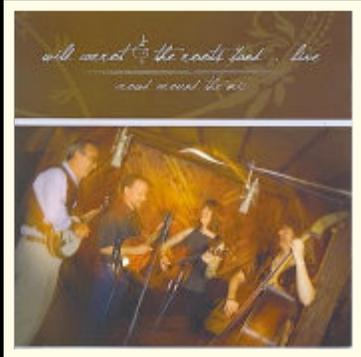


FOLKWAX

Folk Music



Planted and Rooted in Hearty Soil, (01/21/10)

Get ready for a feel good, foot tappin', smilin' good time. **Wild Carrot** is a duo from Cincinnati and when joined by the **Roots** they grow into a quartet. Luckily for the listeners, they recorded two sets in July, 2009 for this fun-filled romp. This twenty-three song set lasts about seventy minutes and entertains from start to finish. There are a few songs with introductions that add fun stories, especially the intro to "MacPherson's Lament." These moments let you hear the character of the performers outside of their quirky performances.

"Crowd Around the Mic" is a light bluegrass album with guitar, upright bass, mandolin, and banjo creating most of the sounds. Also infused with the bluegrass is traditional Blues, folk, and swing that round out their pleasant music. Some magic moments come through on the harmonized vocalizing throughout the disc. Check out the opening "Pan American Boogie." All four members add harmony vocals that sound like a train.

The majority of the songs are originals with a smattering of "covers." I put that in quotes because they have their own sound and make any song their own. They cover songs by **Guy Clark**, **Michelle Shocked**, and **Lennon/ McCartney**, but I did not think of any of these artists as I listened to Wild Carrot. Wild Carrot are seasoned veterans that comfortably play music that appears to have come out of their finger tips for decades on end.

The interplay between the instruments and the vocals is incredible to hear. Cue up "Homegrown Tomatoes" and hear audience interactions scrambled up with each performer's own solos. The only word that really describes the song is fun. "Blue Bottle Tree" has a groovy story with writer/ singer **Pam Temple** telling a beautiful story. **Spencer Funk** plucks out a mandolin solo followed by **Brandt Smith's** dobro. Both just stay right in the feel of the song and take you onto a well worn side path before getting back to the main dirt road.

You do not have to be a die hard bluegrass fan to enjoy this album. In fact it might be a little too light for the diehards, but this album is very enjoyable. If it weren't for the introductions you wouldn't realize this is a live recording; the quality is excellent. Speaking of quality, these musicians and voices are the stars of this show. This is an album to start off with for a casual bluegrass fan or for someone who is curious and listens to other roots music. Wild Carrot and the Roots Band could open up some people's ears to other styles they normally don't listen to. One thing is for sure, *Crowd Around the Mic* won't have fans turning it off anytime soon.

Kyle M. Palarino is a contributing editor to FolkWax. Kyle can be reached at www.folkwax@visnat.com.