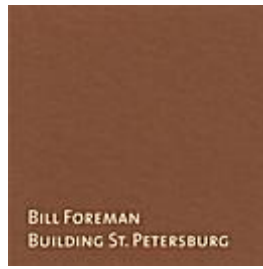


Mp3 Bill Foreman - Building St. Petersburg



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9 songs of subversive garage folk-rock, ranging from the microscopic to the epic in scale. Exquisite narratives in raw performances. 9 MP3 Songs FOLK: Alternative Folk, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: Dense, but rewarding. 9 songs, one cover, one spoken. Recorded in 1998 and 1999 in Riverside and San Diego. In glorious digital fidelity. 4 out of 5 stars: Employing a more standard folk style than on his previous release, *The Duck Hunter*, Bill Foreman's strangely intricate lyricism remains completely intact. While the overriding theme of *Building St. Petersburg* is not explicit, themes of small town folks and simple ways seem to persist in the homespun narratives and love songs. Almost recalling the teary-eyed homeyness of Mississippi John Hurt, the finger-picked country-blues of the title track, with Celtic flavor added by unexpected penny whistle, tells the tale of a lonely peasant worker sent to the swamplands that would become St. Petersburg, Russia. Using soft drums, piano, guitar and mandolin, tracks like "San Diego" fit perfectly beside the bluesy R&B grooves in "The Canadian Vacation" and the quietly picked electric guitar in "The Good Life," keeping a fresh pace throughout the album's nine tracks. The intensely surreal narrative in "The Stroke Victim" finds Foreman at his most unflinchingly esoteric, leaving listeners feeling as if they've just watched a short film. Like the very best singer/songwriters, he crafts songs that engage the mind and stir the soul. As such, it would be futile, and moreover misleading, to try to match these abstract word paintings to any particular genre. All Music Guide It's rare to see music and lyrics given the loving, painstakingly thorough crafting that Foreman provides; each of these songs is so carefully written and assembled that reading the lyrics is a rich literary experience itself. Foreman fits into the same broad non-genre that holds Tom Waits, and indeed their vocal styles intersect, inasmuch as both sometimes plumb the same sort of "Delta Blues Madman" character to varying degrees (see "Some Kind of Magic" for a prime example). Elsewhere on the disc you'll find workmen's tales (the title track), spoken-word

absurdity ("Talking Ballroom Blues"), traditional highwayman histories ("Newry Highwayman") and an idiosyncratic mixture of defiance, love, remorse, wanderlust, mental collapse and ribald eccentricity, teamed with jauntily appropriate folkish melodies. Building St. Petersburg gives little outward evidence of its inner magic and exhilarating eccentricity; it's one of those discs that you might look at, briefly, but not take the time to get to know. We've all made those decisions, and this disc is a prime example of the delights you miss on the road not taken. George Zahora, Splendid E-Zine Dreams, nightmares, imagining and reality dance round and round the dusty shadowplays of this stark but stunning gem. Foreman is a storyteller extraordinaire; equipped with little more than an acoustic guitar and his creaky, weedy voice, Foreman transports us, in both senses of the term, from the barrio to a brothel, from medieval Russia to medieval England, from a border-crossing bender to the confused visions of "The Stroke Victim." All in the comfort of our own child-like enrapture. If you're a folk music fan, grab your socks lest Foreman knock them off. And if you think folk music is only for college professors and lesbians, I challenge you to spin this disc and tell me it's not brilliant. Sure bet for me; if you disagree, you're dumber than you look. Jim Santo, Demo Universe

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