

Gap To Gap – Cane Mill Road

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It's always encouraging to hear a new generation of musicians taking up the bluegrass and grassicana mantle, and though they may opt to add new elements to the mix, the devotion and dedication is generally evident immediately. That's clearly the case with the young quartet that calls itself [Cane Mill Road](#), a reference to their Appalachian origins. Their sophomore set, [Gap To Gap](#), finds an astute and articulate blend of arcane trappings and obvious enthusiasm, a sound that's fresh, invigorating and readily resourceful.

Although the majority of the songs on *Gap To Gap* are original compositions — a reverential take on Utah Phillips' somber standby, *Rock, Salt and Nails*, and Gordon Lightfoot's stoic classic, *Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, being the most notable exceptions — the material sounds like a batch of seasoned standards, even on first hearing. The drive and determination inherent in *Round To Ramble* and *Here I Go* are invigorating in every sense, adding further credence to the idea of youthful enthusiasm.

Clearly confident due to their instrumental acumen, the foursome — vocalist, mandolin, fiddle, and dobro player Liam Purcell, bassist Eliot Smith, banjo and guitar picker Tray Wellington and vocalist/guitarist Casey Lewis — ply a traditional tapestry even as they forge a contemporary connection. *Rohan* offers a perfect case in point; an engaging instrumental, it creates a mood through its melody that's both captivating and compelling. Likewise, the song that follows, *You Can Take Me Home*, offers soft spoken sentiment that looks wistfully forward to the future. "Some say life is downhill after 40, others say it's just begun, don't want to live to be forgotten," they wax euphemistically. Here again, emotion is bound with intent, making the entire experience one to relish and reflect on.

Ultimately, *Gap To Gap* isn't an exercise in sheer dexterity, although their skill is clearly unquestionable. Indeed, there's something to be said for earnest engagement. With *Gap To Gap*, Cane Mill Road confirm the fact that they've not only arrived, but done so in record