



## **Mission Door – 2008 (Red Beet)**

### **Peter Cooper**

Reviewed by Linda Dailey Paulson

It's boggling to think that this is Peter Cooper's debut. The writing is mature, the arrangements thoughtful and artistic. This is storytelling in song by the Nashville-based music journalist. His lyrics are often as brash as introspective. "Boy Genius," for example, features a witty and improbable verse - "We got dark sunglasses and push-up bras/Control-top pantyhose and probable cause." The songs are as likely to feature truths about living life as they are witty observations about how folks cope. Sometimes they engage in existential conversation, and other times it takes the help of a little liquid courage. Or both.

Other short stories include a tribute to Hank Aaron, a confrontation between Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan ("Thin Wild Mercury"), and memories of places like Sheboygan and Andalusia. In addition to his own work, Cooper covers Eric Taylor's "Mission Door" and "All the Way to Heaven."

Cooper is buoyed by the caliber of artists accompanying him: the steel of Lloyd Green in particular, Nanci Griffith, Todd Snider (whom Cooper credits with pushing him to record), and Jason Ringenberg (Jason and the Scorchers). Those who enjoy smart and soulful singer-songwriters in the vein of John Prine and Townes Van Zandt are sure to enjoy Cooper.