

Myths We Tell Our Young

Artist: Unspoken Tradition

Review by Bluegrass Unlimited

This project erupts in a wall of sound. They drive as hard as any of the older bands of yesteryear, but with a new approach that incorporates influences from various newer sources. They are at once part of the tradition and shapers of a new sound. Their sound is a virile, volcanic blast as the instruments and vocals jump out in a torrent of notes and words. It's compelling and challenging all at once.

Audie McGinnis wrote three songs and Ty Gilpin wrote two for this project. Bass player Lee Shuford wrote "I Say Let's Go (Colorado)" which has "hit" written all over it. The remainder of the material includes two songs from Paula Breedlove and Brad Davis—"Dark Side Of The Mountain" and "Uncharted Territory." The material is solid stuff. McGinnis' "Land" is a masterpiece for its simple message in a complex arrangement, and his gritty Southern rock vocals combine to make it work. With the next cut, McGinnis and band hit you with "Force Of Nature." The band hails notes in a tumultuous torrent with mandolin, banjo and fiddle cascading in a gully washer of musical mayhem. It successfully catches what a force of nature can sound like.

The vocal harmonies shine on "Dark Side Of The Mountain." Each cut shows off the multiple talents of these fine musicians. Zane McGinnis drives the banjo, while brother Audie plays some facile guitar. Tim Gardner wails on the fiddle, filling holes and soaring on breaks getting a tone in places like an electric guitar through a phase shifter, then turning around and sounding just like it came from the mountains. Lee Shuford underpins the whole works with his in-the-pocket bass. Ty Gilpin's mandolin drives the sound, filling it with subtle nuance and authoritative force.

This band is so modern in its scope, and they can incorporate a song from rock so well that it sounds like maybe Blues Traveler covered their version of "The Mountains Win Again." The McGinnis originals are tough, direct, and in your face. Ty Gilpin's pieces and the other material offset this blast but carry their own intensity. That's the word that best describes this unrelentingly good band—intense.