

## Mp3 James Thurgood - Handy Little Rig



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Celtic old-time harmonica as once played in the backwoods, backfields, front parlours, taverns church basements of the Maritimes. Traditional jigs, reels, strathspeys, slow airs, etc., played in traditional and not-so-traditional style. 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Traditional Folk, WORLD: Celtic Details: There was a time, and not so long ago, when it seems practically everyone in the Maritimes could play a tune or two on the mouth organ, and if you wanted someone who could play all night, you wouldn't have to look too far. More recently, this "handy little rig" has fallen onto hard times, left to gather rust and dust in the back of a kitchen drawer, in the pocket of a forgotten pair of overalls, or in the glove compartment of a '48 Ford out behind the barn. I'm originally from the village of Wallace, on the north shore of Nova Scotia, although now I live in northern Alberta. I started playing the mouth organ when I was just a little kid. I'd figure out how to play the old songs we'd sing around the house, and the next natural step was to start working on the fiddle tunes my mother was always playing on piano. These she had learned in her younger days on Prince Edward Island. The Scottish melodies had a particular appeal to me, and as a teenager I began seeking out Cape Breton fiddle music, and trying to work out ways to play the old modal tunes. At the same time, I was experimenting with blues harp, and the two endeavours seemed to complement each other . . . There's been a lot of water under the bridge since then. I've messed around with other instruments and other types of music, but I keep coming back to the diatonic ten-hole harmonica and the Celtic and old-time tunes. On this CD, I'm fortunate to be joined by Kevin Roach, a guitarist who is well-known down east. His hard-driving rhythms, subtle harmonies and, when called for, delicate touch, provide an accompaniment that in itself expresses the many moods of Celtic music. If you like reading liner notes, you'll be in your glory with this CD: it includes ten pages of commentary on the tunes, the traditions, and my own musical background. Meanwhile, better clear a space on the floor - you may want

to dance! - James Thurgood WHAT THE CRITICS SAY: "If you think the harmonica is a kid's toy, not to be distinguished by the term 'musical instrument,' then James Thurgood has something he wants you to hear. "Thurgood raises the humble Marine Band into something that can produce the most danceable fiddle tunes and the most beautiful airs and waltzes. The scope of his debut CD is astonishing . . . a joyous collection of dance music and songs, augmented by liner notes which trace the history of the harmonica as a folk instrument in and around eastern Canada. A real winner. This CD might even prompt you to rummage around for that Hohner you once got from Santa." - Sing Out!, Summer 2004 v48 i2 p136(1) . . . an impressive achievement . . . a down-to-earth recording that will likely sell well wherever James cares to perform, and wherever he plays a good time will be had by all. - Canadian Folk Music Bulletin, v38.4 p. 39 "Thurgood is an exceedingly good harmonica player (and singer, although only on one track) covering Celtic and Old-Time music from Canada's Maritime Provinces, where he was raised. While the harmonica might seem like an unlikely instrument for that music, he makes it work perfectly, whether on reels, airs, strathspeys, or hornpipes, with subtle guitar accompaniment from Kevin Roach. The playing is sensational without ever going over the top, and there's some remarkable technique involved. Highly recommended." - globalvillageidiot.net " . . . when played well this relatively simple instrument has a strength and versatility of its own. This is more than amply demonstrated on Handy Little [Rig], the debut album by James Thurgood. . . . Relying solely on his ability to provide chordal counterpoint and some very able guitar accompaniment from guitarist Kevin Roach, Handy Little Rig is a veritable tour de force. . . . you'll be captivated by the sheer eloquence of his playing . . . blindingly excellent . . . " - Irish Music Review " . . . And what made this so unusual, was to see the material Thurgood's expert mouth harp tackled. . . . And he pulled it off very well, ably assisted by his fellow Nova Scotia born Kevin Roach on guitar. I never tired of it, even though the whole album is virtually all instrumental. However, I must confess that when he chose to sing a traditional ballad "My Gallant Brigantine", he sang with such an intelligence (really extracting maximum meaning from the song) that he had me wanting more. ... There is a fine liner booklet with this CD. One of the best sets of liner notes I have seen in a while. . . . " - Folk World "Handy Little Rig as an album features some dynamic harmonica playing and well-thought-out arrangements. It is a very enjoyable listen and worth acquiring." - Green Man Review "James is a fine player and a welcome addition to the recorded ranks." - Musical Traditions Magazine

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