

Maria Fairchild – “Celebration” CD and Concert Reviews –

CD Review Dec 17, 2009

Simply calling Maria Fairchild an old-timey banjo picker is akin to saying Mark O'Connor is just a fiddler. One of the most evocative performers of clawhammer (drop-thumb) banjo in the modern age, Maria brings subtle sophistication to this ancient technique. In her capable hands, her instrument's voice is rich and mellow, a far cry from the twangy plunk usually associated with old-timey banjo. Add vocals that are clear, warm and pure, and the result is outstanding.

What makes this recording such a standout is the consistently high level of musicianship on every track. Accompanied by some of the finest performers in the Northeast, Maria has chosen intriguing tunes which showcase their talents as fully as her own, and the blend is flawless.

Maria's choice of material highlights her own eclectic sensibilities: the moody ecological lament of Larry Moser's *Too Many* and the surreal murder ballad *Wind and Rain* are neatly juxtaposed with high-spirited traditional reels, a light-hearted take on Jethro Tull's *Mother Goose* and the joyful syncopation of Maria's own composition, the title track *Celebration*.

Roots music has been the happy recipient of much attention in recent years, thanks to the films *O Brother, Where Art Thou* and *Cold Mountain*. Like many other roots musicians, Maria embraces the heart and soul of the Appalachian Mountains and the Celtic Isles. Unlike many other roots musicians, she embraces rock melodies and precise harmonies with equal gusto, giving her instrument a welcome place in the 21st Century.

Roots music fans have much to celebrate with this CD. This is roots music, indeed, and *Celebration* proves that roots can grow beautiful blooms.

---**Amy Tuttle**

**Secretary, Founding Board of Directors, Long Island Music Hall of Fame,
Honorary Board, Folk Music Society of Huntington**

CD Review Dec 15, 2009.

I first listened to this CD while driving from NY to Pennsylvania. After playing it through four times I still wanted to hear more. If you're a fan of old time clawhammer banjo then this is a must have CD! Maria's banjo playing is flawless, original and tasteful. Every tune is well crafted into an elegant arrangement that demonstrates the best of this genre. Button accordion and old time banjo are awesome together – who knew? Jethro Tull's *Mother Goose* as an instrumental clawhammer piece? – that works too and is one of my favorite tracks! Maria's voice is wonderful and is complimented well by her banjo playing. Even on the vocal tracks the banjo shines through nicely in the mix. Can't wait for the next CD!

--- **Ric Hollander, performer, banjo player, and luthier**

CD & radio appearance Review Dec 10, 2009

Maria's new CD "Celebration" is a wonderful mix of old time music and more modern songs played in the old time style. The original title track shows that it is possible to write a good old time song these days. The song selection, performance and recording production are all top notch and I'll be playing the CD regularly on my show for some time.

--- **Buddy Merriam, Backroads Bluegrass, Blue Grass Time, WUSB-fm**

Concert reviews

November 28, 2009

Maria Fairchild and Vinny Raniolo performed an excellent show for us. Their mix of swing, pop and folk tunes kept the well attended house entertained and after two encores, they were still asking for more. True professionals, and a real pleasure to work with. Thanks for a great evening!

--- **Gerald Moss, Last Licks Café**

November 28, 2009, Last Licks Café

You were great! Wonderful presence, connection with the audience, humor...most of all your mastery of the music that moves your heart and, as a result, ours. Thanks for a great evening. It was very special for all of us.

--- **John Taylor, performer**

November 28, 2009. Your voice is a combination of Judy Collins and Joan Baez with a touch of Winonna Judd

--- **Clyde Berger**

July 16, 2009, Mountainside Library, Mountainside, NJ

When Maria Fairchild played at the Folk Music Cafe, the room was mesmerized by her haunting and soulful songs. You could hear a pin drop. She played the banjo with a combination of tenderness and technical skill that revealed a true seasoned performer. One that you want to hear again and again!

--- **Lynn Sichel, Folk Music Cafe at the Mountainside Library**

Portland Folklore Society

Maria is one of those rare performers who really inhabits the stage.

She is a splendid instrumentalist — in particular she is a virtuoso clawhammer banjo player and a great singer. Authentic Quebecois songs and old time banjo music are tied together by Maria's sly and engaging wit. Her unique ability to make traditional material feel contemporary and accessible along with her sparkling stage presence makes Maria's performances a compelling and memorable experience.

--- **Jack Bohl, Portland Folkore Society**

She has performed in major folk venues on both coasts as well as in Canada and England. She has previously performed at the Northwest Folklife Festival in Seattle, the Portland Folklore Society in Oregon, the Vancouver Folk Song Society in Canada, the Cecil Sharp House in London, England and locally at LITMA and the UU Fellowship of Huntington.

**Nov. 20, 2004 Folk Music Society of Huntington
MARIA FAIRCHILD**

Jan. 17, 2005

Maria's gift to the audience is her balance of musical strength and gracefulness. She is a versatile and talented musician, and an engaging performer.

---S.B. MacDonald, musician, instrument builder

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