

Mp3 Hilarie Burhans - Put On The Skillet



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Traditional and original old-time and Celtic tunes on clawhammer banjo, from a member of the well-known Hotpoint Stringband. 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Traditional Folk, WORLD: World Fusion Details: Hilarie has been playing clawhammer banjo since the early '70s, and currently plays with the Hotpoint Stringband, a nationally touring contradance band. She was finally persuaded to release a solo (sort of) banjo CD; this is not solo clawhammer banjo, for the most part, but Hilarie's banjo is the consistent thread running through this recording which also features The Cantrells, Mark Burhans, Mark Hellenberg, Nick Weiland, Matthew McElroy and Bernie Nau on various tracks. The "Pretty Polly" track was used in episode 18 of the HBO show Deadwood. What follows are a couple of reviews of Put On the Skillet. The first is from the Green Man Review: The sound of an egg frying opens Put On The Skillet, leading into "Cluck Old Hen", where Hilarie Burhans garnishes her banjo picking with vocal cackles ("Let's cluck this thing up!" she says). That first cut gives a good indication of things to come; the recording has an ample supply of the off-beat. I don't mean off-beat in the musical sense. Burhans is a dance musician (with Hotpoint Stringband), and her playing is rock-steady. An example of the type of off-beat that I'm referring to would be the version of "Little Sadie", where Burhans' voice is processed to sound like it's coming from an old cabinet-style crystal radio, while Mark Hellenberg's percussion seems to mimic a skretch DJ. Another might be the swing arrangement of "Shortenin' Bread", with it's cool harmony singing -- think Manhattan Transfer with clawhammer banjo -- or murder ballad "Pretty Polly", with its whispery lead vocals, and eerie wailing heard in the background. Burhans is capable of playing it straight when she chooses, though, really cooking on tunes like "Ragtime Annie". Burhans also plays some driving back-up behind Al Cantrell (mandolin) and husband Mark Burhans (fiddle), who add some sparkling, swing-y solos. A couple of banjo and harmonium duets have an introspective feel, and Matthew McElroy joins

Burhans on two cuts for some rousing tunes featuring double banjos. I wish my banjo sounded like this. I feel obligated to comment on the artwork. I've often thought that the demise of vinyl was also the death knell of good cover art, but some artists (Summer Blevins, in this case) have adapted to the new format. The cover of Put On The Skillet depicts Burhans in front of a stove (Horrors! It looks like she's cooking a banjo!), the backpiece shows a skillet, and the CD itself sports a picture of a fried egg. This is some of the best art I've seen on a CD. -Tim Hoke Here is a review from Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine, Fall, 2003 by Tom Druckenmiller Hilarie holds down the banjo seat in the Hotpoint Stringband out of Athens, Ohio. With that aggregation she has fused traditional and original dance tunes with some very unusual cover tunes to make for very enjoyable listening and dancing music. On this, her solo clawhammer banjo recording, Hilarie teams up with fiddler, husband and fellow band member Mark Burhans, and friends Al and Emily Cantrell on mandolin, guitar and background vocals. They are joined by Mark Hellenberg on percussion, Mathew McElroy on second banjo, Nick Weiland on bass and co-producer Bernie Nau on keyboards. Put On the Skillet includes many traditional classics done with various arrangements. The recording begins with the sound of eggs frying introducing the old Grayson County classic "Cluck Old Hen." "Shortenin' Bread" places emphasis on the skillet theme once again and is done up in Hokum style with luscious background vocals from Al and Emily. "Pretty Polly" features Hilarie and Emily in harmonies straight out of the netherworld. Traditional treatment is stretched a bit with the filtered vocals and percussion of the "industrial" style "Little Sadie." It's a curiosity that may not stand up to repeated hearings. In addition to the many well-known traditional tunes, Hilarie offers some fine originals. "River Falls" is a tune dedicated to a contradance venue in South Carolina and judging from the lovely melody must be a great place to play and dance. She also pairs up the traditional "Cumberland Gap" with a self composed tune called "Little Wonder" dedicated to her new banjo, a reconditioned Vega Little Wonder. Hilarie is a talented clawhammer player (with just the right amount of chuck in her style) and she has collected some fine traditional and new tunes and arranged them in a very enjoyable and tasty way. COPYRIGHT 2003 Sing Out Corporation The following is a review appearing on the FAME (Folk Acoustic Music Exchange) website: It can be tricky business playing traditional music. One wants to preserve the traditional feeling and history of the music while at the same time giving it one's own artistic stamp. Move too far in one direction or the other, and one or both of these opposing objectives is seriously compromised. Clawhammer banjoist Hilarie Burhans has found a perfect balance in Put on the

Skillet, an independent release of mostly traditional old time tunes. Burhans is a master banjo player who has won the Ohio State Old-Time Banjo contest nine times. When not recording solo, she is a member of Hotpoint String Band, a contradance band in which she is joined by many of the other players on this album. Burhans' playing has the sweet plunky sound a clawhammer banjo should have. It fits perfectly alongside her rich and soulful vocals. Rounding out the sound on this album are the traditional fiddle, mandolin, bass and guitar, as well as the Indian harmonium and various objects of percussion. The result is a unique yet traditional sounding and feeling collection. Her rendition of Little Sadie sounds as though it might have been recorded sixty years ago, given the rhythmic playing of Mark Hellenberg on an aluminum doumbek, giving the backdrop that "scratchy-record" feel. It might take some doing to track this recording down, but it is well worth the effort. Hilarie Burhans is making some mighty fine music out there in Ohio. It ought to be heard far and wide. by Allen Price (al@squirrelheads.com) Edited by David N. Pyles (dnpyles@acousticmusic.com) Copyright 2003, Peterborough Folk Music Society.

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