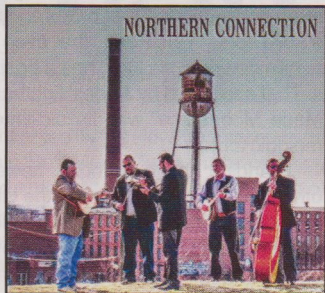


NORTHERN CONNECTION

Patuxent Music
CD-291



This recording makes little or no attempt at breaking new ground. If anything, guitarist/vocalist Frankie Short, Jr., mandolinist/vocalist Mark Seitz, fiddler Steve Streett, banjoist Bobby Lundy and bassist/vocalist Brian Eldreth are holding the ground of a style (the Baltimore sound) they grew up amidst, one they believe still has relevance and entertainment value, which it does when performed this well.

The 15 songs selected for this recording are almost all standards. Unless you're absolutely new to the music, you should recognize at least 13 when you hear them, if not by title. "Nobody But You," "Handsome Molly," "Mr. Engineer," "My

Little Girl In Tennessee," and "Nobody's Child." I could list them all, but you get the picture. The two exceptions are Del McCoury's rapid-fire laundry list description of a "Loggin' Man," followed two tracks later by Merle Haggard's more lyrical "The Longer You Wait," both good songs.

Each tune gets the same no-frills treatment. Arrangements are direct. Melody is key, both in the singing, handled predominantly by Short, and in the instrumental soloing. This is music presented largely as it was in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. You can drop into the middle of one of Lundy's or Seitz's or Streett's solos and know almost instantly you're hearing "She's No Angel" or "Pain In My Heart." Moreover, the sound of the recording has a strong sense of past, a feel of one microphone and of period technology and studios; think of Red Smiley or Earl Taylor or Sid Campbell.

Some who read this will no doubt think these guys are re-creators or a band stuck in the past. That might be true if the results were not what they are here. Northern Connection throw themselves into this music. It's vibrant. It makes a personal statement. It sounds great. (Patuxent Music, P.O. Box 572, Rockville, MD 20848, www.pxrec.com.)BW