

409 – Tom Mindte, Mason Via and Ben Somerville

Posted on [February 25, 2020](#) by [Lee Zimmerman](#)



There's always some degree of skepticism involved when you combine the talents of three seasoned musicians versed in different genres and spawned from different backgrounds. So credit Tom Mindte, Mason Via and Ben Somerville with finding common ground within a template that borrows liberally from bluegrass, while also daring to push some parameters and venture beyond the tried and true.

With their current collaboration, [409](#), from Mindte's Patuxent Records, that's evident at the outset given the choice of material. While Via and Mindte each contribute to the songs that make up this well-stocked baker's dozen, they also offer some unlikely covers, at least as far as any standard serving is concerned. The trio's take on Bob Dylan's *You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go* finds a natural fit, and while most artists find themselves conforming to Dylan's vision of his material, here they take this well-trod standard into new territory entirely. The same can be said of the rockabilly rave-up that accompanies *Hot Rod Man*, the spiritual sensibilities of the Gospel sing-along, *This Little Light of Mine*, the sprightly blues of Brownie McGhee's *Jump Little Children*, and, most surprisingly of all, The Velvet Underground's signature chestnut, *There She Goes Again*, recasting it with a surprisingly new and unexpected interpretation.

Still, that's not to discount the group's original material which finds appropriate context thanks to the skill of the players involved — Mindte, who mines the possibilities on mandolin, Somerville, who anchors the proceedings on bass, and Via who supplies texture and melody on guitar. There's not a single song here that doesn't possess an inherent charm, especially given the compact arrangements and tasteful settings this threesome provide. To some who aren't used to

such a spare set-up, the richness found in these melodies may seem like something of a surprise. In truth, after listening, it's hard to imagine the music performed any other way.

Consequently, credit these three musicians for developing a formula of vintage stature in such a new, and, dare we say, provocative way. Though the men vary in ages, they find common ground through a tack that falls midway between archival and contemporary. That said, it really matters very little where the songs originate.

Whether it's their spot-on harmonies, a lilting instrumental like *Dark Romance*, an eagerly engaging tune such as *Run Mountain*, or the cool caress of *You're Running Wild*, there's little need to confine the music to any particular point of reference or origination. In every regard, 409 appears right on time.