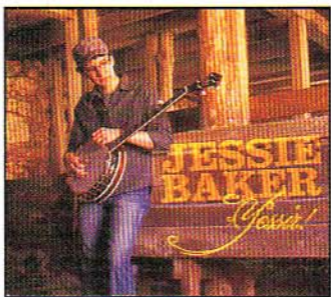


JESSIE BAKER YESSIR!

Patuxent Music
CD-196



For the last couple of years, readers of this magazine may have seen advertisements for the Baker Brothers and their music. Hailing from Indiana, Jessie and Taylor Baker are teenagers who took up bluegrass at a young age and have progressed ever since. In recent years, Jessie has gone on to play with many top bands in the business including fellow Hoosiers, the Wildwood Valley Boys, Karl Shifflet, Wildfire, Melvin Goins, Marty Raybon, and more. He is now a member of the powerhouse band Flamekeeper that backs the award-winning Michael Cleveland. This new all-instrumental album, *Yessir!*, represents a coming-out party in the bluegrass tradition for Jessie Baker, as this is his first solo project.

Early on, Baker was inspired by Earl Scruggs and Don Reno and the album starts off with the Reno/Stroup-penned "Follow The Leader." It's one of many standards found here, along with "San Antonio Rose," "Jesus Savior Pilot Me," "Nine Pound Hammer," "Bury Me Beneath The Willow," and another Reno tune called "Banjo Riff."

Baker keeps the tempos fairly subdued, which only reminds the listener that some of these familiar tunes have been dredged up one too many times over the years. Fortunately, however, there are some real barnburners including "Boston Boy," "Banjo Fling," "Johnson Mountain Chimes," and the new Baker original and title cut, "Yessir."

Jessie is a very good player who more than holds his own. Another saving grace that keeps this album from sounding like just another collection of oft-mined standards is the exceptional fiddling of Michael Cleveland who plays on all but one cut. Other musicians on the project include Marshall Wilborn, Dudley Connell, David McLaughlin, Audie Blaylock, Nate Leath, Patrick McAvinue and Barry Reid. (Patuxent Music, P.O. Box 572, Rockville, MD 20848, <www.pxrec.com>.)DH

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