



Darol Anger “**Generation Nation**” Compass Records

“**Generation Nation**” is the sophomore album by the multi-talented fiddler Darol Anger and his American Fiddle Ensemble, except that they now appear to have settled for the nom de plume, Republic Of Strings, the title of their 2004 debut set for Compass Records. The other quartet members are flat-picking guitarist Scott Nygaard [Tim O'Brien's O'Boys, Grant Street with Laurie Lewis], and two relative youngsters, cellist Rushad Eggleston [a member of Fiddlers 4, another of Anger's many recording/performing aggregations] and fiddle prodigy Brittany Haas. According to the liner booklet, when listening to this disc in stereo, it's Anger's fiddle you hear in the right channel, while Haas takes the left.

Among the twelve tracks there's a quartet penned by band members, the remainder being a mix of trad. arr. and cover songs. The Republic Of Strings is joined by a guest female vocalist on a quartet of the “**Generation Nation**” cuts. In track order, first up is Davis, California based singer/songwriter Chris Webster [also vocalist in the band Mumbo Jumbo] who delivers a suitably soulful yet ethereal performance of “Chain Of Fools” a song Don Covay penned in 1967, that Aretha Franklin took to # 2 on the Pop Chart the following year [+]. A member of the female a cappella group Anonymous 4, Californian bred Marsha Genensky tackles an Anger/Nygaard arrangement of the traditional “Father Adieu,” while Crooked Still vocalist Aoife O'Donovan performs Rushad's mysterious “In The Basement.” Aoife, Rushad, [Dr.] Gregory Liszt [banjo] and Corey DiMario [bass] also perform as Crooked Still. The group's debut album “**Hop High**” was recently released on their own Footprint Records. Donovan is also a member of Matt Glaser's Wayfaring Strangers, Glaser being a long time Anger musical associate. Stephen Stills' Buffalo Springfield era “Bluebird” is now [practically] a four-decade old favourite and it is performed on “**Generation Nation**” by Terry Pinkham [of The Pinkham Family Band, and granddaughter of Texas fiddle legend Benny Thomasson].

As for the eight instrumental tracks, the album opens with Scott Nygaard's “When You Go [Djulaikta Waltz]” and retaining a European feel, albeit Eastern European, it is followed by “Polska Upstairs” aka “Polska Pa Overvaingen” composed – in Scandinavia - by nyckelharpist Olov Johansson, of Swedish folk quartet Vasen. Anger a long time alumni of David Grisman bands [1976-84] has his former boss's son, Samson, play string bass on the track. Ornette Coleman's “Ramblin'” and the traditional “Yellow Barber” are melded together and reinterpreted as “The Ramblin' Barber,” while Ian Carr's wistful “The Seagull [Fiskmas]” is segued here with Anger's “The Bay Day.” “Fiskmas” was the opening cut on “**Mosquito Hunter**” the 2004 album by Swap, an Anglo Swedish group that features guitarist Ian Carr, Karen Tweed [accordion], Ola Backstrom [fiddle] and Carina Normansson [fiddle]. The trad. arr. “Lady Hamilton” was doubtless written in honour of Nelson's mistress. Anger's second original contribution “You Noticed Too” dates from his days with the Turtle Island String Quarter, and appeared on their album “**Skylife**” [1990]. “Rain Dance” penned by jazz musicians Russell Ferrante, Jimmy Haslip and Steve Croes appeared on The Yellowjackets album “**Greenhouse**” [1991]. This collection closes with “The Tan Hut” a “*let's see how this one works out*” collaboration by Anger, Nygaard, Eggleston and Haas.

As you can see from the foregoing Anger & Co. have drawn on planet-wide musical sources to bring you their sophomore string band work “**Generation Nation**.”

Note.

[+] – Franklin won a Grammy for her performance of “Chain Of Fools.”

Folkwax Score 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 03/06.