

Album: Mason Jennings, In The Ever

(Rated 4/ 5)

He's been one of pop's best kept secrets ...

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Mason Jennings, In The Ever



But now the cat's out of the bag. Remember the name Mason Jennings – a singer-songwriter schooled in the art of Jack Johnson-style campfire songs but sounding more like the legendary Neil Young.

Jennings has been around the block – new album *In The Ever* is his sixth long-player. But there's a freshness and passion in his music that belie his veteran standing.

Musically, simplicity is the key. Acoustic guitars ripple throughout – melodies are windblown and arrangements honeyed – the songs are beautifully crafted and build in atmosphere. It's the perfect musical formula.

In the Ever contains 12 tracks – each one beautifully crafted and presented. These are strong, lyrically well-drilled tunes, all propped up by lean arrangements, and stripped-bare textures.

Having signed to Johnson Brushfire label, Jennings will invariably be compared to the folk and blues-inflected pop produced by his more successful surfer-turned-musician stablemate.

Certainly, Jennings demonstrates much of the aching romanticism with which Johnson is associated.

But on several tracks, particularly the stunning *Something About Your Love*, you'd swear Jennings had morphed into the great Young.

The best thing about *In The Ever* is that the listener requires the minimum of effort to enjoy. Every track on *Little Dreamer* is an uplifting experience.

Jennings cruises effortlessly through each cathartic tune and by the end you are reaching for the repeat button.

These are songs of absolute carefree abandon – dreamy lush pop and mellow yellow throughout.

Among the many highlights are the catchy *I Love You and Buddha Too* and *Going Back to New Orleans*.

With such a calibre of tune, Jennings is surely destined for big things – and you feel with the talented Johnson in his camp, he could become one of the biggest stars of 2008.