

Mp3 Ensemble Cast - Crossing Paths At Starved Rock



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A contemporary anthology of songs about life in the Illinois Valley and living in a small prairie town. 10 MP3 Songs POP: Folkly Pop, COUNTRY: Country Rock Details: More than 25 years ago, Buckacre, a local band from La Salle, Illinois, recorded two nationally-released albums and was one of the most popular musical groups ever to originate from the Illinois Valley. Now former Buckacre members have joined together with many other area musicians to produce, "Crossing Paths" a collection of original music which celebrates life in Illinois and the diverse heritage of the Starved Rock area. Coordinated by Richard Hally of La Salle, Dick Verucchi of Cedar Point and Steve Stout of Utica, the new contemporary collection includes songs about Starved Rock Lodge, the demolition of Shippingsport Bridge, an infamous area bank robbery, living life in a small town and the 1909 Cherry, Illinois Mine Disaster. "For years, I have been writing books on local history and I always dreamed of exploring the Illinois Valley's heritage through music," Stout said. "The three of us were very fortunate to recruit many of the area's most talented musicians to write and record a truly homegrown original album." Featured on the new CD is "Dreams Die Hard" written and performed by Steve Sharp of Ottawa. Sharp's song examines the life experience of growing up in a small town and the constantly changing shapes of a young person's hopes and dreams. He sings: And those dreams die hard / Living in your home town / Change around here is slow to come / The world just keeps on turning round / And all the things you're looking for / You know they can be found / Right here in your own backyard / Where dreams die hard. Another familiar Illinois Valley performer on the CD is musician Rick Soens of La Salle. His original song, "Drivin' Around this Town" commemorates young people who cruise in their cars on hometown streets in constant search of boredom relief. "Each generation has those who drive aimlessly around their city roads and Rick's song offers some keen observations about that time-honored tradition," Stout said. Hally, former Buckacre bass

player and author of "Cherry Mine" on the CD, said, "The basic story line contained in the verses of the Cherry Mine Disaster song were written in the late 1970's and were first published in the forward section of Steve's novel, Black Damp." He added, "When we decided to record the song for this project I felt strongly that it needed a chorus. Fortunately, I was able to come up with an eight bar chorus that fit the rest of the song nicely even though I finished it some twenty years later." Commenting on the creative aspect of the project, Hally said, "I wish I was more disciplined as a songwriter but I've always worked best under the pressure of a specific project. That's the way I worked during the Buckacre years. If we had an album to record, I focused more on finishing songs." Percussionist Dick Verucchi, former Buckacre drummer, said, "In a compilation such as this, we had the advantage of producing varied sounds and styles on the same CD. It moves from country rock to instrumental to ballad all while maintaining a distinct central Illinois theme within each different recording." As a student of Illinois Valley history, Stout admitted that one of his favorite songs on the CD is based on the 1935 Leonore bank robbery. "Ray Tutaj of Mendota has composed a great story song about a legendary area event. Seven people killed for seven cents. It reminds me of the music by the late Harry Chapin," Stout said. Other area artists on the CD include Darrell Data, Terry Feldott, Les Lockridge, Brian Lorenzi, Bruce Lorenzi, Gary Marini, John Morton, John Piontek, Rick Powell, Doug Ragan, Rick Soens, Al Shupp, Alan Thacker, Ray Tutaj and Jim Witcher. Discussing the ensemble cast, Hally concluded, "I loved working on this project, especially with so many talented singers, songwriters and musicians - some whom I've worked with during the last 25 years and others for the very first time. Dick, Steve and I all take great pride in the creative contributions they each made to the CD."

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