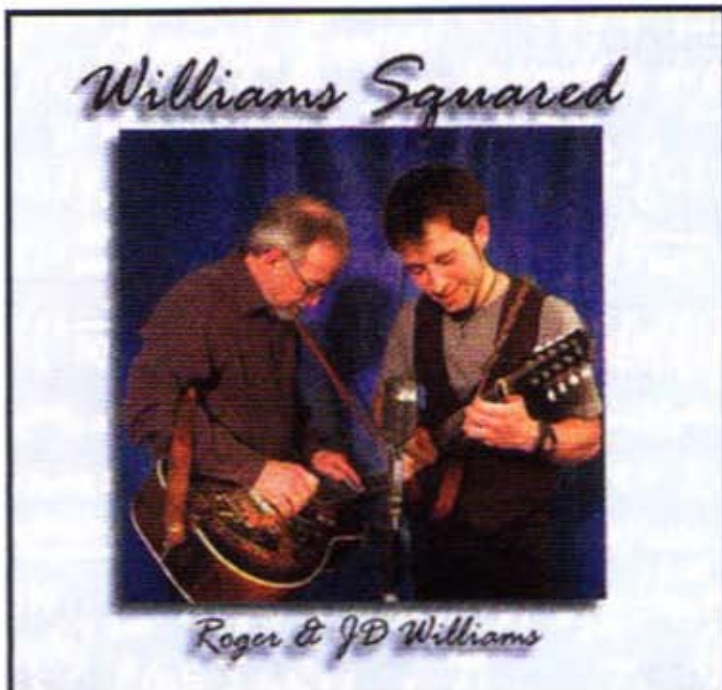


ROGER AND J.D. WILLIAMS
WILLIAMS SQUARED

Happy Appy Records
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Father and son. Those are the brick-and-mortar constants appearing on each track of this 12-tune, all-instrumental recording. Otherwise, resonator guitarist, bassist and father, Roger Williams, and mandolinist, bassist and son, J.D. Williams, each took charge of half. Each wrote six tunes and programmed them in alternating fashion, and each chose their own backup musicians. Roger's group included fiddler Ray Legere, banjoist Dave Dick and guitarist Lincoln Meyer. J.D. went with guitarist Courtney Hartman, fiddler Kimber Ludiker, and banjoist Gabe Hirshfeld.

Though not a new concept, the idea of father and son each showcasing their music and allowing the other to share in it is a good one and one that results in an album of pleasant, well-played music. Honestly, none of the tunes here are destined to be bluegrass standards, but neither can it be said that they're filler. Roger, a musician of long pedigree backing such legends as Joe Val and the Lilly Brothers, brings an evenhanded, precise and melodic quality to his writing and playing, qualities that reflect his traditional leanings. He is at his best on the jaunty "Roger's Reel," the equally-junty "Roger's Rag" and "Jonathan's Lullaby Revisited." For his part on all of Roger's tunes, Ray Legere all but steals the show with his thoughtful solos and creativity.

J.D. counters with tunes that tend to be more varied and more intense, and as on "Wood Pile," slightly dissonant. He makes more use of rhythmic devices and employs a wider range of tempos, from the slow dreamscape of "Crystal Ice Cave," to the rapid attack of "Fifty Flamewood." My favorite is "Crimson Raptor," a gypsy-jazz tune with a good bounce and prominent bass; Hartman gets in a particularly nice guitar solo. Albums of all-original instrumentals are always risky, but father and son here acquit themselves well. (Roger Williams, P.O. Box 313, Glastonbury CT 06033. www.rogerreso.net.)BW

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