

## Mp3 Rob Huffman - Tone Without Tension



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New folk songs and tunes influenced by celtic and bluegrass music 15 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, WORLD: Celtic Details: As heard on NPR's Car Talk! On Tone without Tension, musical raconteur Rob Huffman creates a sonic mosaic in which disparate elements become part of a grander and more compelling image. Both a virtuoso instrumentalist steeped in Anglo and Irish musics and a wryly honest singer-songwriter in the Arlo Guthrie/Jim Croce mold, Rob performs original and traditional instrumentals and songs on guitar, Irish flute, and whistle. Rob is accompanied by fine backing musicians such as bluegrass stalwart Bob Dick on bass, Einsteins Little Homunculus saxophonist Susan Gedutis Lindsay, and percussionist Ken Hickey from Boston rockers O Positive. Robs songs reflect his keen observations of the human comedy. Brink's Garage, for example, tells the riveting story of the infamous 1950 Boston robbery that very nearly became "the perfect crime." Written from the perspective of one of the hapless robbers, it's a moving historical ballad in the tradition of James Keelaghan, Richard Shindell, or Stan Rogers. The Cowboy gives a complex hall-of-mirrors treatment to Americas fascination with Wild West imagery (as well as Rob's Texas roots), and dramatically incorporates the Irish reel "Green Fields of Rossbeigh." Rob performs this reel with fluid grace on the low D whistle, an instrument used to good effect throughout the album. Two and three-part flute and whistle arrangements on "Ella Faye Waltz" and "Mustwee" recall the best work of Irish bands Planxty and Lunasa. Throughout the album, Rob's sense of irony is tempered with compassion and leavened with humor. The musical settings themselves are perfect complements to the lyrics (for example, the terrific Western swing treatment of Driver, Would You Turn This Bus Around? and the bouncy good vibes of More Than A Friend (I Need a Friend With A Truck)). One of the albums highlights is the elegiac Memorial Day, a masterfully simple interweaving of reflection on the past and anticipation of the future (and one of the very few songs composed for the

end-of-May holiday). The album alternates instrumental and vocal tracks, often intertwined. For example, Little Liza Jane, an old-timey melody from the Southern Appalachians, is heard first as a background line on Bad Beyond Belief, a hilarious song about being in a garage band, then gets a full and exuberant twin-fiddle treatment on the following track. Rob Huffmans ringing voice, articulate lyrics, and artful sense of composition make Tone Without Tension a musical experience that yields new rewards with each listen. Its true American music humorous, tender, wise, and joyous made by a true American musician. "Not only are his lyrics loads of fun, but his playing is excellent to boot!" - Metronome Magazine tt

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