

Mp3 J.p. Riemens & The Barflies - Plain & Simple



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Modern folk/Americana - Masterfull songwriting and raw performances from the northern shore of Lake Erie and the Tobacco Belt. 13 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Folk, FOLK: Modern Folk Details: By Graham Rockingham The Hamilton Spectator The good folks at Hamilton's Grant Avenue Studios seem to be getting out more these days. When business is good, and they say it is, it's fairly easy to stay cooped up in the studio all day long, taking care of everybody else's music. It's not a bad place to hang out. There's all that history hanging on the walls -- pictures of people such as Bono, Eno and Daniel Lanois at the console, plus a whole array of records, Martha and the Muffins, Parachute Club, a couple by Gordon Lightfoot. It's easy to forget that the Grant Avenue denizens are top-flight musicians as well as studio geeks. But they are. Take J.P. Riemens. He has been a co-owner of Grant for seven years. The first three or four, he spent just learning how to use all the gear. Since then, he has returned to his first love, songwriting. "I have to write," Riemens says. "I have to get out and play." Plain And Simple is a return to his roots, growing up in the tobacco belt on an acre of land outside a little town called Harley. People tend to be natural storytellers there and, let's face it, there's not much else to do in winter except play guitar. They get good at it. The album has the feel of a country kitchen and the near-perfect sound of Grant Avenue. Riemens wrote all 13 tracks, most of them recently, although one, Loser, goes back 30 years to his youth growing up near the shores of Lake Erie, a time when Riemens spent his summers hanging tobacco, baling hay and getting into mischief. In fact, most of the songs have that by-the-shores-of-Lake Erie setting. Farming Town is a lament for the loss of old ways. Dover Girl revisits late night kisses on the beach outside the old Summer Garden dance hall. A Piece Of Heaven is a standard '70s story about heading out West in search of hippie paradise. Riemens lived the dream, spending three years on the road as a street singer, hitching rides, crashing with friends and playing the

streets of Winnipeg, Vancouver and Sault Ste. Marie. Get Up And Dance could have been written for a jubilee in a country arena. On Glory Daze, Riemens sings about all those stories he has heard from musicians boasting of past brushes with fame. The songs are bound together by a wonderful group of musicians. First and foremost, there's the mandolin master, Randal Hill, a nine-time Canadian bluegrass champion. Riemens turned to Port Dover's Dan Walsh, another old friend best known for his work with Fred Eaglesmith, for some beautiful embellishments on dobro guitar. Carrie Ashworth, a 23-year-old graduate of the Mohawk music program, was handed the job of playing upright bass after wandering into the studio looking for some session work. "She's trained in jazz and classical ", Riemens says. "So she puts something different into the music and it's real funky and cool." On background vocals is Shauna Drayson, a prairie farmers daughter and session singer whose effortless singing blends perfectly with Riemens' rough-hewn style.

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