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DAVE'S TRUE STORY "Nature" BePop

The real story about Dave's True Story hasn't changed over the course of seven years and four recordings. The Manhattan trio remains one of best-kept secrets in pop music, consistently producing songs that are witty and wise, sultry and soulful, and distinctively arranged. If anything, songwriter and guitarist Dave Cantor has outdone himself on the group's latest release, "Nature," a collection of ironic ballads and bossa nova-tinted ruminations that suit Kelly Flint's sensuous voice to

a T. Though not nearly as well-known as some of the iconoclastic tunesmiths he brings to mind -- Dave Frishberg, Lyle Lovett and Tom Waits, for instance --

Cantor has had the good fortune to collaborate with a vocalist who never fails to do justice to his lyrics, no matter if they're sad ("Small Black Heart"), sunny ("Kiss Me Quick") or wry ("Dog's Life). Meanwhile, Cantor's subtle guitar work and bassist Jeff Eyrich's similarly understated approach are augmented by a curious array of instruments -- organ, trombone, bongos, ukelele, vibes -- that make "Nature" all the more intriguing.

-- Mike Joyce