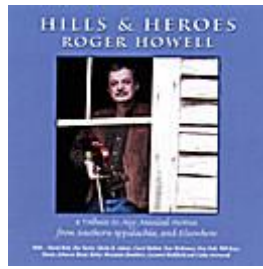


Mp3 Roger Howell - Hills & Heroes



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A masterful "Symphony from the Mountains" touching all the emotions from happy to devotional, with irresistible fiddle rhythms to raise your spirits and soothing acoustic melodies for the soul. 20 MP3 Songs
FOLK: String Band, COUNTRY: Traditional Bluegrass Show all album songs: Hills Heroes Songs
Details: Hills Heroes - - a title that conjures up scenes of rural, rugged Madison County in the westernmost part of North Carolina's high mountains, and home to native Roger Howell - - one of the most celebrated practitioners of the region's traditional music. An award-winning fiddler and multi-instrumentalist, Roger takes us back to his early days of musical upbringing, when almost every home in his community of Banjo Branch had some form of string music for entertainment. But, this cd offers a wider variety of styles and influences from his many friends over the years in other parts of the nation as well. With his earliest influences being the ever-popular Saturday afternoon TV shows of Lester Flatt Earl Scruggs, The Wilburn Brothers, The Stoneman Family, and Porter Wagoner in the early 1960s, his uncanny fascination with early bluegrass and old-time country began by teaching himself guitar at age 12. He learned clawhammer banjo from elderly neighbors only shortly thereafter, so began Rogers lifelong passion with traditional music. He became a musical sponge, and took in all the old tunes and songs of the region, and soon became fascinated with what would later become his main instrument, the fiddle. With some persistent observation and a lot of hard work, Roger began to pick up the unique bow styles and repertoire from local fiddle legends Tommy Hunter and Woodrow Boone, and began appearing at local festivals in the 1970s. Since then, Roger has become one of the most respected fiddle players from this mountain region, and has the reputation of being an important preservationist and collector of fiddle tunes, which come from the areas rich Scotch-Irish tradition. Roger started his own label Bearwallow Music and produced several cassette tapes of local fiddler Woodrow Boone, as well as one of

his own, and soon began a working relationship with Ernest Smith, son of the early Grand Old Opry star Fiddlin Arthur Smith. This collaboration resulted in Roger cultivating friendships with many of the genres top fiddlers, including the legendary Benny Sims and John Hartford. Smith also passed along a vast amount of music via recordings of his famous Dad, and many of the other legendary figures of the early Grand Old Opry who he had worked with over the years. In 1991, a recording with Smith, Sims and with Roger on banjo entitled Time Goes On began Rogers proper recording career, and in the mid 90s he joined the great Carroll Best String Band as fiddler. From there, as they say, the rest is history. Rogers many appearances at the regions top festivals and contests gained him dozens of championships in fiddle, banjo, and guitar, and later as leader of several top regional bands, including his "Carolina Old-Timers" and "Bailey Mountain Ramblers." He has become a very sought-after studio musician, and has to date appeared on over 35 recordings of other regional artists. In 1999, Roger was awarded the prestigious Bascom Lamar Lunsford Award for his many contributions to traditional music, has published several articles and written extensively about the regions musical heritage, and is still active in producing and promoting many of the areas major music festivals. Roger is also a well-known luthier, and when hes not performing youll find him in his shop repairing and restoring old fiddles, which are known for their remarkable tone. (UPDATE: In 2007, Roger completed his Memory Collection of over 350 fiddle tunes (13 cds) , which have been donated to Mars Hill Colleges Lunsford Archives, as well as 8 other major universities in the US. Quite a resume for a mountain boy!) Hills Heroes samples the rich patchwork of Roger Howell's musical influences. Tunes like Chinky Pin came from his elderly banjo-picking neighbor Pearl Ball,(actually an old Robert Burns tune adapted to the fiddle), Rambling Hobo is an early solo banjo piece from Doc Watson, and Lady of the Lake is a rousing fiddle tune from his early recollections of the Crook Brothers on the Grand Old Opry. For lovers of banjo-fiddle duets, Roger enlisted the help of his Scruggs-style banjo friend Tom McKinney on several numbers including Charlie Acuffs Two Oclock, Sam Kirk McGees Lafayette, FiddlinArthur Smiths popular Blackberry Blossom, and a classic two-style banjo duet on Soldiers Joy. For guitar enthusiasts, Rogers moving version of John Hartfords Presbyterian Guitar is worth the price of admission, as is the early Thomas Moore piece The Minstrel Boy To War Has Gone, with Jim Taylors exquisite hammered dulcimer work. Of course, this album features plenty of old-time string band favorites, like Jimmy in the Swamp and Rogers trademark New Five Cents, with banjo by friend Grammy-winner David Holt. Even a couple of Rogers former bands make appearances

here, including Danny Johnson String Bands luscious twin-guitar versions of Hog Trough Reel and Little Stream of Whiskey, and Rogers own Bailey Mountain Ramblers on Flop-Eared Mule, the smokin Polecat Blues, and the French-Canadian favorite St. Annes Reel. Friend and lap dulcimer-player extraordinaire Don Pedi even makes an appearance on a couple of tunes, including the rare Newport Breakdown. And in a special moment, Rogers old friend Will Keys makes a cameo appearance here with his unique banjo style on the banjo duet Wreck of the Old 97, and it stands as a poignant tribute to his late mentor. To round out the set, theres a lovely finger-picking guitar version of A.P. Carters Diamonds in the Rough, with vocal by Carol Mallett, and Rogers fiddle on probably the most beautiful version of Amazing Grace that youll ever hear - - period! Wonderful bass accompaniment by friend Cathy Arrowood, and solid guitar licks courtesy of Leonard Hollifield make this project a great success, and the addition of informative liner notes and photos makes this cd an educational as well as a most pleasurable listening experience. In short - - if youre a fan of GREAT traditional fiddling, pristine guitar and banjo picking, or just fine traditional string music, youll LOVE this recording! BUY IT, and find out why Roger Howell has been called the mountain's Best Kept Secret. You simply cant go wrong! - - - Roger Howell has an ear for a great melody, and a sense of rhythm that is irresistible. You can hear his Blue Ridge Mountain roots echo through everything he plays!" - - - David Holt

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