

Old Time Music Party by Brian Vollmer.
Patuxent 236 CD. www.pxrec.com

Review by Dan Levenson

Woh! Imagine The Horseflies (the old-time version) meet Plank Road String Band meet The Hot Mud Family! Brian has assembled a wonderful cast of musicians, which he uses well. Brian himself has been on a musical journey that started as “a patron and soon-to-be picker at bluegrass festivals and fiddlers’ conventions since before he can remember...”

This one starts strong with a full big band sound on a tune called *Arkansas Two-Step* which really gets you ready to enjoy what is a rollicking great disc of old time music. The big string band sound just *moves!* Brian and Ruth on fiddle, Ben on banjo, Nate playing guitar and Joseph DeJarnette holding the bottom end with a solid oh so nice bass line.

And while the musician make-up changes cut to cut, the music stays strong and the vocals are usually quite good with only one or two appropriately old-time sounding songs where the vocals could have been stronger. That is perhaps my only quibble with this disc. It is hard to sort out who plays what because while each cut has the initials of the person playing

there though.

Lost Goose (from Clyde Davenport) is hauntingly beautiful. It starts out with just banjo and fiddles and the bass, mandolin and guitar come in at just the right time with just the right emphasis adding a solid bottom to an already beautiful piece.

Ladies on the Steamboat rocks out with Ben Townsend playing those high up the neck Richie Stern-type rhythmic bug-a-bug-a banjo first/fifth string vamps that just push the whole tune forward. *Elzik's Farewell*, from the West Virginia tradition of French Carpenter and Wilson Douglas, is beautiful with the banjo fiddle duo where Ben plays fiddle and Brian takes the banjo duties. There is just enough personalization of this tune and lovely crooked bits that make it familiar yet new all at once.

For some reason, I just *love Skippin' and Flyin'*. The singing is cool and the chorus is hypnotic and catchy, “Ain’t that skippin’ and flyin’, boys, ain’t that skippin’ and flyin’!” I can’t really explain it either. It has a bunch of those old-time floating verses (verses that appear in many different songs) but it all fits in such a unique way. And that booga booga tenor banjo! *Ha!* Makes me laugh just thinking about it. This one just catches me right.

I could go on cut by cut but I think you get the message. In all, there is a

great variety of old-time on this disc, from barnburner all-out fiddle tunes to old-time songs to even the wonderful *My Favorite Waltz* (that appropriately closes the disc) which is played in the most ballroom but still old-time style you could ask for. Very sweet and syrupy. Love it! By the way, the name of this is still in question so if you get this disc and recognize the tune, drop Brian a note. He’d love to know.

Don’t miss this one. It’s a great old time recording that honors the past while staying up to date with younger musicians who will carry on the

tradition in good hands for years to come.

The musicians: These change cut to cut but basically they are: Brian Vollmer, fiddle, banjo; Joseph DeJarnette, bass; Sarah Jamison, guitar; Nate Leath, guitar, fiddle; Rosie Newton, fiddle; Liz Pikard, vocals; Mark Schimick, mandolin, guitar tenor banjo; Max Paskin-Flerlague, banjo; Ben Townsend, banjo.

Additional Tunes:
Fall On My Knees;
Rambler's Blues;
Birchfield's Sally Ann;

Been All Around This World; *What We Got's Rich;* *The Green Door;* *Trouble in Mind;* *Skillot Ticker Breakdown.*

