



## PRESS RELEASE

The first thing that strikes you, when listening to Peter Mulvey's new solo retrospective, *Notes from Elsewhere*, is how complete it feels. A voice and a guitar. The facts. When an artist's work is reduced to element, it inevitably tells something about the musicality at the bottom line. In this case, the approach also reveals a complexity of detail, a bedrock of solid technique, and a fullness and range of effect that are rare in a solo recording. It's the sort of sufficiency that can only be got through long years and hard listening.

There is, of course, the guitar. The speed and precision, the rawness and restraint, the delicate touch - like a haywagon rolling down hill on fire, driven by a man wearing an expensive suit. On songs like "If Love Is Not Enough" (first recorded on the 1995 album *Rapture*, and an enduring fan favorite), Mulvey, alone with his guitar, takes his own leads, not like a blues player picking the melody out against the open strings, but like a lead player trading short flurries of notes with the bass. It's safe at this point to say that Peter Mulvey has figured out how to play the guitar. He's got his very own thing. Songs like the instrumental "Black Rabbit", which Mulvey has been playing for over 15 years now, continue to evolve and showcase his varied talents on the fretboard. He plays the bass, the rhythm, and lead parts all at once. The growling slack-key figures, the rolling thumb, the jazz sensibility; all the tricks he's picked up and abandoned over the years are here combined and pressed into the service of the songs with a naturalness and ease that builds without distracting.

And then there are the songs themselves. In 15 years and a half-score of records, Peter Mulvey has found a lot of different ways to get from the beginning to the end. The songs included here are a fair inventory of the ways and the means, and they showcase the theatrical flair, novelty, energy, and swing that mark his best work. The lyrical progression through his records has been a movement toward a more open language and greater detail, toward finding and naming the sacraments in the small facts of living (notice the difference between a young songwriter's narrative in "The Dreams" as compared to the economy of language in the newer song "The Knuckleball Suite"). The young-man songs are still here, but he's found the understated voice, and the restraint to give them depth. Over the years he's lost the high warble and found the river-bed gravel at the bottom of his range, developing his voice to achieve the painter's dream of maximum effect by minimum means.

The songs collected on this record are indeed fan favorites, and they've been both praised by critics and respected by Mulvey's songwriter colleagues. They are the kind of songs musicians sit around in bars, arguing about which one is the better, and why. Arguments aside, what's certain is that *Notes from Elsewhere* is the straight story, a beautiful document, the man in full. In seventeen tracks it captures the first half of Peter Mulvey's career, and shows him in complete command of his powers as a writer, singer, and player. Fans, critics, and musicians in bars can't wait to see what happens in the second half.

**"Peter Mulvey has a spontaneity that's rare indeed...superb songs and singing...  
the music swings like a demon, with a laidback groove...  
some of the most literate songs around."  
- MAVERICK (★★★★)- UK**



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