

## from **Sing Out!, The Folk Song Magazine**

Todd High String Band

*Moonshine Boogie*

Blue Corn

Two High String Band is Billy Bright on mandolin and guitarists Geoff Union and Brian Smith. Guests here are Eric Thorin on upright bass, Chojo Jacques on fiddle and the legendary Tony Trischka on banjo. ***Moonshine Boogie's*** 12 tracks divide evenly between sung and instrumental. The common thread is the spectacular picking throughout. On the previous Two High album, Bright was the sole songwriter/composer, and he still is here with credits on three songs and four instrumentals. Union steps up with two songs and one instrumental, and Smith wrote, "The Closer," the instrumental that ends the set. The one cover is the wry "Nobody Calls from Vegas Just to Say Hello" which sets the tone with its sharp, funny lyrics and blazing picking. The songwriting is sharp and quite clever. Union's "Moonshine Boogie" is a wistful paean to the joys of sweet white lighting. His "Melinda" is the ages-old story of the young man smitten with a girl above his station and the girl's disapproving father. Old as the story is, the song still feels fresh and authentic. Bright's "Selmerbam" limns an Alabama town where Civil Rights breakthroughs and 40 years of progress have changed nothing. His "Cold World" and "Last Chance Motel" are close desperate cousins. The instrumentals all sport fabulous performances by players at the top of their game. These come in diverse styles which allow both lightning fingers and slowly rendered beauty in turns. ***Moonshine Boogie*** is a delight end to end as it straddles the blurry line between bluegrass and country. With no drums it leans strongly toward 'grass, and I like it that way. - MT