

Mp3 Fellaheen - The Excommunicate's Canzonet



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a mlange of rocknroll, blues, downbeat jazz, and murky existential wit that betrays a secret pop heart 13
MP3 Songs ROCK: Roots Rock, POP: Quirky Details: The band? Well, let's see: Fellaheen, for the moment, is Bruce Hanson (along with a bunch of guitars and other musical gear) writing, recording and performing slightly off-kilter original songs about dogs, particle physics, shady characters, luv'n'hate, and works of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Other folks kindly help out when beckoned. The style? Call it rock-pop-blues-jazz-lounge-country-alt-cabaret-house-trip-folk... Now about the album, "The Excommunicate's Canzonet"... A "canzonet" (to save you a trip to fetch the dictionary, just in case) is a light air or song: A drinking song, perhaps, or a cheery tune you whistle to yourself while walking past the graveyard. Or maybe it's that ditty your mother sang to you to fool you into thinking everything was gonna be alright when, in actuality, the monsters under your bed were indeed real -- just waiting for a better time to make their move... Just to be clear: the narrator, central character, or spirit haunting the album is not the songwriter listed within the credits. But it's someone he knows: Some geezer who grew up and came of adult mind amidst the published and extrapolated works of Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag, Mad Magazine, JohnPaulGeorge&Ringo, Jack Kerouac, John Coltrane, Jean-Paul Sartre, Vittorio De Sica, George Carlin, Kurt Weill, Thomas Pynchon, Captain Beefheart, Dante Aligheri, The Clash, Bugs Bunny and a million musicians recorded, unrecorded, celebrated and forgotten. And when a guy like that finds himself in a world of market-tested war, aggressively backward religious revivalism, un-"intelligent design," and bait-and-switch deniability, he begins to feel, well, excommunicated. An important distinction, this notion of excommunication: he hasn't quit -- he's been asked to leave, or (if he's lucky) just to keep his thoughts to himself. Strange, because he's no threat, and of little consequence. After all, his vote is no longer courted -- there are plenty of others ranked and filed to bring about the predetermined result (and

even if there aren't, the requisite numbers can now be summoned by means of clever software). His fringe ideas, or, more accurately, those he bears a standard for, are pass, because where no questions are asked, no answers are needed; where nothing but dogmatic piety is said to have morality, no inquiry into Truth need be conducted. Could be he thinks we're in the last stage of Oswald Spengler's organic civilization model, when a culture reflexively retreats into its quasi-mythic past as it withers into violence and farce. Perhaps, but who knows? After all, the documentary about the bastard and his impenetrable theories was programmed against the American Idol finale. One must be so careful these days... Thus, them ol' Fellaheen (for our purposes: the great mass of peasants who adapt and survive from one civilization to the next without becoming part of any, thus remaining separate from the great movements of history) step aside as the locomotive of this particular history hurtles down the dark track. At some point over the horizon, the rails do indeed diverge, the wheel carriage snaps, and the engine explodes against the silhouette of What Comes Next... So, the album? It's got a good beat, and you can brood to it... The librettist: Bruce Hanson played guitar in a hundred bands no one ever heard of (or at least remembers now) from the late 1970s through the early 1990s. Taking a pause from music, Hanson rediscovered his muse sometime around 1998, and returned to recording. Finding a music world completely dominated by giant record companies with little interest in nurturing music beyond that which can move a gazillion units in less than a week, he went the route now available via the Internet, accessible recording technology, and good old DIY: building a recording studio in his home, playing all of the instruments, and recording and releasing a succession of CDs. (He also designs the artwork and packaging, and probably empties the garbage as well). "The Excommunicate's Canzonet" (2005, EGADS Music) is the latest Fellaheen release, which follows 2003's "Busking for Karma," 2002's "Dispatches from Quarantine," 2000's "The Dog as Metaphor," and a collection of oddities, "Nasty, Brutish and Short" (released 2002).

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