

**Jessie Baker** is a hot young - just 19 years old - banjo picker who has been playing with Michael Cleveland since August 2008. *Yessir!* (Patuxent 196), recorded in February 2009, is his first solo CD.

Accompanying him for most of the sessions to form a core band are Cleveland (fiddle and mandolin), Dudley Connell (guitar), David McLaughlin (mandolin) and Marshall Wilborn (bass); all masters of their chosen instrument. Baker isn't intimidated though. He plays his way through 13 instrumentals

in fine fashion, demonstrating his own style, a blending of Reno's and Scruggs' best. His picking is clean and 'snappy' and brings a freshness to tunes like Follow The Leader, Banjo Riff, Boston Boy and Banjo Fling. Two other tunes, Richard Underwood's Johnson Mountain Chimes and the title cut, a Baker original, also get powerful, driving treatment. San Antonio Rose, Jesus Savior Pilot Me and Bury Me Beneath The Willow are taken at more sedate tempos. Baker demonstrates that he is more than just a good banjo player and his appointment to that spot in Flamekeeper is a stunning endorsement of his status. As Tom Adams, an excellent banjo player himself, says in the album notes, "You're sure to hear a lot more great music from Jessie Baker in the coming months and years". Keep your ears close to the ground.