

Maverick CD review      *Maverick Magazine*      from the UK

George Shuffler & Laura Boosinger

Mountain Treasures

Copper Creek CCCD-0217

Bluegrass main-liners who know their stuff know the name of George Shuffler. For close on two decades, he was a mainstay of The Stanley Brothers and during those years, carved a name for himself with his pioneering cross-picking guitar style, walking bass work and distinctive sandy-textured vocal harmonies. Later, he worked with Don Reno and Bill Harrell before creating The Shuffler Family who toured extensively on the gospel circuit.

Laura Boosinger too is a prominent figure on the western North Carolina folk scene, was a member of the Luke Smathers String Band for thirteen years and has performed with artistes of the calibre of John Hartford and David Holt.

A rising star of the Southern Appalachians, she is a stalwart of the legendary Shindig On The Green series of concerts which take place in Asheville throughout the summer months, and has made quite an impact as a solo musician (banjo/guitar/dulcimer/autoharp), thanks to her gift for soft and delicate interpretations of the good old songs. She also has a beautifully expressive voice.

This pairing came about after she coaxed the mighty Shuffler to get back into the studio after a period of virtual retirement, the two of them having been drawn together under the NC Heritage programme.

Both have a deep love and understanding of what constitutes a classic piece of old-time mountain music. Hence here, the material has a well-burnished patina and is played with a polish that comes from deep-rooted passion.

*Rabbit In The Log*, occasionally known as *A Feast Here Tonight*, and recorded in the early days by Bill and Charlie Monroe, is a showstopper and *Sail Away Ladies* finds Boosinger on her best singing form and provides a pointer to how sweet things are on her wonderful solo CD, *DOWN THE ROAD* from 1998.

On *Pass Me Not*, the guitar work is as mature and mellow as can be. Heres one of the real old masters in the company of someone who can bring the very best out of him.

Among the remaining gems are old favourites such as *Cluck Old Hen*, *Red Rocking Chair*, *Grave In The Pines*, *Lonesome Road Blues* and *Will The Circle Be Unbroken?*

It was George who chose to call the CD MOUNTAIN TREASURES, as a reference to the fact that these are songs which have been played in the Carolina hills for many generations. There is no question it could also apply to these musical partners. *LT*