

Review

Two Tom Mawhinney Albums

Tom Mawhinney, **Await the Time** and **Highway #1**. Calliope Music, 124 Bagot St., #5, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3E5.

"Await the Time" is a record album with songs about love, flowers, seasons, and travelling. Tom Mawhinney is a wanderer who allows himself to touch and be touched by the places and people he meets. He goes beyond experience to give expression to what he feels. For example, in "The Seasons and the Times," he says,

Here's my hand what can I offer?
Here's my heart to go along
Let them be of comfort to you
Til the time when I'll be gone.

As a lyricist he is lavish with words and verses. Too many "ands" at the beginning of lines in "Await the Time" and "Come to me for Comforts" weaken an otherwise superb song-writing style. He takes us with him in "Hepatica Paths:"

It's midway through spring of my thirtieth year
Hepatica paths fill the woods
And the birds fill the sky
As they fly into summer
The sun on my skin feels good
I'll watch for what's mine
All the while that my time
It goes on and goes on and goes on
And all I can say at the end of a day
It's to-day, it's to-day, it's gone.



His arrangements are uncluttered, with autoharp, electric bass, guitar, and recorders. He is the sole performer. With added instrumentation, some numbers, such as "Dark Clouds" could be compared with Simon and Garfunkle's greatest hits. His voice is clear and controlled. The catchy "Zucchini Alley Theme Song" is a round on two recorders with the sound of the Calliope at the fairgrounds.

His attitude of caring enough to share with a wider audience is reflected in "I'm Leaving You."

Got something I'm trying to see through
It's coming out soon
And I'm leaving you.

Among the extra ingredients required to leave a lot of things behind and to produce two albums are vision and determination. Mawhinney's second album, "Highway #1," is equally pleasant listening. "Highway #1" refers to the Trans-Canada. The title song is a spoof of modern man-woman relationships.

The songs range in time from 1971 to 1980. In style they range from blues (Bachelor Blues) to ballad (The Ploughsman) and from religious (Keep your Feet) to reggae (The President Says). A song in french, "Lumieres," is especially beautiful. There are two selections called "Sanctuary." One with guitar reflects shades of Bruce Cockburn. The piano version has a "radio programme interlude" quality to it.

There is a wide selection of songs in the folk tradition about causes of various kinds. Included here is "Kouchibouguac" which concerns expropriation of a farm. "Anacouni," an indian song, provides an interesting contrast. It would have been nice to see a translation of this song in the liner notes.

The second album has expanded arrangements with the inclusion of drums, harmonica, and highstring guitar, all played by Mawhinney. Added musicians are Ron Dann, pedal steel, Tony "Raffa" White, drums, and Doug McClement, bass. McClement was also engineer of the record. It was recorded at Comfort Sound, Toronto. "Await the Time" was recorded at Meadowlark Studios, Kingston, with engineer, Lloyd Peppard.

Tom Mawhinney, composer, arranger, performer, psychologist has lived all across Canada. It would be splendid to see him at the festivals and concerts and hear him on the radio more often. If he were to serenade me at my balcony I would throw flowers with no thorns.

Mary Ann Wilson