

Maple Hill - "Back To You"

www.maplehillbluegrass.com

"Back to You" is a brand new recording from Ottawa-based Maple Hill. It is a collection of familiar bluegrass and country favourites and new songs written by the band members.

First, some background. Maple Hill was formed in the early 80's and lasted for about 10 years when the band members went on to pursue some different projects.

About 5 years ago Maple Hill got back together again. Three of the original members, Pat Moore (bass and vocals), Garry Greenland (a highly accomplished and respected banjo player and teacher) and Kevin Golka (mandolin) are back this time around. They have also added Sean Lundy (one of Garry's former students) on banjo with Garry now on rhythm guitar. This is the first recording for the new line-up.

When this CD arrived I planned to give it a cursory listen to get a general impression of how it sounded before drawing any conclusions. However, as I went through the tracks I quickly realized that I wanted to keep on listening to this recording. I became engrossed in the musicianship, the rhythms and the songs...but most of all by Pat Moore's singing. One of my favourite nostalgia songs is Laurie Lewis' stunning version of "**Who Will Watch the Home Place**". I could not imagine anyone else doing justice to it but Pat, with Kevin singing harmony, has managed to pull it off. She captures completely the emotion and longing that is at the core of this beautiful song. Pat's version stands alone. It is a show stopper. A special kudo also to Jason Jaknunas for his excellent recording techniques that helps make this track so outstanding.

Patsy Cline's "**Sweet Dreams**" is another classic where Pat shines. I first heard her sing this many years ago at the Central Canada Bluegrass Awards show. I loved her version back then and I am glad she chose to include it here.

Pat also wrote five of the songs in this recording. "**The Shores of Black Lake**" which needs to be the "Original Canadian Bluegrass Song of the Year"! "**Don't Trouble Trouble**" is a humorous up-tempo song in the classic bluegrass style. "**I'll Be Your Fool ('Til the End of My Days)**" a well-written classic country waltz. "**Lone Pine Standing**" is an up-tempo song which compares a lone pine tree to the strength of a love. "**Lay Me Down**" a touching song about her mother's final days.

Garry Greenland also contributes the title song "**Back To You**"....a song about a guy finally waking up and realizing why his marriage is in trouble. Great trio singing and instrumental back-up.

Maple Hill has included several familiar songs on this CD. "**Somehow Tonight**" is done traditionally but with a medium-tempo slightly bluesy feel. It works!

"**Hello City Limits**" sung by mandolinist Kevin Golka. He also added a new third verse to the song.

"Eight More Miles to Louisville" is another of my favourites on this CD. Garry sings this Grandpa Jones classic which has great harmony vocals and excellent instrumental work by Sean and Kevin.

"I Hope You Have Learned" sung by Kevin Golka. This is a song that has been recorded by Bill Monroe, Tony Rice, and Doyle Lawson among others. Maple Hill stays true to the original with their own blend of vocals.

"Luxury Liner" written by Gram Parsons and made popular by Emmylou Harris. Pat and the band add their own unique touch.

"Back To You" is a must-have for any Bluegrass music collection. It has well-written original songs, excellent musicianship and harmonies and great production. Above all though, Pat Moore's rich, soaring and expressive singing is a delight. She is one of the finest singers ever, in Canadian Bluegrass music.

This quality project extends right down to the packaging theme. The booklet that comes with the CD is excellent, with some great band photography taken at the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls.

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October 2016.