

Shepherd Express, CD Review >>

Toni lordache

Sounds from a Bygone Age Vol. 4

(Asphalt Tango)

Romania under the communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was never known as a cultural hub, yet under his patronage certain folk artists were allowed to flourish. Among them: Toni lordache, maestro of the tzambal, a string instrument played with mallets. The recording collected here, made from 1964 through 1980, find him in various settings: providing low-key accompaniment to the melancholy soul of female singers; speeding through breakneck instrumentals at hardcore punk tempo; and executing deft, harmonically ingenious solos redolent of Eastern scales. Although he was sent abroad on state-sponsored tours, Lordache earned his living as a wedding musician, the center piece of bands that kept dance floors in rented halls packed all night long.

-David Lührssen 11/14/07