

“The Cost of Living”

New album by accordion troubadour Jason Webley in stores June 24th

Best known as a solo performer, bellowing apocalyptic dirges to the accompaniment of his accordion, Jason Webley's new album marks a departure for the Seattle-based artist, featuring a steady, driving rhythm section, more guitar than accordion, and dominant melodies carved out by strings.

The album, titled *The Cost of Living*, is Webley's first full-length recording since 2004 and features eleven new songs. The first single, “Ways to Love” is indicative of his new direction. Staccato guitar finger picking and lilting viola lines lend the track a distinct Eastern European flavor, while the rhythm section pushes the song towards completely different territory, culminating in a triumphant finale over a frantic house beat.

Even on the album's slower songs, such as “Almost Time to Go” with its haunting glockenspiel melody, the band keeps the music anchored in a way that is not present on Webley's earlier efforts.

Though many of the new songs are guitar driven, accordion lovers will not be left disappointed. On tracks such as the bombastic, Gypsy-surf-punk tune “Little Sister” or the album's epic closing number, Webley uses his trademark squeezebox to great effect.

The album was recorded with the members of Webley's touring band, made up of long time collaborators Jherek Bischoff, L. Alex Guy and Michael McQuilken.

“We could have brought other people into the studio for a few songs, but I thought it would be an interesting challenge to record



The cover is photo of a model built by Webley with stained glass windows he constructed with the help of his parents, who built windows professionally when he was a boy.

with just Michael, Alex and Jherek,” he says. “They are all such incredible players. I really can't imagine a better group.”

Bassist Jherek Bischoff, who co-produced *The Cost of Living*, is also known for his work with indie bands **Xiu Xiu**, **Casiotone for the Painfully Alone**, **Paranetical Girls** and **The Dead Science**. L. Alex Guy, who has also worked with **Laura Viers**, **The Degenerate Art Ensemble** and performs solo under the project name **Led to Sea**, plays viola and violin on all but one of the tracks. Drummer Michael McQuilken is also an actor and theater composer. He composed the original score to the Broadway production of *Nickel and Dimed* and was recently accepted into Yale's competitive graduate theater program.

Although this is Webley's first album in more than three years, he has been far from idle, keeping an unrelenting touring schedule, circling the globe and playing over 200 shows a year. In 2006 he began a series of collaborative recordings with different musician friends, most recently with **The Dresden Dolls** singer **Amanda Palmer**. The first single in the series, “Eleven Saints” (co-written with Seattle poet **Jay Thompson**), and its home-made animated video have become something of an internet sensation, winning the praise of radio cult figure **Dr. Demento** and author **Neil Gaiman**.

“The collaborations have mostly been fun, catchy, light songs, and I think that actually had a big effect on this new album,” Webley explains. “Normally my albums have been a bit bi-polar, switching quickly between really dark and really silly. But I guess I got all of the silliness out of my system with the collaborations, and the new album is pretty straight and serious.”



Jherek Bischoff, Jason Webley, L. Alex Guy, Michael McQuilken. Photo by Suzanna Finley. More images available at: www.elevenrecords.com/the-cost/

Webley's music career began in 1998 when he quit his day job as a studio engineer to play accordion on the streets. He went on to build a sizable cult following in Seattle where he became known for Andy Kaufman-like pranks - taking over a local commuter ferry with hundreds of fans dressed as pirates, and being arrested at Seattle's Bumbershoot Festival after leading a mob of listeners into the International Fountain. In later years, Webley began to tour more and more, building a fan base everywhere from Mexico City to Moscow (he is a minor celebrity in Russia, his most recent appearance in Moscow drew over a thousand concert goers.) In recent years he has toured extensively with his friends **The Dresden Dolls**, and has shared the stage with **Devotchka**, **Architecture in Helsinki**, **The Avett Brothers** and **Regina Spektor**.

For press ready photos and MP3s visit: www.elevenrecords.com/thecost

For more information or interview requests: info@elevenrecords.com

11 eleven records
po box 85777
records seattle, wa 98145