

in, his patience. This album moves our souls as delicately as the first time Steve heard Mississippi John Hurt when he was just aged thirteen, over forty five years ago now. This was the song which changed his life and allowed him to treat us to this very beautiful album of 'country blues and roots music'.

Frankie Bluesy Pfeiffer and Nat Harrap

RORY BLOCK – Lovin' Whiskey A Collection of Songs from the Rounder Years

Continental Records

Now seen as a leading light in the country blues, Rory Block's latest compilation release finds some of the best examples of her songwriting together on one disk. The songs feature her trademark soaring vocals, which sound like a cross between Linda Ronstadt and Bonnie Raitt, with strong support from musicians playing across a number of genres. The songs range from the plaintive ballads *Silver Wings*, and *Lovin' Whiskey*, which is included as a full band arrangement, and in the live guitar/vocal treatment that finishes the sixteen track album. The album also includes the celtic *Misty Glen*, and *The Water is Wide*, as well as the album's lone instrumental, *Catastrophe Rag*, which show of Block's acoustic guitar skills. Her singing features against a backdrop of an acappella male choir on *God's Gift to Women*. The country rock of *I'll be Gone*, and the slide guitar drenched *Somebody's Baby* show the direction her solo career would later take. This album, which does not sound as dated as other compilations can do offers a good overview of Rory Block's career to date, and it is worth a look for fans of mature music, and the blues which infuses the whole of this worthwhile re-release.

Ben Macnair

THORBJORN RISAGER

Track Record Cope

Judging by the cover I thought that this was going to be an album of solo acoustic train Blues as the sepia images of a young man walking the tracks carrying a guitar case suggested – oops! What I got instead was ten tracks of absolutely excellent Blues with some great playing and a wild and throaty vocal from Mr Risager. Martin Seidelin kicks things off with a heavy, thudding drum while Risager's grumbling guitar and Svein Erik Martinsen's slide lead into a Bob Seger-like growl on 'Rock 'N' Roll Ride'. The treatment continues on 'Baby Please Don't Go' which has a real New Orleans voodoo feel to it and some fine horns courtesy of Kasper Wagner & Peter Kehl. If I give the impression that this album is pretty tasty I am pleased to announce that from here it gets even better! 'Let's Go Down' has a great walking pace and deeply soulful harp and piano while 'You Walked Right In' has a Mick Taylor era Stones riff and those wonderful horns again. '7 Steps To Heaven' is funky and jazzy, 'Stand Beside Me' gives Risager a chance to emote in some blue-eyed soul with a great bassline from Soren Bojgaard carrying the song along. All through the album the playing is superb but it also has great feel for the music and the sheer variety of moods and styles that the band

are capable of is remarkable – even more so that they manage to put over some classic Blues alongside soul and jazz. 'I'll Be Moving On' is probably the most classic with a real BB King feel to the guitar and the band cooking like the best of swing outfits. These guys can really light up a stereo system and I wouldn't mind seeing them live either.

Andy Snipper

MAURIZIO PUGNO Kill The Coffee

Pacific Blues

Maurizio Pugno is an Italian guitarist of some repute in his native land and for this CD he has collaborated with the singers Sugar Ray Norcia and Mark Dufresne, who each front the band on different tracks. It's a very well-produced album, recorded in an Italian opera house, with a big fat sound and some nice playing. The music is often in the swing/jump mould, and Maurizio Pugno's playing is reminiscent of that of Ronnie Earl, which explains his collaboration with former Roomful Of Blues member Norcia. Within that general area, there's quite a mixture of styles, including the shuffle of the opening track 'The Lion's Den', the 1950s BB King style R & B of 'Funny What Happens (When The Old Man's Not Around)', the out-and-out rocker 'Big Party At My House Tonight', which features some excellent harp from Sugar Ray Norcia, and the light, jazzy ballad 'Blue Soul'. In addition, there are a couple of effective instrumentals 'Tronfy The Weeper' and 'From Norcia To Gubbio', the latter featuring some nice interplay between Norcia's harp and Alberto Marsico on organ. The tracks are split pretty evenly between the two vocalists and this adds variety too as they have contrasting sounds and styles – Dufresne a high-register vocalist, Norcia mellower. Pugno works very well with both of them, his guitar style marked by deft touches and a subtle and understated approach. The arrangements are well thought-out and in particular the use of an excellent brass section on several tracks is very successful. Pugno's Italian bandmates, Gio Rossi on drums and Lucio Villani on upright bass, as well as Marsico on keys, show themselves to be excellent musicians. All in all, this is a collaboration that has succeeded in its aims.

Mark Harrison

CHASING PANDORA The Driver And The Dancer

Tickety-Boo

I must admit that I wasn't blown away by the Chasing Pandora EP "Running In Circles", although it had just enough goodness to recommend it, but this engaging and intriguing album is definitely a step up, in the right direction. Billed as "Malta's greatest ever music phenomena", Chasing Pandora are essentially a duo comprising singer Melissa Portelli and multi-instrumentalist Keith Anthony. They're basically dealing in simple folk-

