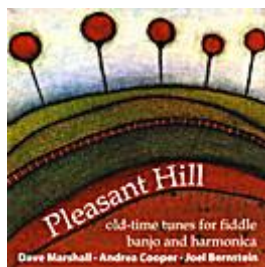


Mp3 Dave Marshall, Andrea Cooper & Joel Bernstein - Pleasant Hill



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Sweet straight-ahead old-time traditional music, on fiddle, harmonica and banjo. 20 MP3 Songs in this album (51:27) ! Related styles: FOLK: String Band, COUNTRY: Old-Timey People who are interested in Foghorn Stringband The Red Hots should consider this download. Details: Lost Chicken's first CD, Pleasant Hill, is straight-ahead old-time music on fiddle, banjo and harmonica. They play tunes mostly from the south and midwest, along with a few newly-composed tunes. From the Pacific Northwest (Vancouver, BC and Seattle), the musicians are Joel Bernstein, Andrea Cooper, and Dave Marshall, with guests Mark Roberts and Shiho Mizumoto. Their sound is clean, tight, live and listenable. Described as "lovely and moody and great playing!" Review from the Old Time Herald (Fall 2004 by Steve Senderoff): Far from being insects harassing the string band, little instruments like tiny ukuleles, harmonicas, and jaw harps can produce hugely entertaining music when placed in the right hands and/or mouth. Diminutive instruments are becoming increasingly prominent in contemporary old-time music, as evidenced by a plethora of Clifftop prize-winning bands powered by chugging banjo-ukuleles, pear shaped short scale tenor guitars, and expertly tongue-blocked harmonica playing. I await a piccolo banjo onslaught. The Seattle/Vancouver based musicians appearing on Pleasant Hill are musically accomplished friends gathering to play their current favorite tunes. Efforts by versatile fiddler Dave Marshall - who is also an accomplished Celtic and contradance musician - are carefully and faithfully crafted with attention to and respect for his sources. Sympathetic banjo accompaniment from Andrea Cooper, Dave's cleanly over-dubbed guitar, and moderate, lilting tempos produce a finely integrated ensemble sound, giving a warm, homey feel to this outing. An all- tunes CD from contemporary old-time music practitioners (of which there are many) could become homogenous or tiresome, even in the hands of virtuosos. Interest is

maintained on this recording, however, by presentation of a precisely played, varied program of well known and less familiar material from Kentucky, West Virginia, the Midwest, the Southwest, and maritime Canada. Three fine "new" tunes are included as well. Normally, a recording of this nature would elicit a smile and go to the "good tune CD stack," but the inclusion of a microinstrument elevates this enjoyable, low-key recording to the realm of something special! Joel Bernstein, banjoist, was busking in Seattle when a harmonica was dropped into his open case. His partner said, "It's yours!" and Joel started "fooling with it." Inspired by Seattle harmonica virtuoso Mark Graham, he became adept at precise, note-for-note adaptation of fiddle tunes. Far from making a contribution proportional to instrument size, Joel's superb harp playing propels the various banjo-fiddle-guitar combinations on this recording from the level of pleasant, enjoyable music making among friends to an example of one of the finest tune collections this reviewer has heard in quite a while. Great fiddle and guitar music from New England and the Pacific Northwest, newly released on CD! Bernstein's harmonica blends into single and twin fiddling with supple, reedy understatement. This produces a strikingly archaic composite band sound, bringing to mind a flute and hurdy-gurdy or a combination of fiddle and uilleann pipes, heard in the Celtic traditions. Joel has a fluid, expressive, woody tone, possibly the result of his especially advanced throat/diaphragm vibrato and hand cupping techniques. He faithfully customizes traditional wood comb Hohner Marine Band harp - and he has impeccable pitch and expressive control of his draw bends, playing much of the recording in cross (second) position. His superb technique allows for full melody / accompaniment sounds, octaves, and ornaments and he has a keen ear for the use of the harp as a "seconding" instrument. A trio of West Virginia tunes is one of the high points of Pleasant Hill. The music of Burl and Edna Hammons is represented by "Piney Woods" and "Washington's March" presented on twin fiddle (Dave and Shiho Mizumoto) and fiddle-harmonica-banjo, respectively. Ernie Carpenter's tune "Granddad's Favorite" gets a fiddle-harmonica-banjo treatment as well. Rather than duplicate the playing of their sources, the performers choose to accentuate the Celtic / African elements of the music, especially evident in Joel's bluesy harmonica bends and the rhythmically aggressive fiddling, which accentuates syncopation. Also outstanding is Joel's self-penned "Pleasant Hill," a banjo-harmonica duet - a tour-de-force of melodic and rhythmic cross harp blowing backed by expertly played clawhammer banjo tuned fCFCD. Precisely executed triplet ornaments on the harmonica, characteristic of Quebecois fiddle and melodeon music, punctuate its B and C parts. The two waltzes on this recording can be described as eye-tearers and

heart-melters. "Black Hills Waltz," from Kenner Kartchner, is presented as a fingerpicked banjo (Mark Roberts) and harmonica duet. The performance approaches Jess Thomas' "Goodbye Old Paint" in sadness and winsome beauty. Joel uses the full palette of crossharp sound colors to stunning effect, and pleasing harmonic complexity appears in the banjo accompaniment. The recording ends with a Newfoundland tune, "Granny's Waltz." This piece is presented as a harmonica-fiddle duet. Dave's long experience as an expressive dance fiddler is clearly evident, and Joel does an excellent job providing harmonica accompaniment, approaching the sound of a gently played accordion. The recording was done in Mark Robert's well-equipped home studio, and was produced by Dave Marshall. The sound is bright and clear, with accurate reproduction of instrumental timbres. They also managed to achieve a proper balance between instruments, yielding an intimate, yet well-defined ensemble sound. Although the guitar was overdubbed, this is not apparent, and the entire project has a homemade, one-take feel. In the jewel case insert, one finds humorous vignettes concerning the selections, careful source annotation, and attractive artwork. Very highly recommended!

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