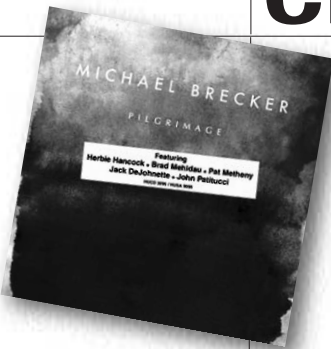


CDREVIEW M



Michael Brecker *Pilgrimage* Telarc/Heads Up

P*ilgrimage* is the gorgeous, courageous final coda of tenor saxophonist Michael Brecker. Brecker, a 13-time Grammy-winner, was one of the most influential jazz musicians of the past 25 years. He died on January 13, 2007, after a two-and-a-half year battle with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) and leukemia. *Pilgrimage* was recorded in August of 2006, with Brecker in the company of the contemporary giants of jazz—pianists Brad Mehldau and Herbie Hancock, guitarist Pat Metheny, drummer Jack DeJohnette and bassist John Patitucci. The album is Brecker's

first recording that consists of only his original compositions. As it chronicles his final moments, the album reflects the hope and urgency in fighting to survive, as well as the quiet serenity of saying goodbye. "When Can I Kiss You Again?" arose out of a question from Brecker's teenage son, during a hospital stay when physical contact was prohibited. The title track, the last track ever recorded by Brecker, oscillates between melancholy and optimism, yet resolves triumphantly. In his life and in passing, Brecker will continue to touch many for years to come.
Irene Jay Liu

By about 90 seconds into "Draconian Crackdown"—the best track on Melora Creager's latest outburst of Victorian death pop—the entire appeal of Rasputina's checkered history has blasted into glorious being: over-electrified cello blaring feedback, monster metal drum work, spectral backing vocals, unanticipated allusions to classic rock hooks, and that warbling voice tripping lightly over the arcane vocabulary of yesteryear's unwashed. The "band" has dropped any pretense of a permanent lineup—the previous four albums were Creager and two other random lady cellists willing to don corsets—and focuses solely on the

mastermind and her bearded imp of a percussionist, Jonathon TeBeest. *Oh Perilous World* is presented as a "Pulitzer-prize winning" vaudeville called "The Files of Thursday Christian" that took place in the imaginary (and probably dusty) town of Yellowcake, sometime in the indefinite pre-electric past. Obsessive fans had a crack at a limited edition double album featuring, among other curiosities, "The Pruning" performed by Access Hollywood's Pat O'Brian (or, to be precise, a spot-on impersonator). Those late to the party will content themselves with the main album's feverish stories about goats swimming in floodwaters, talking vapors, and snail fever.
Chris J. Magyar



Rasputina *Oh Perilous World* Filthy Bonnet



Various Artists *Putumayo Presents Americana* Putumayo World Music

What is Americana? The diversity and range of artists clumped under this moniker makes it hard to pin down. Americana reflects the country for which the genre is named—a melting pot of diverse cultural influences that is rooted in bluegrass, folk, and traditional country. For a primer on the genre, check out the compilation album, *Putumayo Presents Americana*. Putumayo is a world music label and it treats Americana like any other ethnic compilation album—a

sampling of the most accessible, hinting at the diversity of the genre. You have the songs that are pretty much pure bluegrass, but then you'll hear the darker indie-tones of Josh Ritter, the soulful belting of Ruthie Foster, and even a surprise appearance by pop-jazz crooner Norah Jones, performing with side project The Little Willies. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this CD will be donated to the Second Harvest Food Bank. | **JL**