

such group; his wife, Susan Tedeschi, is on her second. The Tedeschi-Trucks Band's debut last year, *Revelator*, was a success on every level, selling well and winning a Grammy. They've followed it up with a live album that finds the band more sure of itself and stronger in every way.

It almost seems silly to bother talking about Trucks' ability on guitar. He's just a great player, and that shows on pretty much every cut on this two-disc set. His biting slide is the highlight of the title cut, a funky cover of the Fred Neil classic. He and the band, which displays a fine looseness throughout, take the rock of "Nobody's Free" and turn it into a jazz tune with stellar solos all around. In the hands of a lesser guitarist and band, that could be a dangerous thing.

There's almost 110 minutes of music on these two discs, but only 11 songs. Don't let that scare you. The jams, solos, and soulful vocals from Tedeschi and others, are never boring. The use of dynamics by this band rivals the work of Trucks' other going gig, the Allman Brothers Band.

We also have an added element of guitar from Tedeschi. A fine guitarist in her own right, she puts some serious fire into several of the blues-rock tunes here.

Given the growth shown in what is literally only a year, and given the commitment Trucks and Tedeschi have to this band, it'll be interesting to see how they continue to develop. Expect greatness. — **John Heidt**



## Allan Holdsworth

**Hard Hat Area**  
**None Too Soon**

MoonJune

Since leaving Bruford in 1979, Allan Holdsworth has crafted an esoteric career. Yet it's also a career that's amassed a solid cult following. These two reissues help explain the appeal.

*Hard Hat Area* was released in 1993 and was Holdsworth's return to form, following a period when he'd been lost in the wilderness with guitar synthesizers and the SynthAxe MIDI controller — an instrument that he loved and his fans absolutely despised. Yet with a killer band behind him, the album got Holdsworth back on track and remains among the guitarist's best solo efforts.

"Ruhkukah" is premium Holdsworth, featuring extended solos, unpredictable chord changes, and intense rhythm structures. As usual, Holdsworth's flawless legato and deft melodic sense is front and center, proving again that he is among rock's best improvisers, hands down. Another gem is the title cut, which pulls no punches: this is intense, hardcore fusion played by world-class musicians. Suffice to say, if you like classic Allan Holdsworth, grab this CD.

*None Too Soon* from 1996 is Hold-

Matt Munisteri and his 1927 Gibson Master Model L-5 with a '33 neck.



## Timeless Guitar

**T**he common thread among this trio of CDs, besides hearkening back to an era before jazz was divided into camps (swing, bebop, cool), is the presence of Matt Munisteri. To give you an idea of where Munisteri is coming from, one of his aggregations is named not for an early-20th-century jazz musician, but for the never-recorded legend's *guitarist*, Brock Mumford (who played with New Orleans cornetist Buddy Bolden).

That knowledge of and dedication to the minutiae surrounding "old music," however, doesn't limit Munisteri as some nostalgia act; he's actually all the more original, since pre-

cious few players venture into styles the 47-year-old brings to life. A perfect example is *Wilderness*, which is subtitled "The Lost Music of Willard Robison, Volume One." Best known for composing the jazz standards "Old Folks" and "A Cottage For Sale," Robison wrote, sang, and played piano on 1920s recordings that defy categorization. To extrapolate a reference Munisteri makes in his liner notes, Robison, who pre-dated Hoagy Carmichael, was to jazz what Randy Newman is to rock — not really a member of the club but occasionally invited to its parties. "We'll Have A New Home In The Morning," with

Munisteri fingerpicking in a style that's equal parts country and Piedmont blues, then reeling off single notes à la Lonnie Johnson, might come off as caricature in the hands of, say, Leon Redbone. But the New Yorker sings in a manner that's relaxed without becoming cavalier and, most important, avoids affectation.

Although there's fine playing by all concerned, Munisteri wisely avoids pyrotechnics so as not to overshadow Robison's gems. But his duo outing with the Hot Club of Cowtown's Whit Smith should satisfy the appetites of guitar fans who prefer their jazz hot and spicy. The mostly

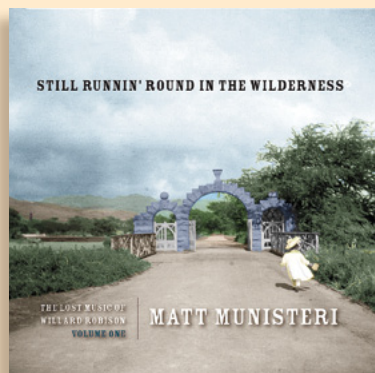
instrumental set finds the two guitarists backed only by upright bass. Songs from jazz saxophonist Coleman Hawkins to Texas Playboys Eldon Shamblin and Tiny Moore are joined by one original, Smith's Raymond Scott-flavored title tune.

The liner notes accurately explain that Smith's sound (courtesy his 1946 Gibson L-5 with a DeArmond pickup) is "more compact and warm" while Munisteri's tone (via a 1939 Gibson ES-150 that, unbeknownst to Matt at the time, once belonged to Whit) has "more treble and gloss." The playing (leads, rhythm, interplay) is about as good as it gets, and it's obvious that both are having a blast. (Wouldn't you?)

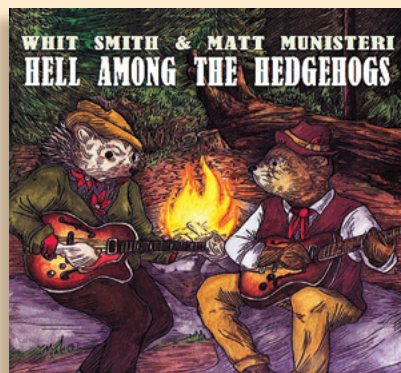
But Munisteri's highest profile gig of late is as guitarist and musical director/arranger for Catherine Russell. This makes total sense not only thanks to his versatility and musicianship but because Russell's father, Luis Russell, was Louis Armstrong's pianist and arranger.

Again, the repertoire dips back several decades to Satchmo, Ella Fitzgerald, Hoagy Carmichael, Lil Green, Duke Ellington, Mary Lou Williams, Abbey Lincoln, and Cab Calloway, but the mood is reverent without becoming slavish. That Russell can breathe life into a warhorse like "I'm In The Mood For Love" (with a bouncy, Django-tinged solo from Munisteri) is testament to her energy as much as vocal chops.

Thanks to Russell, Smith, and Munisteri for keeping this music very much alive. — **Dan Forte**



**Matt Munisteri**  
**Still Runnin' Round In The Wilderness**  
Old Cow Music



**Whit Smith & Matt Munisteri**  
**Hell Among The Hedgehogs**  
Old Cow Music



**Catherine Russell**  
**Strictly Romancin'**  
World Village