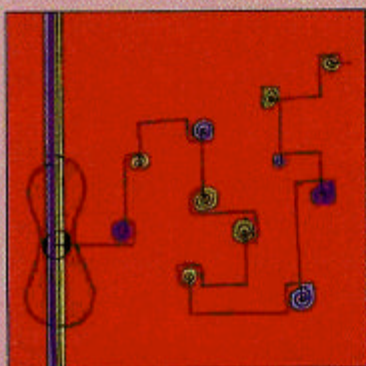


ACOUSTIC GUITAR

DECEMBER 2003

HIT LIST



Alexis Harte, *Sunlight Loping*. Northern California singer-songwriter Harte could pass as a Scottish or English expatriate on this second self-produced CD, as he channels bits of Donovan ("Sweet Tooth"), Nick Drake ("Lap Dragons"), and Al Stewart ("Puddle of Stars") along with a little gratuitous Tom Waits vocal processing. But his knack for catchy melodies, fresh lyrics, and deftly textured arrangements (integrating balafon, accordion, violin, and reeds into the mix), as well as crisp acoustic fingerpicking and taut soloing, confirm the original folk-rock sensibility he's forged since trading his Marshall amp head for an early-'60s sunburst Gibson acoustic guitar. A former ecologist in Brazil, Harte tempers his folkie romanticism with worldly rhythms and prismatic poetry for a bracing effect overall. (Mentl, www.mentlmusic.com)

—Derk Richardson