

The Mountain Miner Motion Picture Soundtrack Artist

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CD: *The Mountain Miner Motion Picture Soundtrack*

Artist: Various

Label: Alt452 Records

The Bluegrass Standard published an in-depth article about the film *The Mountain Miner*. (See *The Bluegrass Standard Vol. 4 Issue 5 – The Mountain Miner*) I have not seen the film, but I have listened to the soundtrack several times now. *The Mountain Miner Motion Picture Soundtrack* is a significant collection and recording of folk music. There are thirty-nine tracks of closely recorded unadorned Appalachian folk music for one to enjoy. Some tunes are so closely recorded, one can hear the groans and vocalizations of the fiddle box and its uh-uh-uh with every stroke of the bow (as in *Brushy Fork of John's Creek*). At times, one can hear the friction of the bow hair grabbing the fiddle strings in addition to the notes. One can hear the fingernails on the banjo strings and the percussive explosion of the notes from a loose, twelve-inch skinhead (as in *Ever Been to Ohio?*). That is close. It makes for some mighty enjoyable fiddle and banjo music, or so it does to my ears. When these types of sounds are heard, it is an indication of how close one is to the music. Close is good.

The singing is straightforward, durable, timeless. The tunes, mostly traditional with a smattering of new originals, are as timeless as the performance model. "Old-timey," some might shrug and say. Yes, it is old-timey. But it is also

uncomplicated music, music playable on the front porch as indeed some of the soundtrack's tunes are indicated so in the song list. I like porch music. I like funky-tuned fiddles. I like funky-tuned slack-key open-back fretless banjos. I like modal ballads, unconventional modal melodies and harmonies, modal fiddles, mixed modalities, and a good smattering of modal madness. This soundtrack will provide some welcome relief for one who craves a daily Mixolydian fix; maybe there aren't so many of us, but it is a powerful addiction.

The Soundtrack, taken as a whole, is an old-time Appalachian journey in and of itself. While I haven't seen the movie, I am pleased with the journey afforded by the soundtrack. The images evoked by the music are my own, not those suggested by the filmmaker. I am not able to adequately convey the images coaxed forth by *Kingdom Come (part 2)*, with the DDAD fiddle and the slack, fretless banjo's bass notes. It is powerful, joyful, mournful, dark, light, foreboding, forbidding, yielding, and welcoming all at the same time, which is a remarkable achievement. *Across the Ohio* is a beautiful, simple tune, sang in wonderful unadorned harmony. *Coming from the Ball* made Uncle Dave Macon proud; he'd gleefully slice off a slab of his last country ham and pass his final still-house jug around to get to hear that one more time.

Favorites: *Old Jim Sutton (porch)*, *Sugar Baby*, *Short Time Here* *Long Time Gone*, *Darlin' Corey (porch)*, *Glory in the Meeting House*, *Little Birdie (part 1)*, *Fireflies* (and its haunting funky slack-tuned banjo), *Kingdom Come (part 1)*, *Pay Them No Mind*, *Shakin' Down the Acorns*, *I'm Going to a City (Where the Roses Never Fade)*, *Ever Been to Ohio?*, *Little Birdie (part 2)*, *Rye Straw*, *Brushy Fork of John's Creek*, *The Day Is Past and Gone*, *Kingdom Come (part 2)* [my favorite!!!], *Across the Ohio*, and *Coming from the Ball (Don't Get Weary Children)*.

I salute everyone associated with this soundtrack: The producers, the ones who selected the music, the ones who performed the music, and those who recorded the music. Having

been taken on a journey by the soundtrack, I now need to see how much further I can be carried by hearing the soundtrack as part of the film. I expect it will be much further. We'll see. Based on the soundtrack, alone, everyone should plan on seeing *The Mountain Miner*. The various artists are too many to mention here, but each one I heard gave me a place of joy and respite, which is a thing every artist hopes to achieve.

The Mountain Miner Motion Picture Soundtrack, download, streaming, or CD, is available through all major music outlets.

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