

(Bobby Hardin & The Night Riders) / They Call It Puppy Love (Tony Snider & The Thunderbolts) / Pins And Needles (N.A. Stephenson & The Four Kings) / I Love My Baby (Billy Wayne) / Dreamer Boy (Bobby Hardin) / All Night Long (Larry Brinkley) / Your Cheating Heart (Tony Snider & the Thunderbolts) / Blues In F (Charlie Roach) / My Old Lonesome Love (Joe Rickman) / Tornado Twist (Larry Brinkley) / Getting Better (Bobby Hardin & The Night Riders) / Fool For Jealousy (Tony Snider & The Thunderbolts) / Little Star (Charlie Roach & Joe Kenchen) / Lonely Wind (Billy Wayne) / Sweet Sweet Dreams (Bobby Hardin & The Night Beats) / Sundown Blues (Larry Brinkley) / It's You (Tony Snider & The Thunderbolts) / Three Way Boogie (Charlie Roach) / That'll Get It (Bobby Hardin & The Night Riders) / I Got Memories In My Eyes (Larry Brinkley) / Dreamer Boy (Bobby Hardin & The Night Riders) / It's You (Tony Snider) / Tom Cat Boogie (Lynn Pratt & His Rhythm Cats with Charlie Roach) / I've Seen It All (Curly Griffin) / They're Learning (Lynn Pratt & His Rhythm Cats) / Got Rockin' On My Mind (Curly Griffin) / Come Here Mama (Lynn Pratt & His Rhythm Cats) / Gotta Whip This Bear (Curly Griffin) / You Gotta Play Fair (Curly Griffin) / You'll Never Be My Baby Anymore (Larry Brinkley)

Producers: not listed

**Stomper Time STCD 22**

1:18:06

Stomper Time specialise in compiling retrospective collections from small independent record companies of the 50s and 60s and this release focuses on the Westwood and Hillcrest labels out of Jackson, Tennessee which were owned and operated by entrepreneur Charlie Roach and covers the period 1959-62. As always, it is accompanied by an interesting booklet containing several ultra rare photos and provides real value for money by jamming no less than 36 tracks on to a single CD. Tucked away

towards the end are seven recordings that pre-date Westwood from Lynn Pratt and Howard 'Curly' Griffin, on which Roach is featured as steel guitarist, so the whole project is very much a tribute to this forgotten man of country music.

The set opens with blistering pace thanks to N.A. Stephenson's magnificent *Boogie Woogie Country Girl* which will be familiar to most rockabilly enthusiasts, but much of what follows is seriously obscure. *Move Over Rover* by Larry Brinkley and *Walking And Strolling* by Billy Wayne are about as commercial as it gets and names like Bobby Hardin and Tony Snider will have most readers scratching their heads.

Unfortunately, obscure does not have to mean great and in truth much of this collection is routine rockabilly, not the strongest material, not the most dynamic vocalising – not bad, but hardly a compulsory purchase for other than the hardened collector. *Stomper Time* are providing a valuable service by saving for future generations so much otherwise forgotten rockabilly and country music from the golden era and long may they continue. (stompertime.com)

Ian Wallis

## GRETCHEN PETERS

Burnt Toast & Offerings

★★★★½

*Ghost / Sunday Morning (Up And Down My Street) / Summer People / Jezebel / Thirsty / England Blues / The Lady Of The House / One For My Baby / The Way You Move Me / This Town / Breakfast At Our House / To Say Goodbye*

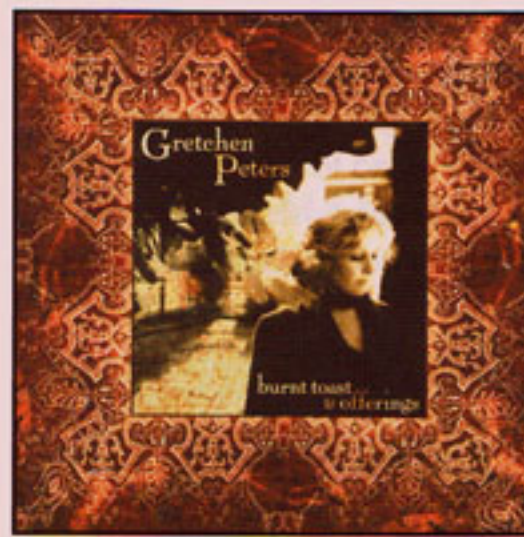
Producers: Doug Lancio &

Gretchen Peters

**Curb CURCD228**

51:40

Gretchen's ex-husband, Green Daniel, produced her previous four studio albums but following the breakdown of her marriage she has turned to Doug Lancio to co-produce this latest release. Gretchen speaks of a mid-life



epiphany and in the past she has been noted for writing some desperately sad songs but she argues strongly that, far from being depressive, they act as a form of catharsis and several songs on this new album prove her point.

The atmosphere of *Ghost*, which opens the album, is cleverly constructed. One can clearly visualise a woman feeling lonely and dejected, looking back on her life and seeing herself in happier times, but now living as a ghost in her own house. The feeling of desolation is revisited on *Thirsty*, which is given a moody jazz feel. Opening with recrimination aimed at her partner, the lyric becomes more introspective until, finally, the blame for the restlessness and dissatisfaction both feel is shared between them.

The way in which a once perfect love can slowly disintegrate is made manifest in the graphic *Breakfast At Our House*, a line from which is used as the title of the album. It's difficult to conceive of this song as being written by a nine-to-five writer: Peters takes us through a slow and painful process whose detailed description of drudgery suggests a firsthand experience.

The sense of foreboding is heightened by the tolling of a church bell sounding the mournful death knell which leads from this track into the closing *To Say Goodbye*, a song that speaks of the hopelessness felt in knowing that a relationship is in its final throes of decay, yet both partners are not ready to let go.

Gretchen's writing has always been incisive and *Summer People*, which views life through

the eyes of an underpaid, overworked waitress, is a masterpiece in empathy. *Jezebel*, with a simple guitar backing, sympathises with a fallen angel, misunderstood and maligned by people only capable of viewing life in black and white.

*This Town*, possibly Nashville, but in reality Anytown, USA, laments the fact that others fail to appreciate the virtues of the homeplace which the narrator has grown to love and of which she speaks fondly and proudly.

*Sunday Morning (Up And Down My Street)* is a detailed portrayal of the rest day, and *England Blues*, reflecting Peters' fondness for this country, finds the protagonist enjoying life on this side, just her and her man "holed up in a room on the river Tyne."

Gretchen has not shown great enthusiasm for co-writing although she has worked with David Mead in the past. He collaborates with her on just one song here, *The Lady Of The House*, which suggests it's possible to salvage hope from a shattered dream and find a glimmer of hope in a new relationship.

*The Way You Move Me* is a powerful ballad just waiting to be grabbed and turned into a big hit by one of the current country divas, while there's just one song that does not bear Peters' name as a writer – the wonderfully delivered, bluesy *One For My Baby* which was written by Johnny Mercer in the 40s, but it fits the overall mood of this album perfectly.

The backings – guitar, cello, piano, organ, concertina, bass, drums, percussion and a small hint of brass on a couple of tracks – is stripped down, always allowing Gretchen's voice to take centre stage. *Burnt Toast And Offerings* is another strong album from the lady who will be touring here in May with Matraca Berg and Suzy Bogguss under the banner *Wine, Women And Song*. This album is currently on release in Britain but will not be released in the States until July.

Al Moir