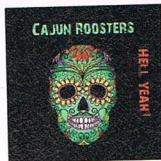


## Cajun Roosters Hell Yeah!

Whoopie Records (48 mins)



A swampy Cajun hoedown



This is some straight-up knee-slapping, line-dancing, hat-tippin', hoedown-swinging, Bayou-

swimmin' stuff! If that's not your thing, you're probably not going to like the latest offering from Cajun Roosters very much. If you do, well, it's time to don your overalls, get to the nearest cookout and stick *Hell Yeah!* on.

Chris Hall, accordionist and founding member of Cajun Roosters, has performed not only with leading Cajun musicians, but with Paul McCartney, Kate Bush and Bill Wyman.

The most impressive thing about this collection of unquestionably talented musicians is that, although none of them actually hail from the wet marshlands of Louisiana (from where their sound originates), they possess a quality that is unmistakably Cajun through and through. *Hell Yeah!* is peppered with soft, delicate French ditties, sung with that tell-tale Southern twang and is backed up by world-class musicianship. The album rarely has a dull moment and for the most part bucks and kicks at breakneck speed only letting up once on 'Belle Louisiane' – a particularly twangy Louisianan French ballad, one of the recording's most noteworthy tracks. *Hell Yeah!* is a must for any hoedown or trip to the swamp.

MIKE FLECK

TRACK TO TRY *Belle Louisiane*

## Abelardo Barroso with Orquesta Sensación Cha Cha Cha

World Circuit (49 mins)



Legendary son-and-salsa sensation swings again



Before achieving its great success with releasing new artists and albums,

the World Circuit label excelled at licensing and re-releasing choice world recordings from the past. With the Cuban licensing frenzy long over, they've returned to the fray and brought us this classic 1950s album from one of the great voices of Cuba. Abelardo Barroso started his career right at the beginnings of professional Cuban popular *son* with the group of Ignacio Piñeiro; by the 50s he was a big star. He became one of the most popular of all Cuban

artists in Africa and was hugely influential on some of the most individual talents of the 70s salsa scene – singers such as Henry Fiol and Cuco Valoy.

This remastered album, smartly designed with excellent liner notes, features the best of his *chachachá* period with Orquesta Sensación, and its flute and violin section. No track better showcases Barroso's agile soulful voice than the fabulous Cubanised cover of Antonio Molina's 30s flamenco hit 'La Hija de Juan Simón'. It's one of the finest ever examples of the fertile encounters between Cuban and Spanish music.

PHILIP SWEENEY

TRACK TO TRY *La Hija de Juan Simón*

## The Earls of Leicester The Earls of Leicester

Rounder Records (38 mins)



All-star supergroup blow away the bluegrass competition



Arrayed in Stetson hats and string bow ties (aka a 'Colonel Sanders tie'), The Earls of Leicester took

the Banjo Stage at the most recent Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival. They quickly elicited thousands of whoops and whistles for their spirited revivals of the repertoire of the late Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs (for whom the group was wryly named). The Earls' approach, as showcased on this album, is as evocative as their wardrobe, divested of the sort of superfluous irony and showiness espoused by many contemporary bluegrass artists. The warm, sassy dobro of Jerry Douglas, who formed the group, is in slithery evidence throughout, but his instrumental breaks are shared handsomely by the other all-star instrumentalists, among them banjoist Charlie Cushman, fiddler Johnny Warren and mandolinist Tim O'Brien. Guitarist Shawn Camacho also authentically delivers the lyrics joined in close chorus harmony by O'Brien and bassist Barry Bales, Douglas' bandmate in Union Station. The call-and-response on the final track, the Stanley Brothers' 'Who Will Sing For Me', sends the album off to a Sunday church service, brightened by Douglas' soloing.

JEFF KALISS

TRACK TO TRY *Who Will Sing For Me*

