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Chuck Brodsky

Radio

Red House RHR119 (1998)

On Radio, his third CD, Chuck Brodsky reaffirms his position as one of contemporary folk music's most effective storytellers. With his humanity, his eye for detail, and ability to create both melodic hooks and dramatic tension, Brodsky can grab listeners with his first line and keep them transfixed until his tale is told. "La Migra Viene" is a warm, if bittersweet, look back at Brodsky's days picking apples with illegal immigrants. "Moe Berg: The Song" continues Brodsky's song cycle about notable baseball players, this time telling the truly remarkable story of Berg, catcher for the Dodgers who was also a valuable U.S. spy in the years before World War II. The title song tells the tale of a mute, mentally challenged young man adopted by an entire South Carolina high school, and "For Christmas I Got Nothing" talks about Brodsky's youthful reactions to the yuletide season in a Jewish household. The only tune Brodsky didn't write here is "Circle," Annie Gallup's vivid juxtapositions of the realities and illusions of circus life. The one oddity on Radio is a re-recording of Brodsky's most familiar tune, the road rage anthem "Blow 'em Away," rendered here in a hard rock version that adds little to the original. Based on the new material here, Brodsky doesn't need to look backwards, as long as he keeps writing new songs.