

# Mp3 The Graveblankets - Orphan Recordings 1991 - 2001



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the graveblankets play their own mutant brand of pop/folk/rock. 16 MP3 Songs ROCK: Americana, POP: Folky Pop Details: Arduser's 'Orphan Recordings' add up to cohesive whole

----- BY LARRY NAGER Rated 4 stars (4 is Excellent) If we had a Cammy Award for All-Around Musician of the Year, Chris Arduser would get my nomination. Bandleader, sideman, singer, songwriter, drummer, guitarist, mandolinist - this guy does it all masterfully. This year saw him reuniting with the Bears, anchoring the Blue Birds and the Blue Birds Big Band, leading his Graveblankets, doing dozens of sessions, seemingly being everywhere at once. The latest evidence that Mr. Arduser doesn't sleep can be found on this 16-track disc, a 10-year collection of rarities going back to 1991 and Mr. Arduser's pre-'blankets solo recordings. It's a gloriously mixed bag, a sort of one-disc boxed set. There's folk-pop-rock that started life with his early-'90s band the psychodots ("The Devil Said Yes"), but the album includes such oddities as a surf-guitar instrumental ("Fecal Sample") and a folksy mandolin instrumental ("The Kirk Douglas Chin"). Many of the tunes are Mr. Arduser as an over-dubbed one-man-band, while on others he's backed by one or two 'blankets, among them electric guitarist George Cunningham (whose solos are infused with Richard Thompson's jagged virtuosity), singer Bridget Otto, bassist Bob Nyswonger, violinist Karen Addie and drummer Mike Radovsky. Some feature the full band, including Nashville recordings in which sessionman Peter Hyrka subbed for Ms. Addie. Yet despite the widely varied recording situations and long gaps between recording dates, Orphan Recordings sounds like a cohesive whole. That's a tribute to Mr. Arduser's many talents, including his fondness for dark lyrics and dysfunctional relationships (with touches of humor). He sets the tone with his opening line, "Our life was a hollow drama, strung together without a comma." Orphan Recordings is one of the best of the year. You can order it online (and read the liner notes) at:

graveblankets.com. BY MIKE BREEN The ever prolific Chris Arduser has released a collection of 'outtakes' from his band The Graveblankets. Dubbed Orphan Recordings 1991-2001 (and capriciously sub-dubbed 'an audio closet of demos, expensive and time-consuming music biz remixes, almost realized half-baked masterpieces and complete obscurities'), the disc is available through graveblankets(while you're there, check out guitarist George Cunningham's hilarious column 'A Guitar Case'). Though culled from various studio sessions and spanning a decade, there is a surprising cohesion to Orphan Recordings, with Arduser's fantastic songwriting chops the focal point. Songs like the swirling 'Just a Question' and the countrified 'Too Sure' certainly rank with some of the best 'blankets music. Though the title and sardonic subtitle might suggest that this disc is best left for Arduser completists, it actually would serve as a pretty decent introduction to one of the finer song craftsmen in the region. The songs may have been throwaways, but the album as a whole is certainly not.

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