

2008 (CD EP, 25:03); Bennett Alliance Records
Style: Jazz/Folk

By John Patrick

Daniel Bennett Group The Legend of Bear Thompson

The Legend of Bear Thompson is the third release from New England Conservatory M.M.-holding reedman Daniel Bennett, and the second to carry the bear-oriented fable theme. Bennett's eyebrow-raising resume includes double bill stints with Bill Frisell, Billy Martin (of Medeski, Martin & Wood), and guitar wunderkind Charlie Hunter.



The Cheshire-grinning title character that zestfully mugs from the insert art seems to suggest that we're in for some kind of wild-hair sonic adventure; however, that's quite a distance from actuality.

Bennett's brand of jazz is spare, buoyant, and pleasantly hypnotic. Doubling on alto and flute with the grace of Ira Sullivan, Bennett is ably supported by guitarist Brant Grieshaber and percussionist Sean Jefferson on eight relatively brief, lighter-than-air vignettes of a kind of muted intensity. Standout cuts are finger challenging scored melodic curveball "Geronimo," and the solo classical guitar study "Paint the Fence."

Ok, you won't exactly wake up the neighbors with *The Legend of Bear Thompson*, but this is a fine disc to crank on the lava lamp, flop in the beanbag chair, and enjoy a thoughtfully relaxing time.