SOUTH WALES Argus

19th June 2004

Cantinero – **Championship Boxing**

FROM the opening sound of an answering machine to recordings of barking dogs and atmospheric of Spanish guitars, the wallpaper of everyday life in New York seeps through every song on Championship Boxing.

It has a glorious casual and melodic sound that is usually associated with lo-fi Beck or Grandaddy; with highlights being the surprisingly uplifting happy/sad lament of Happy When I'm Down and the clever mix of spoken word and Spanish guitars on Tuesday.

Having seen his band Bigmouth's dream of rock n' roll stardom fail, Chris Hickens' debut solo album shows a performer with an immense talent who sounds all the better for not trying too hard.

A quirky uniquely melodic snapshot of East Village life that is highly recommended.

Gareth Phillips