

with Sophie Cavez and as a member of I Fratelli Tarzanelli and Laurent Geoffroy in Passaires. The double accordion lead gives the quintet their distinction. Zef was formed in 2001 and this is their fourth album. All the compositions are by members of the band and seem to be derived ultimately from a range of French styles. The outstanding track is *Balthazar's Castle Of Q* with its zappy, lively take on Parisian café jazz swing. Elsewhere the playing is much more thoughtful and restrained in places; at times almost bordering on the sombre though there is no doubting the quality of the playing and the arrangements.

www.denappel.be

Vic Smith

DAVID EVANS

Under The Yam Yam Tree Blind Lemon Records BLR-CD1401

PETER FUNK

Slidewalk Blind Lemon Records BLR-CD1303

Those Blind Lemons just keep rollin' on with two brand new albums of good acoustic music from this new German label. Hot on the heels of his previous CD, *Live At The Alte Post*, David Evans comes across with *Under The Yam Yam Tree*, a second well-recorded live album, which also contains tracks recorded at the Alte Post, plus other material recorded at a similar intimate venue, the Zum Schwarzen Ross, both venues located in the north west of Germany where (aural evidence indicates) audiences really appreciate David Evans's interpretations of old country blues performed with genuine commitment and fervour. As ever, Evans displays an exemplary choice of songs encompassing the Mississippi blues of Tommy Johnson, Robert Petway, and Johnny Temple, the sanctified song *The Ship Is At The Landing* (learned from bluesman Babe Stovall), Washboard Sam's light hearted *Who Pumped The Wind In My Doughnut?* and (a personal favourite) *Aunt Caroline Dye Blues*, one of three tracks on which label owner Thomas Schleiken plays appropriate second guitar. In the early '60s Evans's friends Bob Hite and Al Wilson went on to form the band Canned Heat and in doing so staked their claim on blues legacy. Due to his exemplary musicology work David Evans is often thought of as purely an academic but this live CD, plus its recent companion, prove that he too is a blues musician worthy of similar note.

German slide guitarist Peter Funk has produced a nice, easy-on-the-ear album that pays homage to his beloved resophonic guitars. He has quite a few of them: two Nationals (a 1930 triolian and a 1932 style O), a 1925 Weissenborn Lapsteel, a squareneck 1928 Tricone, and a 2006 squareneck Manzanita resophonic guitar. He plays them on a variety of blues and rags, Hawaiian pieces, some Gospel tunes and a few self-penned items. He harvests some lovely sounds from his various guitars, but when he sings his vocal prowess is no match for his instrumental ability, especially on the Mississippi delta standards *Walking Blues* (on which he gets some help from Axel Kustner's harmonica blowing) and *Rollin' And Tumblin'*. A second guitarist and a jug blower add some jug band verve to *Tell Me Mama*, and Peter is backed by upright bass on a couple of other tracks but mostly it's solo performances with the various instrumental pieces providing the brightest highlights of *Slidewalk*, including the charming last track *By And By (I'm Going To See My Saviour)* on which Peter plays... an autoharp!

www.blindlemonrecords.de

Dave Peabody

ATSE TEWODROS PROJECT

Atse Tewodros Project Own label

Atse Tewodros, proud Emperor of Ethiopia many years ago, forced a band of unwelcome English chancers to wash themselves and their clothes before booting them out. They carried a message for Queen Victoria: "I know these men are your scouts. I forced them to wash themselves to make it clear that you will not carry even a speck of dust out of Ethiopia."

Good bloke, eh? Recorded in Addis Ababa by an Italian-Ethiopian group, this CD bearing his name was made possible by crowdfunding. No label behind it, just various small investors. The project is propelled by singer / composer Gabriella Ghermandi, an Italian who grew up in Addis, and a small group. Instruments and styles are a mix of traditional Ethiopian and Western.

The music is clear, thoughtful and unforced. The contrast between Gabriella's warm, accurate voice and washint (flute) and dry, aching krar (lyre) and calm, jazzy rhythm section is powerfully evocative. Worth seeking out – and you will have to seek it out, being a self-published album at present, though a label to take it up must be likely.

www.atsetewodros.org

Rick Sanders

MÓRGA

For the Sake of Auld Decency Morga 002



Irish / Danish quartet Morga's second album is an effervescent affair, often as thrilling as a whirligig ride, though sometimes at twice the speed. The blend of the accordion of David 'Bullet from Belmullet' Munnely, Danny Diamond's fiddle,

Jonas Fromseier's banjo and bouzouki, and Dominic Keogh's bodhrán and flute often calls to mind 1980s versions of De Dannan when first Jackie Daly and then Máirtín O'Connor were on the box. Such is clearly the case on a set of tunes kick-started by *Devlin's* jig and culminating in an old-timey swing tune *Birdie*, all replete with the appropriate fits and starts so beloved by Messrs Finn and Gavin in former times.

However, in renditions of tunes such as a sprightly *Fitzmaurice's Polka* and two schottisches, *Kelly's* and *The Sunflower*, Morga's sound is utterly redolent of the Irish-American recordings made in the early part of the 20th Century (and not surprisingly since the first

Morga



schottische was composed by JJ Kimmel while the second is also of US origin). There are also plenty of Sligo influences at work here too, but Mórğa's greatest achievement is to absorb all of these inspirations and, thanks to the combination of their collective imagination and dynamic instrumental interplay, create a truly pleasurable album.

www.morga.ie

Geoff Wallis

BONNIE DOBSON & HER BOYS

Take Me For A Walk In The Morning Dew Hornbeam HBR0003

A contemporary of Joan Baez, Carolyn Hester and Karen Dalton on the early 1960s Greenwich Village folk scene, Canadian singer Bonnie Dobson recorded a handful of albums between 1961 and 1972 before retiring in the '80s to concentrate on her career as an administrator at London's Birkbeck College. Thanks to those nice folks at Hornbeam Records she's now joined the likes of Beverley Martyn, Linda Perhacs and Shelagh McDonald in 'doing a Vashti' and has returned to the recording studio after a lengthy absence.

Hornbeam initially established their reputation with Tom Paley's 2012 *Roll On, Roll On* and three of his Old-Time Moonshine Revue – Ben Paley (fiddle) Jonny Bridgwood (double bass) and Dave Morgan (drums) resurface here as Bonnie's 'Boys'. They're joined by Ben Phillipson (guitar) Felix Holt (harmonica) Ruth Tidmarsh (vocal) Sean Read (trumpet) and the justly ubiquitous BJ Cole on pedal steel guitar and dobro. Dobson's stated dissatisfaction with those earlier recordings, particularly her eponymous, 1969 RCA release, may have prompted the decision to replicate that record's opening two tracks with *I Got Stung* dropped by a semitone and delivered with a tougher, bluesier backing than the jaunty *Sunshine Superman*-like earlier version, and *Morning Dew* (her signature anthem, covered by the Grateful Dead, Robert Plant and Lulu, among many others) finally receiving a definitive reading.

She may have ditched the schmaltz, but Dobson's classic pop and rock instincts are thankfully undiminished, as variously evinced in the Shangri-Las spoken style intro to *Living On Plastic*, the Tex-Mex *Come On Dancing*, the extended, psych-out jam that closes *Winter's Song* (one for the Espers fans) or the band jocosely blasting through *Sandy Boys* like the *Full House*-era Fairport at Glastonbury Fayre in 1971.