

Sing Out!

Summer, 2006

TANGLEWEED

*Just a Spoonful and Other Folksongs
of Rural Cook County*
Squatney 45000

Spontaneity is the word here. Nothing fancy from Tangleweed, just honest bluegrass and old-time music recorded in one long November afternoon with three mics, a tube mixer and an analog two-track tape recorder. In the notes they mention that they are striving for the sound of authentic field recordings. They have achieved their goal.

Just a Spoonful opens with the classic "Train 45" from the playing of Grayson and Whitter. Kenneth P.W. Rainey on mandolin, Billy Oh on fiddle and banjoist Timothy Ryan Fisher trade leads over Rainey's mando theme. It's a driving rendition of a great tune. They follow that with "C-Jam Blues" from Duke Ellington. It demonstrates the range and versatility of the ensemble.

The title track is an energetic rearrangement of Charlie Jordan's "Spoonful" with

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the classic "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down" snuck into the arrangement for good measure. Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys are the source for "Cindy" and once again they breathe new life into an old standard.

"Blackberry Blossom" spotlights Fisher's melodic banjo with strong accompaniment from bassist Paul Wargaski and guitarist Scott Judd. The vocals of Oh, Rainey and Fisher are spotlighted in "Katy Kline" another well-worn classic. Riley Puckett is the source for "Ragged But Right"; as the notes on the recording testify this was recorded at the end of a long day of recording and Rainey admits that his voice is "totally thrashed (sic)," all of which lend an air of authenticity to the proceedings.

If you are looking for virtuosic bluegrass picking or obscure old-time tunes you won't find either on *Just a Spoonful*. What you will find is an energetic band of young roots musicians recording as simply as possible some of their favorite tunes. They hit on all eight cylinders! — TD