



Bruce Molsky **"Soon Be Time"** Compass Records

Following recent contributions to the Compass Records releases by Fiddlers 4 and Mozaik, Bruce Molsky returns with a fifteen-track selection, that mainly features traditional arranged material, performed on fiddle, banjo and guitar. It's his first solo outing for the Nashville based imprint, following a quartet of releases for Rounder Records. Some of the tracks are songs, other instrumentals and **"Soon Be Time"** opens with a segue of both, namely "Lazy John"/"The Bucking Mule." Molsky switches to banjo for a spirited reading of the instrumental "Wandering Boy" and then moves straight on to guitar for the "Buckdancer's Choice."

Now when I stated 'solo outing' in the opening paragraph, I wasn't using the term loosely, since not only did Bruce produce this disc [recorded at Compass Sound Studio], he is the only musician featured. "Bury Me Not On The Lone Prairie" is a mournful song of farewell, while in his liner notes Molsky mentions that the instrumental "The Brass Band Ruchenitsa," which he performs on guitar, originated in Bulgaria and it has to be said that there is a tangible Eastern European feel to the melody.

In the annals of seafaring song, "The Golden Willow Tree" is also known as "The Sweet Trinity," "The Lowlands Low" and "The Golden Vanity." Also identified as Child Ballad # 286, it's the sad tale of death by drowning and a covenant not honoured. Performed on guitar, "Come Home," penned by Kjell-Erik Eriksson of Swedish folk-rock band Hoven Droven [translates as 'helter skelter'], is a gentle sounding instrumental possessed of an introspective feel. "Fare Thee Well Blues" is finger-picked on guitar, and Molsky credits Mississippi Joe Callicott as the source of this love song.

Molsky learned "Cider," which he performs on banjo, from one of his fiddle playing heroes, Tommy Jarrell of Mount Airy, North Carolina. Also featuring Bruce's banjo, "John Brown's Dream" is a square dance song that Jarrell taught him, and the lyric includes the line *"Soon be time a-cookin' it again"* – hence the album title. "Cotton Eyed Joe" is probably the best known number here, and it's followed by the only Molsky original in this collection, "On My Street," a fond recollection in melody, performed on guitar, of the street Bruce *"grew up on."* As for the other fiddle instrumentals in this collection, "Georgia Bell," "Forked Deer" and "Three Forks Of Cheat," Molsky, respectively, credits Santford Kelly/Manco Sneed, Ed Haley and Burl Hammons as being his source.

Molsky's liner notes offer an insight into the source of each track featured on **"Soon Be Time,"** and there's further information about the material on his web site at www.brucemolsky.com

Folkwax Score 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 07/06.