

GRETCHEN PETERS **Burnt Toast & Offerings**

This is an album of middle-age regret, broken relationships and faded dreams wrapped in a classy production mostly smothered in mood and atmosphere. Gretchen Peters is a good songwriter in the smart and sensitive country-pop vein, as befits a New Yorker now living in Nashville. She was a late starter, but her songs have been covered by many prominent acts. She is bright, articulate and insightful, reflecting broadly on the withering of hope and expectation and its replacement with routine emotions (Summer People, Ghosts, Breakfast at Our House). And the songs are honest and good, though generally they stop short of being exceptional. Peters's performance and that of her band impressively mixes the sassy and the subtle. www.gretchenpeters.com **Joe Breen**