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CDs

TIM BENTON - "SCENES FROM A WELL-SPENT YOUTH"

Subtitled "Exploring the Songs of 1965-1975," this unusual and unusually entertaining album allows us to experience the pop hits of that era as re-imagined by an opera/musical theater vocalist. Born in New Zealand, now based in the U.K., Benton has a beautiful, powerful, emotive voice. Working with producer/arranger Simon Wallace (Barb Jungr, TV's "Absolutely Fabulous"), he needs only solid piano accompaniment to make each song fulfill its potential. Benton finds the drama in such songs as Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changing," Goffin & King's "Goin' Back," made famous by The Byrds, and Paul Simon's "America." The combination of "Aquarius/San Francisco" naturally suits Benton's robust voice. Gene Pitney himself had a voice of operatic strength, so "24 Hours From Tulsa" works well for Benton. Other top selections include The Fortunes' "You've Got Your Troubles," The Hollies "Bus Stop," Three Dog Night's "Out in the Country" and Joni Mitchell's "Chelsea Morning." Classic rock/pop tunes sound just fine with a legit voice to interpret them.

Paul Freeman