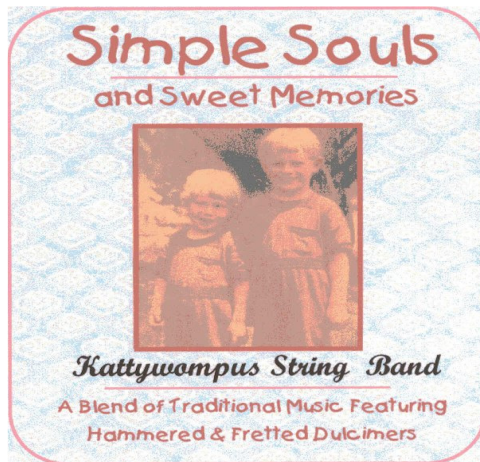


Review: "Simple Souls and Sweet Memories" by The Kattywompus String Band

Bruce W. Ford



This CD is a mixed bag, most of it very good, but mixed just the same. For those you like traditional American folk songs, this CD has that. For those who like jigs and reels, this CD has that as well.

The Kattywompus Sting Band of Monrovia, CA (Jennifer Ranger, Tula Lee, Jim Merriam, Scott Ranger) have done a great job of using a wide range of traditional instruments in this eclectic collection of songs.

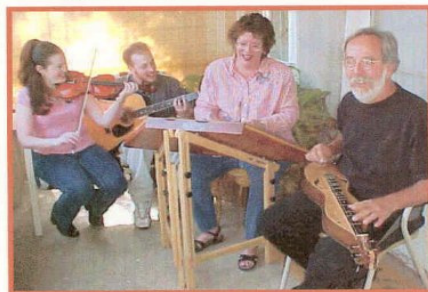
In the Celtic selections (Morrison's Jig, Planty Irwin, Irish Washerwoman, Lisdoonvarne), Kattywompus does a great job of presenting these traditional tunes in an elegant way...very pleasing to the ear.

In the other tracks which feature standbys like Lil' Liza Jane, Bicycle Built for Two, Little Brown Jug, Kattywompus brings a great deal of energy to their songs.

Six of 17 tracks are vocal tracks (Red River Valley, Handsome Molly, Sweet Betsy from Pike, Little Brown Jug, Beautiful Dreamer, and You Are My Sunshine). While the vocals are good, the strength of the Kattywompus string band is in their instrumental talent. There are many instrumental treats on this CD.

My favorite tracks were their version of the Irish Washerwoman and (of course) Dulcimer Reel. The Road to Lisdoonvarne deserves special mention. Jennifer Ranger plays a great version of this song, which I know from experience isn't easy to play fast.

Kattywompus String Band



A sweet song heard one summer night... your Grandfather's favorite tune from long ago...Kattywompus String Band brings you upbeat music from life's sweetest memories, and reminds you of the simple souls you've known and loved.

The centerpiece of this album is the superb hammered dulcimer talent of Jennifer Ranger. She's clean with the hammers and carries many of the tracks. It's great to hear a hammered dulcimer play lead! The tracks in which she's featured are the standouts.

One interesting aspect of this album is that it was produced using a portable home recording/editing system. This allowed the band to cut the album under familiar conditions, and without hurrying to beat the clock. In fact, the recording and mixing of the album was completed by a band member, Scott Ranger. This is a fine effort!

This CD deserves a listen. I don't know the history of the Kattywompus String Band, but watch for future releases from this band!

1. Dulcimer Reel

2. Red River Valley

Lead Vocal: Tula Lee Harmony: Jennifer Ranger

3. Waltz of the Little Girls

4. Lil' Liza Jane

5. Bicycle Built For Two

6. Handsome Molly

Vocal: Jim Merriam

7. Morrison's Jig

8. Sweet Betsy From Pike

Vocal: Jennifer Ranger

17. You Are My Sunshine

Lead Vocal: Tula Lee Harmony: Jennifer Ranger

9. Black Mountain Rag

10. Drink To Me Only

Harmonized Dulcimer Solo

11. Little Brown Jug

Vocal: Jim Merriam

12. Planxty Irwin

13. Irish Washerwoman

14. Beautiful Dreamer

Vocal: Jennifer Ranger

15. Old Joe Clark

16. Road To Lisdoonvarna

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VIOLIN & VOCALS: TULA LEE
FRETTED DULCIMER, SPOONS & VOCALS: JIM MERRIAM
GUITAR & BASS: SCOTT RANGER
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