



KIND OF LIKE SPITTING  
"LEARN: THE SONGS OF  
PHIL OCHS" CD

HSH052

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Phil Ochs is to Bob Dylan as Kind of Like Spitting is to Bright Eyes. You will no doubt recognize this is an oversimplification--if not hyperbole--but the fascinating story behind this recording, indeed the lives and art of said musicians serves up manifold associations illuminating themes of discovery, rivalry, and tragedy, ultimately posing foundation-shaking questions such as: "What is art?" "What are songs for?" "How does one live a meaningful life?" and most importantly perhaps, "What can one learn from the past?"

Recorded at the Gene Autrey Theater in Los Angeles on Autrey's vintage two track machine in 2004, Kind of Like Spitting (here consisting solely of Ben Barnett and David J) deliver a selection of songs from the Phil Ochs catalog. In the months preceding the recording they took to performing six song intermissions of the not-too-well-known folk singer's music inside their own sets on stages across the country, interweaving the songs with biographical insight and contemporary relevance. This recording aligns itself with the production of Ochs' early, seminal records (*All The News That's Fit To Sing* [1965] and *I Aint Marching Anymore* [1966]) consisting solely of acoustic guitars and vocals. It also documents a transformation in the lives and art of Barnett and J, having taken to Ochs as a musical father figure early on, identifying with his underdog status and trumpeting his songwriting nerve and brilliance, only to come to accept him as a brutally narcissistic person who suffered from manic depression and alcoholism, ultimately taking his own life in 1976 in relative obscurity after a spectacular downward spiral, witnessing his peers Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell rise to superstar status.

As Kind of Like Spitting approach a ten year milestone, having committed well over one hundred songs to tape (in the same ballpark as Ochs at his death) over six albums (with as many different label imprints) and a handful of EP's and singles, Barnett and his rotating cast have paid their dues and seen their share of hard knocks for living a life devoted to music. For his effort Barnett has engendered a fierce loyalty from his fan base, not unlike the generation before who saw a light in Phil Ochs. At the turn of the millennium no one would have been able to predict that in five years time Bright Eyes would go on to play a caustic protest song on The Tonight Show, while Kind of Like Spitting would be stalled, sparring with a well known independent label over the "commercial viability" of a long awaited follow-up to 2002's *Bridges Worth Burning*. Looking back, one can trace the steps of artists sprouted in similar pop culture movements and posit reasons for their mass acceptance or marginalization, but these roads are precarious and opinions are fickle and fleeting. With *Learn: The Songs of Phil Ochs* Kind of Like Spitting has performed no mean feat: Together David J and Ben Barnett have felt the catharsis of bearing the torch of a musical ancestor. They have, by internalizing the art of Phil Ochs, learned the value of songs that didn't top the charts, and accepted for themselves a responsibility to persevere in music, as in life, despite the psychic tolls exacted by pop culture gatekeepers, despite the meaningless of artificial rivalry, despite the sacrifice of safety and commerce. They've looked into the art and life of Ochs with the same sense of hope and dread as looking into a mirror, and they've come out okay.

*Learn: The Songs of Phil Ochs sets the stage for In The Red, Kind of Like Spitting's seventh album, which will be issued on HUSH in November 2005.*

**Tracklist**

I'm Tired  
You Can't Get Stoned Enough  
Draft Dodger Rag  
That's What I Want To Hear  
Outside Of A Small Circle Of Friends  
Where Were You In Chicago  
When I'm Gone  
I Aint Marching Anymore  
Remember Me



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