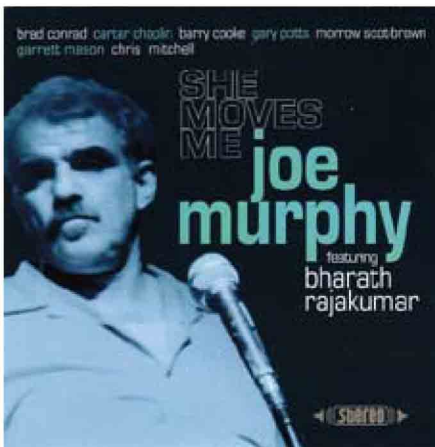


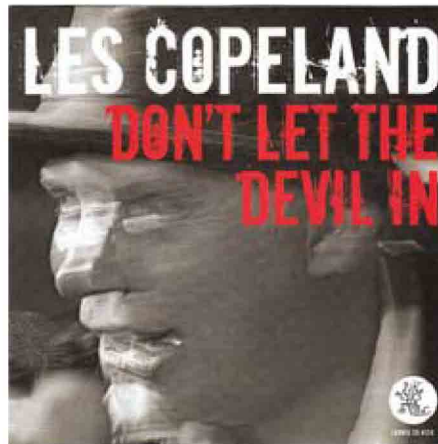
Illustration by Nathaniel Mesner



Joe Murphy *She Moves Me* Canard Noir

An institution on the east coast, **Joe Murphy** has been a mentor to most everyone now working there. His long-running Saturday afternoon gig at Your Father's Moustache in Halifax has been the launching pad for almost all of them. It's also become a must-stop for touring musicians and is a must-stop for you. For all those years of service, this is only his fourth album but it is a tremendous one. And he has a special guest: Montreal's **Bharath Rajakumar**. They both play harp & guitar but here Murphy mostly sticks to the vocals and Rajakumar to harp. They present a solid program of Chicago blues, with particularly fine performances of **Muddy's** "She Moves Me", with Murphy on slide, **Jimmy Rogers'** "My Last Meal" & **Rice Miller's** "Sonny Boy's Santa Claus" among the twelve. On **T-Bone Walker's** "My Eyes Keep Me In Trouble", Murphy solos on chromatic, with Rajakumar on the diatonic harp. **Carter Chaplin** adds his guitar to the band for **John Brim's** rarely heard "You Got Me Where You Want Me". A Murphy original, "A Little Place In The Country", sounds completely appropriate here as Rajakumar straps on the slide and Murphy plays harp. They even go live to the Moustache for a rousing take on "If I Had Possession Over Judgement Day". There is yet more on this generous disc: a live performance of "Five Long Years" with Murphy on chromatic and **Garrett Mason** on guitar is a must hear and another live recording, from Montreal but without Rajakumar, yields a stunning "That's All Right". There are also a couple of songs here from the CBC: **Little Walter's** "Up The Line" in a performance featuring **Chris Mitchell** on baritone sax and the album closer, a sombre original, "Hard Rain", dedicated to the memory of a friend. It's unclear here what the circumstances of the song

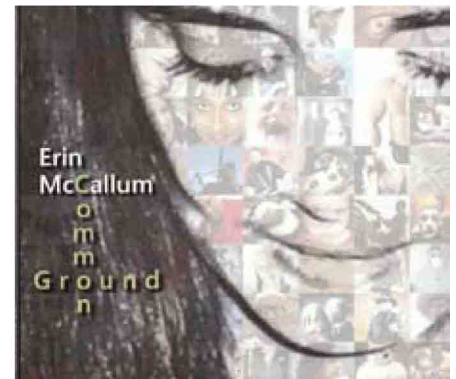
are but Murphy delivers a most compelling vocal, with **Barry Mack** on slide & **Woody Woods** on electric piano. For most artists, the tracks with Bharath Rajakumar would have been enough for one, excellent, CD, the fact that Murphy has added so many fine bonus tracks makes this doubly valuable. For all the players involved here, far too many to list, and all the locations, this is a remarkably consistent production. To get your copy, contact Joe at joemurphy52@hotmail.com.



Les Copeland *Don't Let The Devil In* Earwig

How does a little-known guitarist from Vernon, BC get recorded by Earwig Records in Chicago? Well, **Les Copeland** saw that **Honeyboy Edwards** was playing the Salmon Arms Festival in 1996 and asked if Honeyboy needed an escort for the Fest. They've been friends ever since. For someone who heard **Fred McDowell** at age 11 and made a career decision right then, the match was perfect. Copeland has performed regularly with Honeyboy & arranged tours for him in BC and now Honeyboy has returned the favour, appearing on two tracks here. Label prez (& Honeyboy's manager) **Michael Frank** assists on harp on three more. It would appear that several of the songs here come from earlier, self-produced CDs (should you have found those), with most of the new songs recorded in BC while Honeyboy was on tour there last summer. The liner note describes his music as 'blues with a modern folk edge' but the opener, "That Needed Time", is unmodified blues and a fine way to begin. He is a student of the guitar and a warm vocalist plus he loves to play slide. His tribute, "Ry Cooder" also serves a showcase for his slide skills. "What's Your Name" shows more of his astute songwriting observations and features some fine harp from Frank. "Riding That Sky Train" pays homage to **Bukka White**, it's another gorgeous slide piece. The 'juke-jammin' version of **Robert Nighthawk's** "Anna Lee" shows how close the

relationship with Honeyboy is. He's a master at finger picking as well and "Long Lost Love" could be an example of that folk edge but could equally be termed a modern Piedmont composition. I get the impression that Copeland would not care for such trivialities, however. "How's That Drummer" is the other Honeyboy track and refers to an ongoing exchange between the two of them, with Honeyboy needling him about the drummer that stole his second wife. The well-chosen title track is a minor key plea meant as much for himself as for anyone listening. The closer was only recorded this past March, on the death of his newborn daughter. "Crying For An Angel" is a multi-tracked electric guitar masterpiece. I go to Chicago and find out about a talented BC guitarist – I love it. Earwig's web site is www.earwigmusic.com.



Erin McCallum *Common Ground* Self

Big Voice. Big Sound. So it says on her web site and so it is here as **Erin McCallum's** singing now dominates the proceedings. This is the third album and her experience at writing, arranging and producing for her voice is well captured. She has the confidence to use her power and range more effectively. The new songs like "In Your Dreams", "Miss Informed" & "Don't Call Me Baby" allow her to show off that voice. There are ballads like "Touched Me In My Soul" and rockers like "Right Down The Middle" – all handled with ease. The regular band: **Trevor Mackenzie**, guitars, **Ronald Lombard**, bass and **Joe Pace**, drums, are once again joined by **Greg Dechert**, whose contributions now include piano horns & strings, in addition to his piano & organ. Ms. McCallum has also decided to play harmonica and it may be a sign that she should think about getting an outside producer for the next album. It might be a useful next step in any event. But as she sings in "It Happens", people tell her 'you can't pay the bills with a silly song', well I, for one, hope she keeps trying to do it. The web site is www.erinmccallum.com.