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The Gougers - A Long Day for the Weathervane Written by Don Zelazny

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The Gougers, formerly known as The Sidehill Gougers, are yet another good band from Austin. Main songwriters Shane Walker and Jamie Wilson met in College Station, Texas while both were attending Texas A&M. He (Walker) heard her (Wilson) singing harmony in a bar and things started happening. Besides Shane Walker on vocals, guitar and harmonica and Jamie Wilson on vocals and acoustic guitar, the band also includes Cody Foote on bass and John Ross Silva on drums. Silva, who mastered *A Long Day for the Weathervane* and has engineering credits with Dixie Chicks and Shawn Colvin, has been a friend of the bands since its inception and brought in country rocker Keith Gattis who oversaw production of the new CD and plays baritone and electric guitar on it. The band states that with the name change comes a fuller, more electric sound and is joined on the CD by many other players as well, adding accordion, cello, organ, fiddle, and additional guitar, bass and percussion. If the band plans on utilizing all of these instruments in their live shows, they're gonna need a bigger bus!

The tunes tend to alternate between highlighting either Shane's vocals, or Jamie's vocals; the switching between male and female vocals adds nicely to the diversity of the music on the disc. Both singers have very nice voices, but instead of always singing harmony together the music highlights one or the other in the different songs, which I liked a great deal. Lyrically the music offers much more than the usual as well, the songwriters obviously priding themselves on the lyrics of their tunes as well as the music. *A Long Day for the Weathervane* opens with the bluesy feel of "Manheim Station," a take on life from the vantage point of an old filling station. The singer notes, "I have seen the rain come down and I have braved the cold. And I've watched the world pass by me from the side of the road. I've seen the old folks come to waste their days in groves like old oak trees. And Jack, I swear to Kerouac that won't happen to me." The next tune "Rosalie" is a slower number featuring Jamie's voice and highlighted by the fiddle and cello. My

favorite song on the disc is the up-tempo tune "Everybody Knows," featuring an understated organ accompaniment. Jamie also shines on the soft tune "Michael." It sounds like Michael foolishly left Jamie behind, as she sings "Michael when the fireflies are dancing and the flowers come and go without a sound, Do you know I'm hoping you will answer me even when I look and you are not around." Again, I hope they have room on their tour bus for Brian Standefer and his cello, because this song would definitely lose something without his playing. Other highlights on the album are "Old Crown Scarecrow" and "Sleeping Pills." If the lyrics and liner notes were actually large enough to read I probably would not have any complaints about the CD. Fortunately, you don't need to read the liner notes to enjoy The Gougers and this excellent CD!

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