

## April Verch 'Bright Like Gold' - Slab Town

Sunday, October 6, 2013 at 03:30AM

Twenty tracks, spanning a total playing time of sixty minutes; this is not a recording for the faint-hearted. The songs include a number of traditional airs that are given a contemporary feel by the April Verch Band; bassist and claw hammer banjo player, Cody Walters, guitarist Hayes Griffin and April Verch, who combines both fiddle and step dancing as part of the rhythmic mix.

The band is an energetic, virtuosic, tradition-celebrating trio, joined by various guests, who serve up a heady combo of fiddle, mandolin, dobro, pedal steel, clawhammer banjo, bass, guitars and general good vibes all around.

Produced by Verch, Walters, Griffin, and their engineer Chris Rosser, Bright Like Gold has an old-time Canadian medley made up of 'Dusty Miller,' 'Fiddle Fingers' and 'Grizzly Bear.' These three arrangements bring to mind all that is good in traditional/folk/roots music and point to the close similarities across the oceans between Cajun, Irish, Scottish and Breton music traditions.

The music on display here rewards you with an experience of both the breadth and scope of the playing coupled with past influences. The doo wop of 'Foolish Heart' underlined with a jazz feel arrangement is counterbalanced by the stark feel of 'Raven in the Hemlock' and the celebratory stomp of 'Jeff Sturgeon.'

A fine cover of 'Don't Come Home A Drinkin' originally written by Loretta Lynn & Peggy Willis is followed by 'Six Feet of Earth Makes Us All of One Size' written by Ola Belle Reed; a salutary reminder of life, however lived.

The closing track 'Morris & Boris' is April Verch at her most engaging; all energy to the fore and a swell of fiddle music underpinned by bass accompaniment and traditional vocal, with a coda of parlour sound, stripped back and bowing to the roots of where this all began. Compelling stuff.