

Tom Petersen, Victory Music Review, August 2007: Review of *Big Darlin'*

“The Downtown Mountain Boys are Paul Elliott, Don Share, David Keenan, Terrence Enyeart and Tom Moran, the cream of Seattle-area pickers, top teachers, session musicians, and musicologists . . . so the release of their latest, *Big Darlin'* comes with weighty expectations. Happily, they make it sound easy, as great musicians can. *Big Darlin'* is a solid slice of real, straight-ahead Bluegrass, with only the faintest hints that the band members do some work outside the genre (banjoist Keenan, who made his name in rockabilly and sports Seattle’s most iconic haircut, can’t help singing like Lefty Frizzell). The disc features a couple numbers by award-winning songwriter and former Seattleite Nancy Riccio, including the scorching opening cut, “Back in the Black,” which is about how payday means not just solvency but a general lifting of spirits. Most of the disc is wisely chosen material from a variety of County and Bluegrass sources, like Jesse Fuller’s “99 Years and One Dark Day” and “Till the End of the World Rolls Around.” The cuts are committed with the drive and verve Bluegrass needs, but just to be different, DTMB does the usually-hyper “Black Eyed Suzie” as a slow country lope. Fiddler Paul Elliott penned the title track, while Keenan contributes a fascinating, hilarious, philosophical piece of cornpone Zen, “Sometimes Dig for Taters.” *Big Darlin'* is the big local Bluegrass release of the summer, and should go national. It’s big, darlin’.”