

# Mp3 Brian Wheat & Groggy Darlin' - Where You Have Been



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Wheat's songs sound like something you might hear if you woke up some lazy Sunday morning in a bed next to one that Rod Stewart(Faces)and Sam Beam (Iron and Wine) were sharing. Upbeat, but subdued. Sorrowful, but uplifting. 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, ROCK: Americana Details: In casual conversation, Brian Wheat is a man who pauses occasionally, carefully pondering each exchanged word before responding. Similarly, his songwriting demonstrates fascinating detail that surpasses simple storytelling, and delves into patient studies of the emotional context surrounding a moment. It is clear that the strong sense of community that exists in Buffalo, NY, his current roost, has manifested itself in the themes of home and human connection that pervade his work. In his youngest years Wheat spent his childhood in a small Upstate New York town where he yearned for a broader scope and greater diversity, but also developed a deep admiration for the tradition and intimacy of a close-knit community. However, despite learning the virtue of being rooted, Brian has not been one to stand still. Somewhere in between he has performed at Moroccan festivals, busked in Spain, played for room and board at Australian hostels, shared folk songs with Fijian natives, earned degrees in biology and education, and perfected the art of the falafel as a short-order cook. Wheats desire to combine mobility and exploration, versus a need for intimate connection, rings clear throughout his current and continually growing body of work. Fortified with a dynamic, evocative voice and songs that float with both a secular religion of home and the architecture of ghostly pasts, Wheat blends the immediately tangible with an elusive sense of the enduring. Being influenced by the distinctive songwriting of groups like Cake, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Iron and Wine, and Neil Young, there is a refreshing reality to Wheats music; revealing layered continuums of experience, rather than clean, simplified absolutes. You can expect to be carefully ushered through a place suspended somewhere between modernity and bygone eras, without the risk of being

trapped in either of the two. Wheat has also developed an extraordinary ability to combine his impressive guitar, banjo, and harmonica chops with a keen knowledge of how and when (and when not) to employ them in service of a song. Accompanying this subtle phrasing is his band Groggy Darlin, an all-star cast of Western New York music veterans. Bassist Peter Williams, multi-instrumentalist Peter Gerace, and drummer Mark Longolucco map out the peaks and valleys that define the music's weathered landscapes and consistently complement Wheat's rare ability to bring a crowded room to an attentive silence. Together, they create music that is at once earthy, refined, organic, melodic, and perfectly suited for the time-honored format and progressive delivery that is characteristic of Wheat's songwriting. The band's moving live performances, as well as Wheat's solo works, have garnered him a diverse and expansive fan base, as well as support positions for some of today's most exciting national and international acoustic artists, including Mark Kozelek (Red House Painters/Sun Kil Moon), Hamell on Trial (Righteous Babe Records), David Dondero (Team Love), Olde Tyme Relijun (K Records), Rachel Ries (Waterbug), Robert Blake (Same Room Records), and Ember Swift (Fewell Ignite).

REVIEWS: Brian Wheat and Groggy Darlin' are an upstate New York state band that has somehow befriended Chicagoan Rachel Ries. Rachel sings backup on the group's new disc. I'd like to say her involvement makes this a must have but the fact is it's a must have on its very own merits. The band's debut, *Where You Have Been*, is being released on March 12. It's a very independent, diy release. In fact it'll be a limited edition run of 500 hand-assembled, hand numbered copies. The title track, "Where You Have Been" features many of the stringed instruments you'd expect from a modern day blue/newgrass song including violin, banjo, mandolin, upright bass and drums. But thankfully there is this new category of music called "indie folk" where an artist can take the musical accoutrements of the past and update them with modern lyrics and also more personal, emotional delivery. "On Underneath Your Breath" you get a more straight ahead new-folk number with acoustic guitar and harmonica plus backing vocals by the ever so lovely Rachel Ries." --Craig Bonnell

(Songs:Illinois) "Wheat sings of the need for community, a sense of place, understanding of "home" and all the comfort and stability these things can offer. Yet, the seasoned, well-traveled troubadour cops to an insatiable wanderlust and a need for the open road in the same breath." "There's plenty of that wistful, near-stoic acceptance of sadness in the grooves of "Where You Have Been", ..." "Sparse in instrumentation, earthy in production, the record boasts much of the breathy intimacy displayed by the new vanguard in acoustic alternative music--Iron Wine comes immediately to mind as a reference point.

But in its detailed, subtly ornate arrangements, it avoids the sleepy, aloof, occasionally flat-out boring tendencies of some of the "nu-acoustic" artists. Part of the reason for this is the onion-like layering of the entire presentation--the songs themselves, the savvy production ethic, the striking, stark artwork and album packaging. Most markedly, that multilayering of meaning can be found in Wheat's lyric-writing, which is provocative and poetic without being too precious about it. balancing such detailed, well-honed lyrics against musical arrangements that both support and elevate their sentiments is one of the great battles of record-making. Many a good record has one or the other. Only the great ones manage both."

"Certainly, "Where You Have Been" comes across as serious music, but there is a loose, unstudied, celebratory aspect to the record as well. Much of that must be attributed to Wheat's musical compatriots in Groggy Darlin', great players Peter Williams on bass, Mark Longolucco on percussion and Peter Gerace on Gutar/banjo) who consistently managed to help make the music interesting without getting in the way of the strong narrative quality ever-present in Wheat's writing." -Jeff Miers (The Buffalo News "Gusto")

Where You Have Been, the debut full-length album from Buffalos Brian Wheat Groggy Darlin, is not just the finest album released so far in 2007 by a local artist. Its a geat album, period, and will likely find its way on my personal end-of-the-year best-of. The album seems simple for the first few listens, until the subtly complex arrangements of songs like If Memory Serves and The Days You Would Play becomes more apparent. Wheats bio name-checks Iron and Wine, CCD, Neil Young, and Cake as sonically similar, but I couldnt help but think of heralded-about Irishman Damien Rice. Wheats style is a bit different from Rices, showcasing more of a country-rock bent. Both artists rely on sublimely pretty musical textures, but Where You Have Been blows Rices latest release, 9, out of the water. Its stunning work so remember the name. Brian Wheat Groggy Darlin clearly have the talent to be huge.

--Christopher Schobert (Buffalo Spree) Brian's work is thoughtful and heartfelt, sweet and understated. Mixing traditional instrumentals like banjo and brushed guitar on tunes such as Where Have You Been, he blends harmonics and a gentle touch on the mic to create a world for the listener with softened edges where you feel that everything might just turn out all right. Listeners can catch shades of Tom Waits, Bob Dylan and Randy Newman, with just-slightly detuned pianos and a beautifully blended female harmonic provided by Ries. Editor's Note: I caught the last half of Brian and Groggy Darlin's in-store performance at New World Records today. What was striking at the live show was that the packed house became quiet enough to hear a pin drop at the first strum of the guitar. Brian's talent is truly apparent in a voice that

whispers louder than many others shout. The band was absolutely tight, a sweetheart of an Americana group that will be delivering an authentic performance experience for many years to come. --Gabrielle Bouliane (Buffalo Rising)

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