

## "Waiting In The Wings" Feature & CD Review April 2007

### Mike Aiken - *Just Add Salt*

By George Peden

Like modern day coral reefer Jimmy Buffett, Mike Aiken lives an envied life. Housed on his 42-foot cutter, *Ocean Girl*, with his wife and co-writer, Amy, the salty world faring troubadour doesn't have to dive deep for inspiration. With a backdrop familiar to the rich and famous, this months *Waiting In the Wings* highlight has sand, sea and surf as the needed props for his lyrical sojourns. The added bonus of using a recording studio housed in a retired Navy tug also adds to the feel of Aiken's third album, "*Just Add Salt*".

The multi-talented Aiken --he's co-produced and supplied ink on most of the 12 cuts, also claims wider praise for slide, electric and mandolin on the album -- has captured, successfully, the essence of the sea.

The lead-off cut, "Hillbilly Beach Bum" (also an eye feast video with "90 Miles To Hemingway" on this enhanced CD) is musical proof. "I've got sand between my toes; I've got salt air in my nose" are lyrics decidedly not in the familiar leavin' and lovin' with the dog in the pickup country fare of radio. Tracks like the melodic "90 Miles To Hemingway" with its Caribbean soaked guitar, and Lyle Lovett's remembered "If I Had A Boat" are well suited to Aiken's easy-on-ear delivery, while "Fisherman's Wife" confirms Aiken's instrumental virtuosity. Aiken's passion for his weapon of choice, the guitar, well recognized by sponsors Takamine Guitars with a signature guitar "The Travelin' Bone", is shared with a musician's passion on "This Guitar".

If Americana and Folk, all sea-soaked with lyrical images described by one reviewer as the motivation to quit your job and buy a boat is your thing, then, just add salt. Mike Aiken is your man.

The album, slotted for an April 24 release, is on Aspirion Records.

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