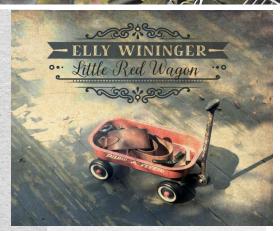
BETTYE LAVETTE | DEWOLFF | MAGGIE BELL | JOAN ARMATRADING | ZOOT MONEY | THE ZOMBIES | GERRY JABLONSKI

## JUNE/JULY 2018 (SSUE 102 £4.99) Our name says it all!

## Elly Wininger L Little Red Wagon

Rabbit Hole Records

This beautiful album straddles the line between blues and folk in a most satisfying way. The superb guitarist and singer Elly Wininger, a 2014 inductee into the New York Blues Hall of Fame, wrote or co-wrote nine of the 13 tracks. Two others, Down The Line and Wild Ox Moan, are traditional numbers. This is primarily an acoustic album, featuring expert fingerpicking and excellent slide. Wininger is aided by the guitarist and producer Stephen Miller; their styles mesh perfectly. The playing is crystal clear. Wininger's fine vocals are far forward in the mix, you can actually make out the words. They cover a cornucopia of life's joys and travails. The Girl In The Tree House is a paean to the magic of childhood. For Fred, a slow, bluesy, fingerpicked number, celebrates the joys of taking chances. 'Thank you for getting me to dance/Thank you for getting me out on the floor,' Wininger sings. 'Thank you for getting me to dance/I'd forgotten that sometimes that's what music is for.' One of the finest cuts is the traditional number Wild Ox Moan. The stellar guitar arrangement is credited, and properly



so, to Geoff Muldaur, who recorded it some years ago. This is country blues indeed. One of the bluesiest cuts is El's Kitchen, an instrumental on which the rhythmic guitar is accented by fiddle. And the title cut is a breakup song enhanced by slow, bluesy slide. Each song is distinct, yet the album forms a stylistic whole. Shade, 'I'm looking for mercy/looking for shade' features moving solos on slide quitar and electric organ. Hard Livin' is a fuller, almost poppier song with singers oohing in the background, 'it's hard living with a soft heart,' Wininger sings. I Say Love carries the warning

that if you can't take the pain, you're not prepared for love. 'And will you walk in trust/though your steps may be unsure?' Wininger asks. I say love. There's not a false note on the album. Every song's a gem. Great listening for a lazy Sunday afternoon.

M.D. Spenser