

## FRANK WAKEFIELD A TRIBUTE TO BILL MONROE

Patuxent Music  
PXCD 227



In the year of Bill Monroe's hundredth birthday, tribute albums emerged like dandelions. Given Frank Wakefield's own legendary status on the mandolin and his self-acknowledged obsession with Monroe's music, finding this CD among those tributes should come as little surprise. Wakefield was a great innovator on the mandolin, but as the notes state and as the music reveals, Wakefield largely reverts to Monroe's style (with some personal flourishes) for this recording, a style he obviously devoured in his learning years.

A generous 16 tracks of predominately Monroe classics, totalling within seconds of an hour's worth of music, comprise the recording. I

say "predominately" Monroe classics because two of them are more obscure Monroe songs. "That's All Right," a wonderful brush-off song, sung here to perfection by Tom Mindte, is not a tune you hear every day. In fact, I've never heard Monroe's version and remember only a version by the Nashville Bluegrass Band, but it deserves its selection for this collection. "The One I Love Is Gone," slow, mournful, and modal and though written by Monroe was never actually recorded by him, but also deserves its inclusion. The rest are classics, from "Letter From My Darling" to "Blue Moon Of Kentucky" (done here in pre-Elvis style) to "On And On." Six of the tracks are instrumentals, as you would expect from a man so prolific in the field.

Often you wonder if it's the songs or the performances that makes a tribute so enjoyable. Sometimes it's one or the other, but in this case it's both. Ageless songs, of course, are at the core, but Wakefield's fine interpretations, the excellent support from Michael Cleveland, Marshall Wilborn, Tom Ewing, Mark Delaney (a vastly underrated banjo stylist in his own right), Audie Blaylock and Mindte, plus some nice touches, such as the three-part mandolin on "That's All Right," and the all-slow "Blue Moon..." make this one of the better tributes. (Patuxent Music, P.O. Box 572, Rockville MD, 20848, [www.pxrec.com](http://www.pxrec.com).)JBW