

## MARK DELANEY

### *Sidecar*

Patuxent 175

Maryland-born banjoist Mark Delaney began to play at the age of 11. His Kentucky-born grandfather was a player and he introduced the instrument to Mark. Eventually, he began to perform professionally in regional bands in the D.C. area. In time, he was playing with such luminaries as Jim Eanes, Frank Wakefield, Charlie Waller and Mike Auldridge. At the time of

this recording, Mark was holding down the banjo seat in The Country Gentlemen while maintaining a day job as a BMW motorcycle mechanic (thus the title of the CD). The core band features some heavy hitters: Michael Cleveland, fiddle; Audie Blaylock, guitar; Jesse Brock, mandolin; and Barry Reid, bass. This is his first solo CD.

*Sidecar* opens with "Candlewood," a spirited instrumental written by Mark which highlights his aggressive driving style. It's the perfect showcase for the interplay between the banjo and the fiddle. "Baby Blue Eyes," from the pen of Jim Eanes, follows, and features the fine vocals of Charles Thompson. This is great traditional bluegrass with a wonderful swinging pulse. Up next is "McCormick String Picnic," another fine instrumental out of the Monroe school, spotlighting Jesse Brock's mandolin and Michael Cleveland's fiddle.

I dispute the writing credit of Boxcar Willie for "Six Days on the Road," but that doesn't tarnish the performance. Bryan Deere must have been channeling Gram Parsons for vocal inspiration. This tune, surprisingly, is seldom performed by bluegrass artists.

Dede Wyland and Randy Barrett team up for the vocals on "Fire in the Heart." It's great to hear the former Skyline vocalist again on this tune about lost love.

Carter Stanley's "Let Me Walk Lord By Your Side" closes the CD. The arrangement features the bluesy fiddle of Michael Cleveland and the vocals of Tom Mindte, John Miller, Mark Delaney and Clark Howard.

There's not a hint of newgrass on *Sidecar*, and Mark Delaney is certainly a banjo force to be reckoned with. He has surrounded himself with a solid band and wonderful vocalists, and produced an album of extraordinary power. — TD