

BLUEGRASS

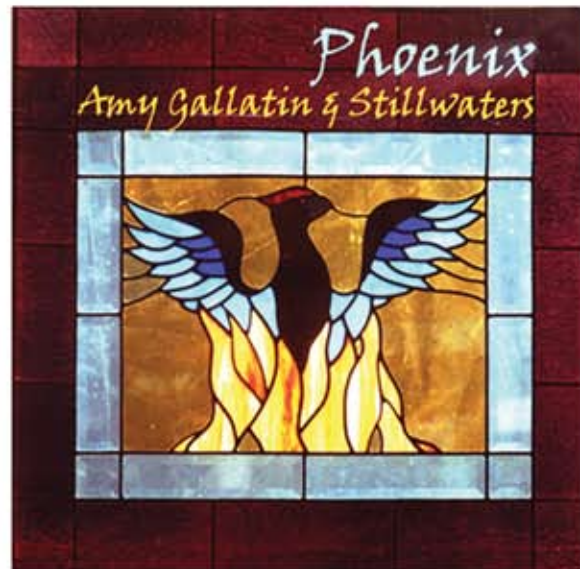
• UNLIMITED •

Amy Gallatin & Stillwaters Phoenix

Happy Appy Records
HAR-7

Amy Gallatin has toured extensively from her Connecticut base as a bandleader and singer for many years. "Phoenix" shows her and her group, Stillwaters, to have carved out a nice musical niche for themselves. With her core band of resonator guitarist Roger Williams and bassist John Urbanik, and rounded out on this recording by Dave and Bob Dick, mandolinist Ben Pearce, and fiddler Mike Barnett, Gallatin adds her crystalline voice and fine ear for a song.

While Williams contributes a handful of lead vocals and two songs and an instrumental that he wrote himself, Gallatin and Stillwaters have managed to pull together a collection of cover material from a wide variety of sources and managed the delicate balance of being both cohesive and eclectic. There is arguably only one song that has had recognition elsewhere, that being "Like I Used To Be," recorded both by the Seldom Scene and the song's co-author, Tim



O'Brien. And even so, it benefits from being sung from a woman's perspective. Otherwise, a fine range of songs is drawn from the pens of a broad array of sources and genres, including country by way of Hank Williams ("Baby We're Really In Love") and Buck Owens, pop via Richard Marx, and folk through the Burns Sisters, David Mallet, and Tanya Savory.

Gallatin's voice is obviously well-trained, lending an effortless purity to her delivery of each song. This combined with her willingness to feature her band, and the often overlooked instrumental wizardry and versatility of Roger Williams and Dave Dick, allows the collective sound of Stillwaters to be exceptionally full and polished. Some bands that fall into the marketing niche of "regional" get passed over by the larger bluegrass audience, but "Phoenix" is proof that this is a group deserving a listen from all. (Amy Gallatin, P.O. Box 313, Glastonbury, CT 06033, <www.amygallatin.com>.)HK