



Coda
Nov/Dec 2006
James Hale

Coming from most musicians, a recording as stylistically and dynamically diverse as *Most Folks* would sound like forced eclecticism, or even artistic indecision. But most musicians aren't guitarist Pete McCann, who has established himself as one of the least classifiable players on the contemporary New York City jazz scene. The Wisconsin native can play clean legato lines with a bright tone and careful articulation, or he can bring the skronk with his amplifier in overdrive and overtones clashing in hazy dissonance. Best of all, as shown on projects like the Palmetto All-stars tribute to Duke Ellington or on cameo appearances with large ensembles, McCann can confound your expectations.

Most Folks allows McCann to cover all the bases, sounding like a portfolio of his best stuff. There's an appropriately churning nod to one of his guitar heroes, John McLaughlin, as well as "Worth," a mellow and melodic tribute to another: Allan Holdsworth. Two other pieces reflect the influence of trumpeter-composer Kenny Wheeler with the open harmonic structures and the kind of romantic yearning that has become Wheeler's signature. "Las Tias," a gentle acoustic dedication to his wife's Ecuadorian aunts unveils yet another side to his playing; illustrating that – like McLaughlin and few others – McCann can transfer his electric licks to nylon strings without losing any fire or personal expression.

McCann is backed by a solid quartet here, in particular saxophonist John O'Gallagher, who almost earns equal billing for his ebullient contributions to the title track and "Rack 'Em Up."