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August, 2006 Shaun Brady

The Brooklyn-based OmniTone label has found a ripe niche somewhere under the bridge between the post-bop tradition torch-bearers and the mass appeal-alienating avantists. Their latest release, the third CD by guitarist Pete McCann, is a textbook example of eclecticism flirting with, though never quite crossing into, the outside. If McCann's sly, springy compositions weren't angular enough, Most Folks screeches through 90-degree turns from one track to the next, veering from cerebral post-bop to delicate ballads to fusion by way of math rock John McLaughlin tribute "JM." His own soloing similarly crosses the streams, Metheny-inspired clean lines morphing into distortion-heavy rock shredding. But rather than diversity for its own sake, McCann's playing is simply the evidence of an intellect that bounces around in his braincase like a superball. And it is that cleverness that reliably gets McCann where he wants to go, no matter how many U-turns he makes along the way.