

Records

Four Volts
Something's Burning
 Braille
Family Mallet
Bosch's Bottom
 Braille
Rabbitlock
The Backbone
 Braille
David Watson
Reference
 Braille

Wellington is responsible for some seemingly insane people. Then again, the insane could be

responsible for Wellington. Either way, there are always outlandish projects humming within the hills. Enter the Braille Collective, an extended family of former weird wizards the Primitive Art Group. This collection of material highlights a group of eccentrics poketed away in the capital playing very bent music.

Four Volts combine the emotions of David and Anthony Donaldson (bass and drums respectively), Neill Duncan, (saxes, etc) and Janet Roddick (voice and trombone), in some skitting versions of 'Light My Fire', 'Domino', 'Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood' and various originals. The tracks mix sparse and empty ground with frantic bursts of fervour, accented by "talking sax" and

the powerfully nerving operatic vocals of Roddick. Combined, these sounds often resemble moods of a living creature. The instruments "breathe" — quirky and sparse.

Bosch's Bottom is a much less tense affair than *Something's Burning*, but nonetheless staccato. Donaldson once again playing trad jazz kit with Gerard Crewson humping away on tuba. Stuart Porter adds reeds to an album packed with 12 tracks. These are interspersed with the storyteller giving us "Right children, now it's time for your bedtime story" and "Mr Chowmondley." The mix is as thick with tricks like backward tapes as it is sparse. A buoyant and bubbly affair... the bubbles are definitely over the top.

The Backbone is a touch more mainstream in its composition — even riff oriented, whereas the others are thematic in approach, creating images rather than patterns. There are numerous rhythmic twists and timing changes, drummer Malcolm Reid accompanied by David Donaldson and David Long (cello) plus various Volts and Mallets. Second track 'Queensaire' slips into a groove (believe it... or not!), electronics giving the largely acoustic collection an edge. 'Rhombus Stomp' is hoe-down banjo music from the back swamps of Southern USA, while 'Optimism in the Face of All Odds' has a jungle eeriness about it.

Reference is a solo project by David Watson based primarily

around guitar with synth trimmings. It's so subtle as to almost not be there... I daresay therein lies the beauty of the work. It drifts along, moving through moods not unlike George Harrison's first solo project *Wonderwall Music*.

Bizarre music from like-minded people — take your pick.
Barry Caltcheon

George Strait
Number Seven
 MCA

He's been described as a neo-conservative but I reckon that includes a whole heap of new young stars like Dwight Yoakam, Randy Travis and Steve Earle. A strengthening of the ties that bind country music, that as Mr Strait sings, "leaves the juke box smoking."

George Strait has a fine honky-tonk style, deep and sad, with more than a hint of Lefty Frizzell. Listen to 'Nobody In His Right Mind Would Have Left Her' for a real tear jerker, with the great line "even my heart was smart enough to stay behind." But then he surprises you with a storming road song like 'Rhythm of The Road', powered along by Johnny Gimble's hot fiddle, country swing fans are going to love his version of 'Deep Water', but my favourite is the sweet jazz feel of 'You Still Get To Me'.

Two excellent records were released here before this, *Right or Wrong* and *Something Special*, but it's going to be hard to get this one off the turntable.
Kerry Buchanan

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The BATS



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Bats bookings, write to 52 Longfellow St. Chch. 2. Ph. 324-828

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