

IB INTERNATIONAL bluegrass

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Going Home **Joe Newberry & April Verch [Slab Town Records]**

There's a tendency to think of the music two people can make as simple – two instruments, two voices, how much can be there, really? In our corner of the musical world we know better, thanks to pairings like Skaggs & Rice and Hurst & Raines. If two musicians know how to find one another in support of the song, a kind of magic happens as something decidedly greater than the sum of the parts is conjured up.

Ozark/Appalachian songsmith Joe Newberry and Canadian fiddler April Verch seem not to know there's a border crossing between the two traditions they draw on. Instead, we hear the common taproot and a kindred blend, whether on an ancient fiddle tune, a rousing Wade Mainer gospel tune, or one of their originals. (Don't miss Newberry's touching title track.) Verch's lively, expressive fiddle is served well by Newberry's understated rhythm work. The joy and immediacy captured in this album are unmistakable. As Sugar Hill's Barry Poss says, "Oh, but this is a good one!" [KK]