

Reviews

Bob Allen, Robert C. Buckingham, Bill Conger, Steve Goldfield, Derek Halsey, Henry Koretzky, Richard K. Spottswood, C

SPRINGFIELD EXIT THAT WAS THEN

Patuxent Music
Patuxent CD-268



Having three former members of the ultra-traditional Johnson Mountain Boys would seem to indicate that Springfield Exit might follow suit. While David McLaughlin, Tom Adams, and Marshall Wilborn do tilt it in the traditional direction at times, particularly McLaughlin's Monroe-style mandolin, the ultimate product has more to do with a softer, gentler approach than the hard-driving roar of JMB. For every mournful "Lonesome Wind" from Buzz Busby's catalogue

or the honky-tonk stylings of Wilborn's "That Was Then And This Is Now," there is a folk-tempered tune such as "No One Knows" and "Still My Thoughts Go Back To You." Countering the old-time edge of "Elkhorn Ridge," with McLaughlin on clawhammer, is the lyrical flow of Chris Brashear's "Listen To Me Mother." Throw in "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere," the Eagles' "Peaceful Easy Feeling," and Don Williams' "Till The Rivers All Run Dry" and a pattern is forming.

Motivating and focusing the band's sound are lead vocalist Linda Lay and guitarist/harmony vocalist David Lay. Mostly, it's Linda. She has a wonderful voice, one that is very expressive. At times, she makes a good run at the bluesy side on the aforementioned Busby tune and the title tune, but she seems more comfortable with a lighter approach. As a result, the band adjusts accordingly, lightening up and pulling back to support that strength, as it should be. You should always play to the strength of the singer.

All that said, this is a good and well-rendered album. They've made sure to cover as wide a spectrum as possible, including the anthem declaration of Ola Belle and Bud Reed's "I've Endured" and the standard "Some Old Day," and they've managed to craft a highly-distinct band