

George McKnight, Uptown Bluegrass Featured Artist of the Month: Review of *Big Darlin'*

From the barn-burning licks of the opening song, "Back in the Black," to the tasty fiddling' of Paul Elliott on the self-penned title tune, "Big Darlin," and everything in between, this is one fine CD of bluegrass music by the Downtown Mountain Boys. This group is based in Seattle, WA., a city of hills, mountains, and valleys . . . hence the name.

The music on this CD is very true to the sound the band produces on stage in live concert shows. It's a very tight sound delivered with the confidence that comes with many years of working together to hone a great sound. Paul Elliott on fiddle, is smooth and powerful, determined to be a good fiddler in all styles and forms. Paul is a much-in-demand session fiddler and showcases his talents in several Northwest-area bands. Terrence Enyeart, a mainstay of traditional bluegrass in his home area is an accomplished bass and mandolin player, plus he is a great lead singer and songwriter. His background includes stints in "Rural Delivery" and "Brother's Keeper." Terrance is an accomplished songwriter and that is evident with his tune "Holy Beacon." David Keenan, is a powerhouse picker on banjo, mandolin, guitar and other instruments, and is also a good singer and songwriter. A professional entertainer with many bands over the years, David brings a great sense of humor to the band and his on-stage work is entertaining and fun. Don Share on the six string guitar is a class act all the way. His guitar pickin' is "clean and decent" and it mirrors his vocal work. Tom Moran on mandolin is strong and steady, a total complement to the sound of the band. Fourteen Songs on the CD showcase the band very well. Original material: "Bug Tussle" (a great banjo tune from David Keenan), "Sometimes Dig for Taters," and "Big Darlin," a super fiddle tune from Paul Elliott, and the aforementioned "Holy Beacon" from Terrance Enyeart. Well presented covers from other writers include "99 Years and One Dark Day" by Jesse Fuller, "Till the End of the World Rolls Round" by Thomas Newton, and a great rendition of a Johnny Cash song, "Train of Love," ...great fun. Every song features crisp and clean pickin' with great lead vocal work on duets and trios. The album liner notes are a bit sparse, and hopeful future recordings will include more background on the band members and the songs. Great songs arrangements, singing, picking, and overall production. This is a super CD and presents the talents and skills of a fine band. Be sure to bookmark "Big Darlin" from the Downtown Mountain Boys for your next CD purchase.