

## Mp3 Pinebox Serenade - Folk: Power-folk



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Texas collective known as Pinebox Serenade present their self-titled debut of gothic Americana. Its a loose array of dirgey mountain folk, dark ballads and gypsy tales, all graced with bluegrass elements and bedeviled with the irreverence of alt. country 11 MP3 Songs FOLK: Power-folk, COUNTRY: Country Rock Details: Guitarist Chris Welch and mandolin player Patrick Newkirk started Pinebox Serenade as an acoustic three-piece group with bluegrass leanings, playing their first shows in early 2004. Since then, the group has become one of Denton's larger groups, weighing in with seven members who each add a layer to the band's brand of dark acoustic folk. The 11 songs on the disc reveal a band that plays rock clubs but is distinguished by elements of country - Newkirk's mandolin plucking, Holly Manning's lively fiddling, even Welch's gravelly voice, which is a Johnny Cash kind of low. Welch handles vocal duties on most of the songs, like the mournful "Lost Pines"; Newkirk handles a few numbers, including "Gravedigger's Blues," with its dark lyrics but sprightly music. In fact, that kind of contrast runs throughout the album, as in "Streets of Righteousness," in which Welch sings about being shunned from the streets mentioned in the title - the lyrics are dark, but the music rollicks in a minor key, buoyed by fiddle, cello and snappy snare drumming. Even the album cover, by Art Prostitute's Brian Gibb, is a lesson in contrasts: The cartoon-like art features a boy dragging a toy duck behind him, eyebrows cocked anxiously. When you flip the CD over, that's when you see that the boy's walking behind a turtle, a bear, an elephant, a giraffe and other animal playthings carrying a coffin. Pinebox Serenade includes a few players better known for their turns in the Denton, TX rock scene, not country. Wally Campbell, who's also in Hand of Onan, plays bass and pitches in with some vocals. Chris Ott, who's played bass for heavier bands like Phalanx and Clutch Cargo, handles cello and slide guitar. And the band's usual drummer is Colin Carter - when he's not out pounding the skins for Hogpig. The band's most recent addition is Nick Foreman, on banjo, accordion,

saw, trumpet or whatever else gets thrown at him. The album was recorded and produced by Brent Best at his home studio. It'll be the first release in a while on Hot Link Records, Campbell's own label that put out recordings by Cornhole, Dooms U.K. and other acts in the '90s. Mariel Tam / Music Notes

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