

Miff Laracy

The One the Road Leads To

Written by Jose Sinatra

by Fallon Faraday (translation by Jose Sinatra)

Having known Miff for over 50 years, I should have expected he had this in him all along. Maybe I did. But I didn't expect I'd end up with my face paralyzed in a nearly-aching smile for the album's (too brief) duration and more...

Miff is an expert musician (several instruments here, including that dancing sax), a fine vocalist who just keeps on getting better and better, a writer and producer to be reckoned with. Even when we were kids, he was always able to pound me decisively when he correctly discerned that I was pretty much asking for it. Now he's touched me again, and it's really, really swell.

James Robinson and Billy Ray handle the drums, while Wolfgang Grasekamp (great name!) and Kurt Baumer offer very fine accents on accordion and violin, respectively. Dough Meyer's lovely pedal steel appears on two tracks, and the project was mastered in Nashville. The genesis was within a major, muscular talent who grew up on Burgener Boulevard in Clairemont (where, for a brief time, an older kid named Jim Morrison lived across the street.)

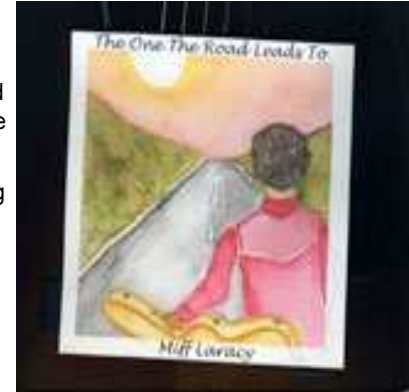
The ten songs encountered along this lovely road are delightful and endearing. Many are evocative of some long-gone master, and could have been tremendous hits when Hit Parades meant anything. Not that Miff doesn't sing and play his compositions perfectly, it's just that these songs would be revered classics yesterday had certain artists grabbed them while in their primes. But Miff wasn't even alive yet, so "Lazy Bones" is Lena Horne's loss and the listeners good fortune. A good musical savvy friend of mine (who was born in the early '60s) was made real happy with this disc. "A great listening experience. When's the CD release thing?; I gotta meet this fellow. This music conjures the spirit of Red Steagull in his prime. Really fascinating."

"In Cold Blood" is an infectious (if gruesome) folk song that would certainly have been a hit for Johnny Cash. "Hey, Mom" is a tender tribute that any mother would be honored to have written for and about her. For Miff's mom, who was recently widowed, it must be a treasured, once-in-a-lifetime jewel. For me it's perfect and sublime.

The anthemic title song about a lovesick musician is so determinedly upbeat and magical (like love itself), you'll wish you could frame it or it might just nail you to the wall.

A special thanks for the twisted wisdom within the lyrics "Thanks to You," a sweet li'l thing that'll have you chuckling throughout its not uncommon tragedy. Yeah, Miff can make sadness fun, just as he makes dance.

It's great stuff, much of it marinated in sweet country wine and laid out all naked and pretty. A cactus rose at dusk, a bracing morning stream, a honky tonk to call home - whatever it so genially evokes for you - you'll want it bad, because Miff Laracy lets you taste it. Way to go, Miff...way to play those gifts!



Shawn Rohlf and the Buskers

Tiny Xs

Written by Frank Kocher

Over the past few years followers of San Diego's Americana music scene have seen and heard a lot of Shawn Rohlf, either on his own, in productions like *O' Berkley*, *Where Hart Thou?*, or playing with Tim Flannery, Steve Poltz, or top local top acts. In former lives he's been a Colorado River whitewater guide and a European street busker. Both as a

