

Daniel Greeson – 15 Fiddle Tunes

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The latest release from Patuxent Records' astounding youth movement is a [self-titled fiddle album](#) from Jamestown, NC bowman Daniel Greeson. For a musician not yet 18 years old, Mr. Greeson displays a remarkable command of bluegrass fiddle, and of the classic tunes and sterling players who have defined it.

In fact, one remarkable thing about this record is the degree to which it resembles the sort of fiddle albums that were popular in 1970s, long before Daniel was born. There are no fancy arrangements, tricky endings, or showy vocals. Just grab a handful of D (or A or G), wind 'er up, and let 'er go.

You can't get far in bluegrass fiddle without Bill Monroe, and Daniel includes six of his tunes. Double fiddle from Casey Driscoll, another young virtuoso from the Washington State school of fiddle, helps out on *The Old Brown County Barn*, *Roanoke* and *Panhandle Country*, all performed with precision and panache. They even add a third fiddle to *Panhandle Country*, replicating Monroe's original cut.

Daniel does an admirable, all-fiddle version of *Jerusalem Ridge* and one of Monroe's more complicated tunes, *Wheel Hoss*. No shrinking violet, this young Greeson.

Clearly Greeson has studied the great Kenny Baker, who many feel recorded the definitive versions of Monroe's music. The album closes with *Dry and Dusty*, one closely associated with Kenny which was used as the title cut of one of his albums in 1973. You hear Kenny clearly again here on *Big Sandy River* which he wrote with Monroe.

Benny Martin gets his due as well, with a fine take on his *Martin's Waltz*, plus a brilliant, swingy rendition of *Twinkle Little Star*, one he was fond of playing. As does Bobby Hicks in a nice reading of *Snowflake Reel* with it's oddball flat 6 chord.

Rounding out the project are familiar favorites *Sally Goodin*, *Cattle In The Cane*, and *Two O'Clock* plus a new tune from Frank Maloy, *Magic Melody Reel*.

An equally remarkable aspect of this record is the degree of talent on display by such young pickers. Greeson is assisted here by Brennen Ernst on banjo, and Taylor Baker on mandolin. They all three look too young to grow a beard, but can each execute traditional bluegrass music like they've been at it for decades. And Tom Mindte at Patuxent keeps finding them and introducing us to them on his label.

Ernst plays his banjo following the lead of Don Reno as much as anyone else, which you can hear clearly on the second part of *Wheel Hoss*, and as he melds Don's *Dixie Breakdown* into *Big Sandy River*. Baker's mandolin is a bit more on the modern side, smooth and clear as a bell. Taylor has two previous projects on Patuxent, and Brennen currently performs with Karl Shiflett. Expect these two men to leave a mark on our music, just as Greeson is likely to do.

A pair of old guys fill out the session band, with Danny Knicely on guitar and Marshall Wilborn on bass. Danny also plays second mandolin and third fiddle on *Panhandle Country*.

Every track here is full of life and excitement, and some mighty fine picking. If you like to hear young artists embracing the traditions that have been handed down, you can't go wrong with [Daniel Greeson](#).