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Toronto bluegrass band The Slokan Ramblers. Pictured (left to right): Alastair Whitehead, Adrian Gross, Darryl Poulsen, and Frank Evans. Photo by Jen Squires







By Pat Moore, CKCU  
93.1 FM The Saturday  
Morning Show (Host)

**Queen City Jubilee is an album you'll want to play over and over. Drive to it, relax to it, play along to it, and introduce your friends to it.**

# Queen City Jubilee

**T**he Slocan Ramblers take no time at all to introduce you to their stellar harmonies right off the top with “Mississippi Heavy Water Blues” featuring great solid rhythm chops, and the ringing of Frank Evans’ banjo throughout the song. It’s very tasteful and certainly makes you want to hear more.

There are several original tracks on this collection, all very well written and all featuring great vocals and instrumental work. The songs work well for both the traditional ear, and someone who is looking for a newer sound. I loved them all.

Track 3, “Down in the Sugarbush” is a fine example of the band’s excellent instrumental playing; the listener is treated to clear and tasteful lead work from each instrument, including some claw-hammer banjo by Frank Evans,

who is excellent at both bluegrass and claw-hammer banjo styles.

Much of the album is up-tempo. By track 6, the slow tempo and nicely carved vocal in the foreground of Don Stover’s “Long Chain Charlie and Moundville” really catches your ear. This is well followed by another slower paced song, “First Train in the Morning”, written by the bass player Alistair Whitehead.

The tempo is picked up again at track 9, the original “Through and Through”, written by mandolinist Adrian Gross, and then “Sun’s Gonna Shine in My Back Door Someday”, an AP Carter song.

“Makin’ Home”, another Alistair Whitehead original, has a beautifully minimal sound that draws you in, giving you a chance to reflect on the lovely lyrics. “It’s A Mighty Hard Road”, written by Frank Evans follows—this medium tempo song has a traditional sound to it. That’s followed by “Shut the Door”, another well-crafted

instrumental tune, with some pretty fun licks on each of the instruments; the mandolin and bass in particular caught my ear as being inventive. Wow!

The final track is a traditional up-tempo story song “Riley The Furniture Man”. It’s a fun way to close the album featuring beautiful instrumental work, and sing-along harmonies.

There’s some “mighty fine picking” on this album, and the vocals beckon you sing along. If you have a friend who’s been asking “what’s bluegrass?” you could play them this album and be proud of this fine Canadian band.

The Slocan Ramblers are Frank Evans, banjo, harmonica and vocals; Adrian Gross, mandolin; Darryl Pouben, guitar & vocals; and Alastair Whitehead, bass & vocals.

Queen City Jubilee can be purchased at [slocanramblers.com](http://slocanramblers.com).

Recorded in Toronto, released June 15 2018. 3 instrumentals, 14 tracks.



**A**s the band name would suggest, this is a strong traditional bluegrass sound, with a real emphasis on well executed harmonies and solid instrumental playing. For banjo and fiddle lovers...this is a must have CD. For those looking for some great original songs, you can't go wrong with a McDonald composition – John or Nick!

I got to have a quick “sneak peek” at this new album by Traditionally Wound, and I'm loving what I hear. This cornerstone Canadian band has pulled together a great collection of original and cover songs.

gives the listener a chance to sit back and enjoy the slower pace of the song, as is “Only a Memory”, another John McDonald song, and one of my favourites on the album. As I listened I found myself wanting to hear what would be the album “gem” – and then it came for me with John and Nick McDonald's co-write “Blood and Lace”.

Traditionally Wound has been around since 2007; however, there have been some changes in band personnel—this version of the band has been together about a year and a half. Nick McDonald and Sheldon Speedie remain from the original band. This is Traditionally Wound's

# Back Where I Come From



**Long-awaited Traditionally Wound project finally here**

The band uses its strengths well, the album being blessed with lots of wonderful instrumental solos and backup, with the banjo and fiddle holding down that solid bluegrass sound very aptly, and the vocals are “right in the pocket”. My only wish, for my ears but perhaps others won't agree, would be for a bit of a warmer touch on the engineering mix/mastering—but that said, it's a great album.

The CD has a good variety of tempos, showing off the vocals. The title track is a lovely John McDonald original that

second album, however, the first since this new version of the band.

The CD is soon to be released. You'll be able to get it at [www.traditionallywound.com](http://www.traditionallywound.com) in hard copy or as a digital download, and directly from the band at a live show. I highly recommend it.

Would you like your album to be reviewed by *Bluegrass Canada*? Send an email to our editor, Mike Kirley, [mikekirley@gmail.com](mailto:mikekirley@gmail.com). We'd love to listen!