

**Peter Cooper, Mission Door (Red Beet).
April 2008**

Album one by Peter Cooper, music critic for Nashville daily The Tennessean and an occasional No Depression contributor, reflects a flair for thoughtful storytelling in the traditions of John Prine, Tom T. Hall and Jim Lauderdale, warmly complemented throughout by co-producer Lloyd Green's pedal steel virtuosity. Cooper's clear sense of history permeates his reflections on the town of Andalusia, Alabama, on Townes Van Zandt ("Take Care"), on ex-FEMA stumblebum Mikey Brown of Katrina fame ("Boy Genius") and on Bob Dylan's toxic, real-life 1960s encounter with folkie Phil Ochs ("Thin wild Mercury"). While a lengthy spoken interlude on "715 (For Hank Aaron)" throws the otherwise fine performance off-balance, both "Wine" and "They Hate Me," the tale of a nouveau-riche southern family, sparkle with wit. As a critic, Cooper has no doubt encountered plenty of singer-songwriters who confuse navel-gazing with creativity; as an artist, he deftly avoids such pitfalls with this low-key yet powerful debut.

-Rich Kienzle, No Depression