

## Mp3 Chris Cairns - Hello Blue



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Bluegrass, high and lonesome. Great harmony vocals and hot pickin' abound on the brand new sophomore release of songwriter, singer and banjo picker Chris Cairns. 12 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Bluegrass, COUNTRY: Country Folk Details: The rumor is that Chris Cairns was born with a banjo in his prodigious hands. By his early teens, Chris Yankee Bluegrass Boys were regularly picking (and hot licking Ill bet) at a local ice cream shop. After graduating from Cornell University, Chris moved to Santa Barbara, Ca. in 1998 and formed the band, Wild Sage, which became well-known through some high visibility festival appearances and a discography which includes four albums (Endless Detour, Live at Strawberry, Fresh Produce, Live at Painted Sky). In 2003, Chris started his own record label, FireHeart Records, and he began to front his own group. The challenge that any band faces with its sophomore release is to continue building its personalized sound and character that preceded it. When Chris Cairns released Runaway Train (Fireheart Records CC8253) a few years ago, he had already established his reputation and credibility as a young bluegrass force to be reckoned with. Besides being a very well-rounded musician with his guitar and banjo, he wears other hats as a songwriter, singer, producer and record label manager. We all know that successful musicians also need strong business acumen and organization. Thus, Chris Cairns entrepreneurial spirit and adventurous zeal become apparent in both his music, as well as its varied presentation and promotion. Like his last album, he conceptualized Hello Blue as an offering of new, thought-provoking original music along with some new arrangements of well-known standards. His continuing desire is to capture the passion and sorrow of life, bottle it up and deliver it to us. He also emphasizes his bands versatility and ability to capture many evocative musical moods. As with his debt album, Hello Blue assembled some other excellent California guest musicians to lend a hand. They include David West, John McFee, Gabe Witcher, Tom Lee, Mahala Fortner, Bill Flores, and

Bob Nichols. All have plenty of experience as performers, road warriors, or session players. As a result, Hello Blue is a very successful, rewarding set of stellar music that is a touch jazz, a bit country, a tad blues, and a skosh folk. All built around the time-tested cornerstone of bluegrass instrumentation and vocal arrangement. There's no doubt that Chris Cairns is a resourceful lad! A technically adroit banjo player, Chris maintains the essence of Earl Scruggs' original version of Ground Speed, but he also incorporates some of his own originality as the snappy tune progresses with each subsequent 5-string break. All of the band's nimble-fingered instrumentalists swing the Go Go Gadget Boogie with plenty of jumpin' jive and new acoustic hustle. If old-time clawhammerin' banjo is your bag, the percussive sounds in Drums of War conjure up compelling images and instrumental messages from a battlefield or conflict in another time and place long ago. To put some old-fashioned flatfootin' spirit into your feet, Mississippi Sawyer gives a nod to the traditional fiddle tune that can trace its ancestry to the early-1800s. Chris' adept guitar work intertwines with some impressively virtuosic Dobro and mandolin in Another Rainy Day. Being lonesome and blue is a common theme in bluegrass music. If you find yourself longing for happiness and affection, then you'll be able to relate to Hold Me My Darlin' while Cannonball Run takes us on a high-octane run in search of control on life's winding and adventurous road. It's a well-written cautionary tale about journeys in the fast lane, embellished with fiddle and banjo in the front seats. Sometimes we just have to admit that life has its ups and downs. A wise person would advise us to embrace change for the opportunities it brings. While the boy eventually gets over his hurt and admits he learned his lesson in Hello Blue, Chris also has a twangy country song (One Lonely Candle) that indulges and feeds his mood to brood. John McFee's pedal steel adds that mournful wail and ache to their agrarian offering. Fortunately, he finds his angel from Heaven once again in Carter Stanley's Baby Girl, a well-rooted selection from the traditional bluegrass canon. Bluegrass music often speaks of roots. The nostalgic yearning for home in Alabama Clay is a spiritually-tinged tale with a happy ending. A reflective melodic minute of solo banjo closes the album with Chris' maternal tribute, Miss My Mom. For just a young guy, Chris Cairns beams with plenty of world-weary wisdom. He confidently draws his inspiration from many sources and genres. He has a spark in his banjo and a flame in his heart. Maybe that's why he calls his record label FireHeart, and his blazing music that is full of pyrotechnics will hit you like a conflagration.

(Joe Ross)

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