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New Recordings

G. Love & Special Sauce

Superhero Brother

(Brushfire ***)

In his quest to find his place within hip-hop, Philly's Garrett Dutton III - G. Love - has alternated between solo crooning as an MC and playing with Special Sauce, the pals he started his career in music with.

G. uses his signature mix of rapier raps and drawling vocals to tell tales of babies having babies and other nice vibrations.

But while the solo efforts are gently countrified affairs, the Sauce (drummer Jeffrey Clemens, bassist Jimi Prescott) bring out the sass in Dutton. With its stumbling rhythms and honky-tonk piano, "Communication" could be a lost Stones track circa *Exile on Main St.* The same goes for the playful "City Livin'," with its jabbering brass and needling guitars.

The Special Sauce cooks best as a combination of hastened hip-hop and dirty funk. So, it makes a muddy mess of "Wiggle Worm" and a soulful stew of "Peace, Love and Happiness," complete with chunks of conga in the tasty mix.

Special Sauce may have been together for 15-plus years and Dutton may be a 36-year-old dad, but their groove is as young as when they started.

- A.D. Amorosi

Country/Roots