

a pick-up band. Johnny's Door is a jazzy late night soul-blues number but title track Lucky Man is a jaunty upbeat stomper. The album closes with Ain't Dead Yet a Crescent City style rave-up featuring a tuba bassline and wailing trumpet solo from Holloman and tinkling piano from Jack Myers. A great finish to a very accomplished album and I hope they are able to achieve more and build on this impressive debut.

DAVID DRURY



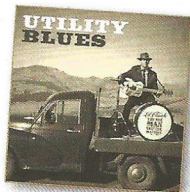
PORTER NICKERSON BONFIRE TO ASH

WEASEL RECORDS

Quite lovely really. Willy Porter has a soft voice and plays guitar with real verve and syncopation, while Carmen Nickerson has a sensual and rich voice that just envelops your ears and a shimmer in her tone that arrows straight for the emotion centers. The songs are predominantly relationship related and they tell stories that we can all relate to, whether they are singing about new love affairs or the exquisite tremors of a love affair just beginning to become a full on relationship. They make you feel accepted as they manage to include so much of human life in songs such as I Need You as Porter's voice leads

softly and slowly and Nickerson's vocal fills in the holes in the same way that couples complete each other, making each single greater than the parts together. The musicianship on the album is superb with stunning bass (electric and acoustic) from Zev Katz and Ben Wisch's piano & Hammond adding so much, so subtly. Mai Bloomfield guests on a couple of numbers on cello and the darkness and depth of tone are remarkable. My personal favourite track is the haunting Living Proof with stunning lead vocals from Ms Nickerson and gorgeous lap steel courtesy of Sean Williamson. It is a delight of an album, recorded with passion and love and every track suggests that it would transfer to the live environment without any troubles.

ANDY SNIPPER



LIL' CHUCK UTILITY BLUES

BACKYARD MUSIC

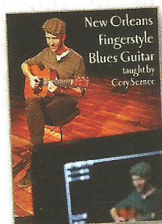
Lil' Chuck is a UK born musician who relocated to New Zealand in 2003. After playing in various bands he reinvented himself as 'the one man skiffle machine' and this is the follow up to his 2013 debut Blues In Full Swing album. The

notes tell us that Chuck plays harmonica, guitar, kick drum, high hat and occasional kazoo as well as vocals and that all songs were recorded live in the studio with all instruments being played simultaneously. The dozen tracks are mostly original compositions which is refreshing although I did enjoy the one cover, Merle Travis classic Sixteen Tons which was surprisingly close to the original. Considering the limitations that Chuck puts himself under the tracks are varied and interesting. Opener All That Glitters sets a good template and dispels any preconceptions that one man skiffle claim may have set. Personally, I think the best thing on here is the

closing track I Call On Jimmy Reed where Chuck tries to evoke the essence of the man and does so extremely well, the tempo, sublime harp and heartfelt vocals leaving the listener wanting more of the same. I also liked the obligatory drinking song Whisky And Ginger but maybe that says more about me? The titles of songs Good Time Mama, Heartache Heartbreak, Honey Leave Your Porch Light On are pretty self-explanatory about the subject matter but having said that Chuck tries to make the lyrics interesting and avoid the usual clichés. Follow the advice of track 4, Stick It In Your Pipe And Smoke it, you might just enjoy it. STEVE YOURGLIVCH



DVDs



CORY SEZNEC NEW ORLEANS FINGERSTYLE BLUES GUITAR

STEFAN GROSSMAN

GUITAR WORKSHOP

Another release from the infamous guitar workshop series. After a while you begin to wonder if there is anything left for them to cover? Cory Sez nec is not a name that I have

come across previously, and according to the blurb, he is a Franco American musician living in Paris France (Yes it really did say Paris France!) and his speciality is fingerstyle playing on guitar and banjo and other instruments. As ever, the production here is faultless, but here is where I start to make a criticism that I have not made before with any of this series, firstly, I don't think that this lesson is intended for the beginner, although in fairness, it doesn't say so anywhere, but I certainly had problems following some of it. Upon reflection, I think that is partly due to the fact that