



Peter Cooper Mission Door Red Beet Records

A talented singer-songwriter takes a wry and witty look at hardships, relationships, racism, drinking, and baseball.

Peter Cooper Mission Door Red Beet Records RBR 006, 46 min. ***:**

Mission Door is Peter Cooper's first solo album – a cool mix of alt-country, indie rock, classic country, folk, and Americana. The amazing amount of pedal steel guitar (jaw-droppingly played by veteran Lloyd Green) makes it sound more country than it really is, but this is refreshingly original, intellectually sharp, and emotionally satisfying music of the first order.

The songs range from the poignant retelling of a young boy's early encounter of racism in 715 (for Hank Aaron) to the funny and slightly sacrilegious Sheboygan - possibly the only song I can recall that deals with the idea of predestination, albeit in a sly tongue-in-cheek manner. The descriptive power of the lyrics is insightful and finely drawn. Cooper's voice is worn and easy – never overpowering the lyrics he expertly crafts. The arrangements, from Cooper and Lloyd Green, are balanced and inventive, and the performances are first-rate from studio veterans like Bill Lloyd on electric guitar, Jen Gunderman on keyboards and accordion, and Todd Snider on harmonica. Cooper shares the vocals on the title track, Mission Door, with Nanci Griffith, Todd Snider, and Fayssoux McLean. The CD has a clean warm sound, which could be attributed to being recorded on – big, thick analog tape, or it could be due to excellent engineering and mastering. Whatever the reason, the sound quality of the recording perfectly matches the intent of the songs and the level of the performances.

For a first effort, this is a distinctly tasty pleasure. I'm looking forward to the next serving from Peter Cooper. More please. Highly recommended.

TrackList:

1. Boy Genius
2. All the Way to Heaven
3. Wine
4. Couple of Lies
5. Take Care
6. Mission Door
7. They Hate Me
8. 715 (For Hank Aaron)
9. Sheboygan
10. One by One
11. Andalusia
12. Thin Wild Mercury

- Hermon Joyner

Copyright 2008 Audiophile Audition