



Matt Lax and Nearly Beloved

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Matt Lax and Nearly Beloved release new CD:

This House of Mine

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Matt Lax and Nearly Beloved's fourth CD, is about souls: souls lost, souls found, souls betrayed, and souls in search of redemption. The album's spare but rich soundscape of guitar, fiddle, banjo, and bass, exquisite harmonies and revealing vocals, explores empty rooms and mythic landscapes where souls are either “seeking to be soothed,” as in the track *Sing Me Along*, or looking toward a final resting place, as in the palm wine music-inspired *Sing a Song For Us*.

Nearly Beloved is a Northern California all star band, featuring Grammy Award nominated banjo player/guitarist Erik Pearson (The Crooked Jades, Evie Laden Band, Mushroom, Diane Ferlatte), bassist Paul Olguin (Mazzy Star, Victor Krummenacher, Shana Morrison), mandolinist/fiddler/guitarist Michael Stadler (Stadler Gibbons Band, Shards of Green, Clawhammer Guitar—The Collection), and Matt Lax on guitars and lead vocals (Zulu Spear, Palm Wine Boys, Lisa Kindred, Paul Pena). Pearson and Stadler also provide the CD’s background vocals, which range from wide-open country harmony to intimate duets--all honed over two decades of singing with Matt at clubs, festivals, farmer’s markets and picking parties.

Finger style guitar and frailing banjo are the musical mainstays of this CD, recorded live over two days at Laughing Tiger Studios in San Rafael, CA. The songs invoke not only American blues, country, and folk music, but strains of South African township and West African palm wine music as well. The long time bandmates weave their influences effortlessly through Matt’s heartfelt tunes--and with the very conscious omission of drums. “When it came time to record this CD, we wanted all the intricacy of the guitars and banjo to be heard, and we wanted the integrity of each song’s style to live uncompromised by the cadence of drums or percussion,” explains Lax.

Some fine Bay Area guests liven up the mix: *It Just Happens* features a duet with powerhouse vocalist Lorelee Christensen (Clarence Clemens, Ziggy Modeliste), and Mike Rinta’s Memphis-inspired horn arrangements (John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Vaughn). *Astronauts and Fishermen* is augmented by Richie Lawrence’s accordion (The Yolos, Loose Acoustic Trio) and Adam Beach’s pennywhistle (Zulu Spear, Romeo Void).

In the title track of *This House of Mine*, the sum of a loner’s life is revealed in a house

that provides a roof but no companionship.

*The price was right, but the location wrong
Too near the tempest sea and the wild beast's song
Too few have stayed for very long,
I have known so many souls*

This House Of Mine represents a return to the acoustic simplicity of debut release *Wanderer's Dream* (1997). *Hurricane and a Tumbleweed* (2002) and *Where's Bob?* (2012) are classic rocking Americana, Texas swing, bluegrass and rock (see reviews below). Matt Lax's honest voice and distinctive songwriting approach tie are a unique through line throughout.



Reviews of 2012's "Where's Bob?"

"The title track is one of the year's best songs ... *Little Woodblock* is another of the year's best songs. Matt Lax is clearly a songwriter to watch." – *Paul Riley, Country Music People - UK*

"Easily digestible, wholly satisfying, oddly familiar, always fresh, who wouldn't want to take an Americana ride with Matt Lax and *Nearly Beloved?*" -- *John Castino, Innocent Words Magazine*

"Made my Best of 2012 list!" -- *Mary Tilson, America's Back 40, KPFA Radio, Berkeley*

"Reminds me of the *Burritos*. There's much to like here and it's the sort of album where your favorite songs will change with each listen. *Where's Bob* is an album worth looking out for and listening to." – *Steve Rapid, Lonesome Highway*

"In the terrain of Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark, John Prine, Woody Guthrie, Gram Parsons and John Hiatt. Stark! Strong." -- *Max Achatz, Country Jukebox*

"Perhaps the most clever song on the album is one that I'm sure would make Roger Miller proud. *'My P-Role Officer'* is a great story song about a guy who just can't catch a break, to say the least. A fantastic, well written song and well performed by Matt Lax and the group." -- *Jason Gartshore, Americana Review*

"Recalls the glory days of bands like Pure Prairie League and others 30 years ago. The guitars of

Erik Pearson and Matt Lax work overtime on a funky cover of '*Subterranean Homesick Blues*' that wraps the whole album up perfectly." -- *John Heidt, Vintage Guitar Magazine*