

Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer - Little Blue Egg (2012)

Written by bluelover

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1 *Better Way* 3:42 2 *Hard Edge Of Livin* 4:39 3 *Way Over Yonder In The Minor Key* 4:14
4 *Hard To Make It* 3:05 5 *Cross Of Jesus* 3:25 6 *Amazon* 4:22 7 *Three-Fingered Jack*
2:43 8 *Any Way I Do* 2:12 9 *Till We Have Faces* 3:44 10 *Gypsy Rose* 5:15 11 *September*
Sea 3:22 Dave Carter - Primary Artist, Banjo, Guitar, Slide Guitar, Vocals Tracy Grammer -
Primary Artist, Producer, Violin, Vocals + Claire Bard - Vocals Jonathan Mann - Bass Eric
Park - Accordion, Harmonica, Vocals

In one sense, singer/songwriter Dave Carter is destined to remain one of those tragic what-ifs of the music world, passing away far too soon and leaving admirers of his work to wonder what else he might have accomplished if only he'd stuck around a little longer. At the same time, however, the five albums he released with partner Tracy Grammer during his lifetime are a treasure trove of tunes; some have been recorded by the likes of Mary Chapin-Carpenter, Chris Smither, and Joan Baez. The posthumous release *Little Blue Egg* adds one more album to Carter and Grammer's already impressive legacy. It consists of home recordings made between 1997 and 2002, and brings to the world a previously unheard batch of tunes from Carter's pen, which is no small thing. People have often wondered why Carter & Grammer didn't break through to a bigger level of success, but honing in on these intimate recordings, one possible reason suggests itself. The fact is that Carter's voice, while tuneful and pleasant, wasn't a particularly commanding one. As great as his songs are, his delivery doesn't demand attention to them. Grammer's harmonies and occasional lead vocals help a bit on that front, though, and when it comes down to it, none of these songs require any kind of hard sell. The duo's cover of "Way Down Yonder in the Minor Key" -- a Woody Guthrie lyric put to music by Billy Bragg -- is listenable, but it's Carter's compositions that put the asses in the seats, so to speak, and we get ten of those here, all top-notch. Like Leonard Cohen, Carter is sometimes at his best when he's tapping into something spiritual, and the almost hymnal quality of "Any Way I Do" makes it a standout, while the plaintive, poetic lament "Hard to Make It" displays the kind of superpowered songwriting that cemented Carter's legend. As sad as it may be that he'll never write another tune, it's an unexpected little miracle that we've got another Carter & Grammer album. ---James Allen, AllMusic Review

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