



learn "Rollin' And Tumblin'" on ukulele. Moving to Chicago in 1976, he apprenticed with blues masters like Walter Horton, Pine-top Perkins, Homesick James, and Hubert Sumlin. Freund has played the Chicago and San Francisco Blues Festivals and recorded with Sunnyland Slim, Snooky Pryor, Magic Slim, Boz Scaggs, and Koko Taylor. He's currently a 15-year resident of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Containing nine original songs, *Lonesome Flight* is his fourth release as featured vocalist/songwriter. In the liner notes, Freund responds to criticism that he's too derivative. "I got into this music not to change it but to interpret it. I have tried on this recording to capture several different styles." Working within a trio format, sometimes adding a harp player or second guitarist (Scot Brenton in both cases), Freund lays down some night-prowlin', laid-back blues, beautifully framed by his rhythm section. The title song, which "recalls the night my father died at work," Freund says, is beautifully set off by Brenton's understated harmonica work, typical of his style on all four tracks on which he appears. Two more songs are in this vein, the King Curtis' tune "Keep On Drinking" and "Wind Is In My Face," described by Freund as the story of his life.

Two rip-roaring Canned Heat-type boogie numbers appear on this album. "Boogie In The Rain" describes a rainy night in San Francisco ("I'm gonna stay inside, drink some good champagne.") In "On Highway 101," Freund reminisces about a 1979 road trip from Chicago to San Francisco with Sunnyland Slim, when he was Slim's main guitarist.

The theme of economic hardship is addressed in "Let Me Down Easy," by mandolinist Johnny Young ("If I had the money I'd be high both night and day,") and the Muddy Waters-style "Tough Times," ("when you ain't go no money you sure can't be a happy man.")

Also in the mix is the smooth, jazz number "La Morr Is Blue," a la Sonny Rollins, and a couple of folk music numbers: a sparkling instrumental version of the traditional "Jesse James," and the acoustic "Hey Big Bill," a high five to Big Bill Broonzy. Freund adds some spice with playful country-style plucking on "Still Pickin'," based on an Elmore James tune.

Though Freund may sing about going in circles and trying not to drown, he certainly seems to have landed on dry land with this release.

— Robert Feuer

PETER PARCEK
The Mathematics of Love
Redstar Entertainment

Fans of guitarists Danny Gatton, Roy Buchanan, and even Peter Green will enjoy this sophomore release from guitarist/vocalist Peter Parcek. Blues fans more interested in the music than fret board antics shouldn't be discouraged, though, as intense electric and acoustic blues melodies make up a good portion of the album. His array doesn't stop there, however, as traces of country, rockabilly, and jazz exist in it as well. CD guests Al Kooper and Ronnie Earl are sure examples of the respect and adoration others have had for the Boston based performer for years, who's sometimes labeled as New England's best kept secret.

His blues inclination is immediately represented in the gritty opener, "Showbiz Blues." To start the Peter Green cover, Parcek slides about the guitar neck and strikes a meaty bottom note intensified by tube amp swell. The rhythm section then joins in, keeping true to Green's typically dark yet compelling drive. An early Fleetwood Mac likeness exists in the CD title song to follow as well, in which Parcek equates mathematical theory to love. Both Green and Jeremy Spencer come to mind in the lethargic acoustic blues number, which is one of four Parcek originals on the album.

Another Parcek original, "Rollin' With Zah," is an instrumental that easily places him into the category of legendary Northeast pickers like Gatton, Buchanan, Arlen Roth, and Tom Principato. Parcek gets into lavish fret board action here, and melds the variable melody with colorful tones and sundry depths. This instrumental diversity is displayed again in a cover of Lucinda Williams' "Get Right With God" and Harlan Howard's "Busted." Interesting things happen when Parcek and keyboardist Kooper get together, as the latter song ends in an effectively spacey and psychedelic manner. He then trades stylish licks with Earl in the slow blues "New Year's Eve."

A primal railroad hammer rhythm sets the mood for Parcek to display blues depth in a cover of Jessie Mae Hemphill's "Lord, Help The Poor And Needy." He then picks it up for Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Kokomo Me Baby," and then ends with Cousin Joe Pleasant's "Evolution." There's a lot of appealing material on *The Mathematics Of Love*. And although Parcek's

vocal talent is heartfelt and passionate, his brilliant guitar playing is front and center, electrically and acoustically.

— Brian D. Holland

STEVE MILLER BAND
Bingo!

Roadrunner

Nobody who has seen Steve Miller live, either since his *The Joker* heyday or back in the late sixties, would dispute the man's blues credentials. His mixture of psychedelic rock, folk, and Chicago blues was a unique and genre expanding sound forty some years ago. More recently, Miller's shows have left plenty of room for the music that is clearly close to his heart, sandwiched between the seventies hits that put the behinds in the shed seats he routinely fills every summer.

Hence, when it was announce that the singer/guitarist's first album in 17 years would consist of blues covers, it seemed like Miller was coming full circle. Sadly, this frustratingly brief 30 minute, 10-track set is a pleasant but hardly essential addition to his catalog. The selections range from obvious chestnuts such as "Rock Me Baby," Earl King's "Come On," and Jessie Hill's "Ooh Pooh Pah Doo" to a run through of Otis Rush's "All Your Love I Miss Loving" which Miller already covered on his previous outing over a decade and a half ago.

Three relatively obscure Jimmie Vaughan tunes are agreeable diversions, but they, like the rest of the album, never sound like Miller is totally invested in them. He's in fine voice, yet the backing is faceless, slick and predictable and lacks the bite of the music that reached down to his soul when he was a young gun prowling the Chicago back streets and blues joints in the early sixties. Recent Steve Miller Band addition Sonny Charles from the Checkmates takes lead vocals on a few tunes that add some grit to the program and occasionally the concoction almost comes alive as on a version of Howlin' Wolf's "Who's Been Talkin'?" Still, would you rather hear Miller's easy rolling voice sing that or Burnett's, biting, razor-sharp howl?

Bingo makes an adequate, top down, sunny day romp that is instantly forgettable. It'll provide concertgoers with a short and sweet souvenir after leaving his always-satisfying gigs. But it won't challenge or inspire them and considering the enormous gap between albums, this is a missed opportunity