Disc 2

He Came to our Town

Bill & Annie

Dock Ellis' No No

Radio

A Toast to the Woman in the Holler

Dangerous Times

Lili's Braids

Old Song Handed Down

The Point

The Man Who Blew Kisses

The 9:30 Point

Armitage Shanks

Take It Back Out

The Come Heres and the Been Heres

Trees Falling

La Migre Viene

Letters in the Dirt

Talk to My Lawyer

Two Left Feet

We are Each Other's Angels

Our Gods

The Boys in the Back Room

On Christmas I Got Nothing

The Goodbye Kid

Blow 'Em Away

All songs written by Chuck Brodsky.

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