

REVIEWS

COWBOY JUNKIES

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***Demons: The Nomad Series, Volume 2***

[Latent/Razor & Tie]

Beloved Athens, Ga., songwriter Vic Chesnutt took his own life last year, leaving behind a quirky, richly poetic body of work that dazzled fans and made his songwriter peers shake their heads in awe. On this striking covers disc, Cowboy Junkies achieve the near-impossible feat of framing Chesnutt's songs in more palatable settings while preserving the off-kilter beauty and mystique that lies at their core. "See You Around" finds singer Margo Timmins' velvety pipes wrapped in strummed guitars and swirling organ, "Ladle" boasts a spooky mood that erupts into a Crazy Horse-style guitar maelstrom in the chorus, and "Strange Language" rocks Chesnutt's biting humor with a vengeance. The inclusion of a lighthearted spoken-word segment from Chesnutt himself lends poignancy and levity. At the time of Chesnutt's death, he and the Junkies were toying with the idea of making an album together. *Demons* offers a hint at what we missed. —RH

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