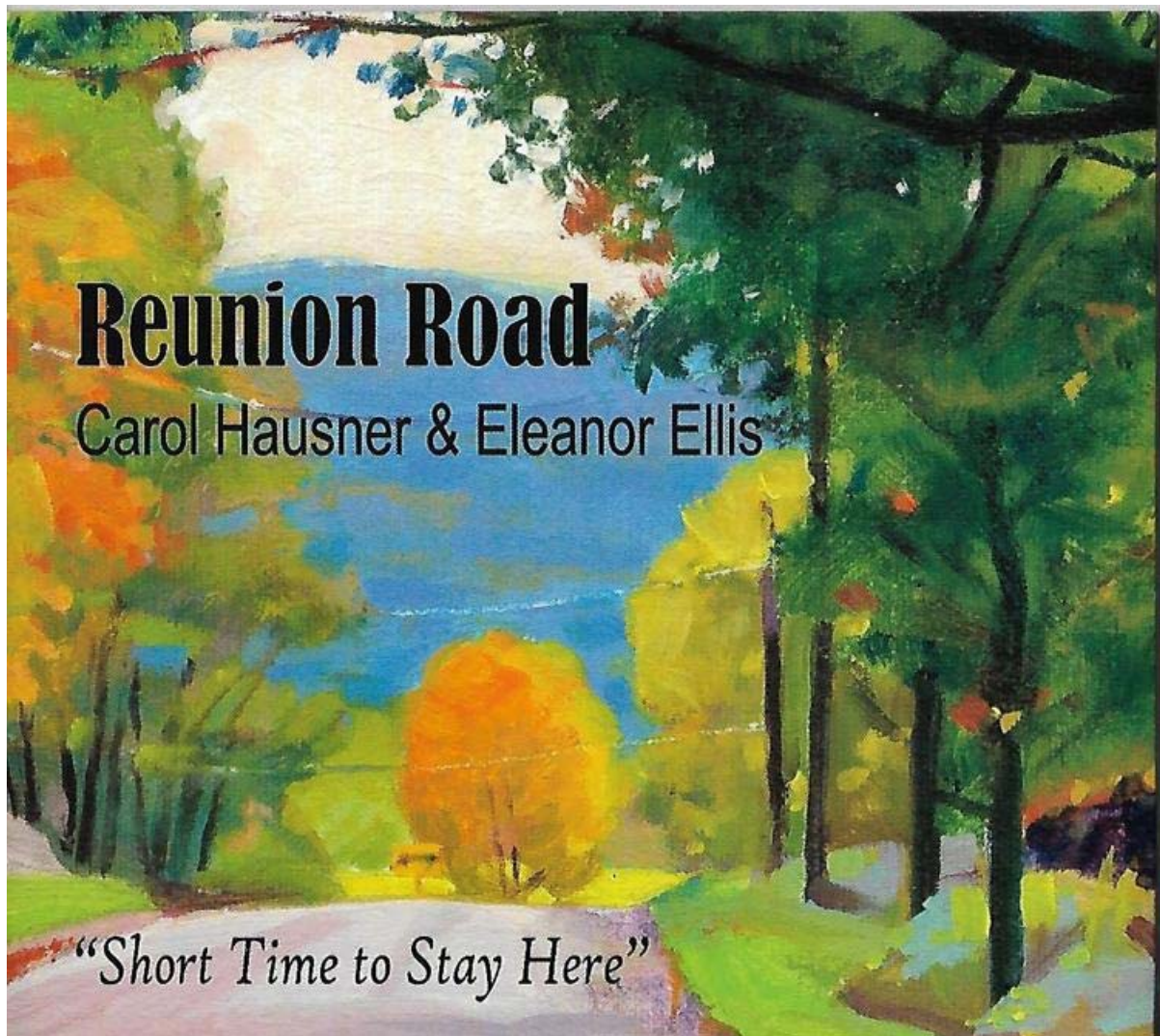


# Hausner and Ellis make beautiful music together

By Art Edelstein Arts Correspondent Nov 23, 2019



Carol Hausner, one of the best female bluegrass-country singers in these parts, has teamed up with longtime friend and singing partner Eleanor Ellis for an album of bluegrass and country duets. "Reunion Road" is reminiscent of the music that Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard produced in the 1960s and '70s.

Hausner, from Montpelier, lived for many years in Tacoma Park, Maryland, where she developed as a singer and rhythm guitarist. She has been performing locally and at bluegrass festivals in the East in more recent years. She is an award-winning songwriter. Among her singing partners in her Maryland days was Ellis, a New Orleans-area native.

Ellis has performed at clubs, festivals and concerts in the United States, Canada and Europe. She has also traveled and played with the late gospel street singer Flora Molton and bluesman Archie Edwards, and sometimes accompanied delta blues great Eugene Powell.

Ellis is a founding member of the DC Blues Society and the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation, and has written about the blues for several publications. She is also producer and editor of the video documentary “Blues Houseparty,” which features well-known Piedmont blues musicians such as John Jackson, John Cephas and Archie Edwards.

The two women met in Maryland. Hausner grew up in New Jersey and learned to sing and play with help from her father, who was influenced by the Greenwich Village music scene of the 1960s. She has been playing traditional, contemporary and original bluegrass, country and folk music with various bands in the Mid-Atlantic States and New England. In 2009 she won first place at the legendary MerleFest Chris Austin Songwriting Contest with co-writer Colin McCaffrey of East Montpelier.

“Reunion Road” is a well-crafted album. The two women’s voices blend easily, and they share high and low harmony parts. The song selection of 14 mostly traditional songs in this 45-minute program is well chosen. Gems like “Little Birdie,” “Going to the West” and “Katie Dear” are treated with reverence. “Across the Great Divide” by the late Kate Wolf, fits nicely into this program. The Hausner-McCaffrey song “On My Mind” suits the theme of this CD.

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The two women get great instrumental support from several of Vermont’s best traditional musicians. The women handle the rhythm guitar tracks, while multi-instrumentalist McCaffrey fills in on fiddle, mandolin, bass, cello and additional guitar parts. Mark Greenberg and Andy Green add banjo tracks and Jim Pitman lends a hand on three tracks with dobro. McCaffrey also recorded, engineered and mixed the CD. The album was released on the Patuxent Music label.

Hausner keeps growing as a performer. She's sung in duos with several Vermont performers and bands, and now with Ellis. Her musical star is in ascendency. By hitching it to Ellis' equally talented style, Hausner has rediscovered a partner who complements her vocal talents and musical interests.

The result is a very satisfying album of traditional singing from two women who should perform and record a lot more together. We hope the next duo album isn't far behind.