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Rich Warren's Favorites of 2012

First, an explanatory note:

I refrain from calling these "The Best of 2012" because the following list is but one listener's biased opinion. I have culled these from the many good recordings that crossed my CD player this year. I'm sure I forgot to include a few notable recordings. All told, I estimate *The Midnight Special* received at least 1000 new recordings, and I listened to about 500 new recordings, of which about 200 made it into the WFMT library, and about 150 received airplay. I do not include reissues and most compilations among these favorites.

Sometimes I am just overwhelmed by mediocrity and at other times marvel at the creativity and talent. There are a mere eight favorites this year. It boiled down to being exceptionally discriminating or a list of 25. I probably could have halved these or doubled the number yet again. There was ample good music, but only these grabbed me. While I thought about these choices long and hard for several weeks, if not most of the year, had I made the list a day earlier or a day later it might have been slightly different.

If a good friend visited from out-of-town with only an hour or two to spare, and asked me to play my favorites from 2012, I would play the following. Actually, I have purchased quantities of several of them to give to friends for the holidays.

[Steve Turner](#): *Rim of the Wheel* (The Tradition Bearers 1104)

Traditional music lives! Steve shines as one of a handful of performers not merely continuing traditional music, but keeping it very much live. His deep, thoughtful interpretations really take you into the ballad. In addition there are a pair wondrous songs by Paul Metsers and a few other worthy contemporary songs. Steve accompanies himself on concertina and cittern. Notables such as Martin Carthy (one of the other great living traditional singers and guitarists) on guitar and Oliver Knight on electric guitar provide icing on the cake. (That most tastefully employed electric guitar is infrequent and subdued.) There is little as gripping as a traditional ballad well delivered, and Steve delivers better than UPS.