

There Was a Time

CD: *There Was A Time*

Artist: *New River Bluegrass Band*

Artist Website: <https://www.newriverbluegrass.net/>

New River Bluegrass Band finds a good groove from the start, then stays in it through their CD, *There Was A Time*.

The twelve songs on this CD are:

1. *In the Shadow of the Mill*
2. *My Mind's Made Up*
3. *Faith of a Little Seed*
4. *My Heavenly Home*
5. *In the Lord's Will Again*
6. *Southern Rail*
7. *Welcome Home*
8. *Hole in the Ground*
9. *There Is a Time*
10. *The Scars You Can't See*
11. *We'll Work Till Jesus Comes*
12. *Living Water*



I always want to hear new music from good songwriters, and the **New River Bluegrass Band** does not disappoint with ***There Was A Time***. Getting out a high magnification loupe so my eyes could interpret the tiny smudges that turned out to be songwriter credits, from what I could make out, I think the three originals penned by band members are among the best songs on this CD.

“In the Shadow of the Mill,” penned by banjoist and singer Barry Long, gives us a good glimpse of a time gone by, which is the theme of the CD. I liked this song and its Flatted 7th structure, which adds musical tension that enhances the lyrics and mood. Every band member gets a vocal credit on the liner notes, so I am not sure who is singing the lead vocals, but

I'll make a pretty good assumption that it's Long. I know about assumptions, folks, and the dangers they pose to us mortals, but it was necessary in this case. If my assumption is wrong, someone will let me know, I'm sure.

Long and bandmate and guitarist Andy Smith teamed up to write "In the Lord's Will Again," which may be my favorite on the CD. Once again, I'd like to be sure who the lead singer is (Long?). I could call them up, but it's 3:30 AM, and a phone call is likely unwelcome, though apparently, one might call me this early in the morning with no gripes. I could send an email, but I'm already past my deadline, so I'm stuck with what is revealed in the liner notes. If I seem a bit frustrated by this, well, I am. I like this music and want to KNOW. "In the Lord's Will Again" touched me in this early morning solitude. It was more than a beautifully crafted and executed song: it was close, soft, coaxing me towards a better version of myself, not judging, not harsh, but tender as a mother's love. The lead singer got my attention on the bridge, a piercing but soft and clear beckoning voice. Salute! Also, a big salute to Bonfire and Sound Engineer Steve Wilson for the noiseless close micing. It was almost as if the song was being whispered right into my ear. In a bizarrely oxymoronic way, the absence of noise was deafening, forcing me to lean in towards the speakers, a lesson in the power of dynamics.

"Southern Rail" was composed by fiddler Chuck Price. I enjoyed this powerful song. "I long to ride the winding track that leads to Tennessee" is a lonesome line that any songwriter would look back on with pride. A tip of the hat to "The Wabash Cannon Ball" at the end was a nice touch.

I enjoyed hearing the cover of "There is a Time," a Dillard's song. I particularly enjoyed the guitar solos, and the hammered E string on the second solo really got my attention.

"Hole in the Ground" had some serious power in the vocals and instruments. It started strong and ended stronger.

All total, that's five favorites out of twelve songs. I liked the other songs, too. If five favorites out of twelve songs were translated into a batting average, it would be .416, and I don't suppose anyone would complain about that. I enjoyed this CD all the way through, and it reads high on the "want to hear it again" meter.

On the recording itself, I did hear a bit of harshness in the first song and a raucous clip later in the CD. A good mastering would have fixed this. Still, I like the sound of this CD. Salute to Bonfire and Engineer Steve Wilson. Sometimes the music got so close, I could smell the aftershave, and folks, that is a compliment.

Best regards, **New River Bluegrass Band**. I'm waiting for the next CD.

Mississippi Chris Sharp