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NOVEMBER 1997 NO. 59

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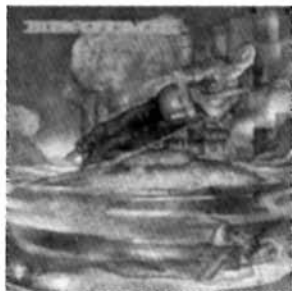
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revisiting the roots

WHEN DAROL ANGER EMBARKED ON A solo career last spring after 11 years in the adventuresome Turtle Island String



Quartet, he traded in the rewards and demands of democratic group decision-making for the freedom and challenges of independence. And on his first post-TISQ recording effort, *Heritage* (Six Degrees/Island), the violinist from northern

California also exchanged the company of violin, viola, and cello for the chance to work with some of the most noted guitarists on the new acoustic, folk-rock, and bluegrass scenes.

"When you're in a band like Turtle Island, you do have to be responsible to everybody else's desires," Anger explained. Conceiving and delivering *Heritage*, Anger was able to play out his own desires. One was to arrange and perform traditional American folk tunes, such as "Shenandoah," "Pretty Polly," "Oh, Death," "Hard Times," and "The Water Is Wide"—what Anger describes as "stuff that gets into my head in the shower and won't go away for a week." Another desire was to invite some of his favorite musicians to interpret these classics. While *Heritage* has garnered attention for the eclectic contributions of singers Willie Nelson, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Mavis Staples, John Gorka, Dar Williams, Jane Siberry, and Tim O'Brien,

Anger was just as impressed by the work of such guitarists as "the inimitable" Mike Marshall, Jerry Douglas, John Jennings, Russ Barenberg, David Grier, and David Lindley.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Lindley," he says reverentially of the man who brought his Weissenborn guitar to bear on "Oh, Death" and "While Roving on a Winter's Night." "That was amazing. He's such a genius of intonation with the slide." Nashville ace Jerry Douglas played Dobro on "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow." "Jerry's so good at building a solo," Anger says. "While we were recording, I was freaking out because his solo kept getting louder and louder and the needles were starting to pin, and I couldn't stop him because he was just getting better and better. It was a real race against the red line. Boy, what a performance."

"John Jennings was really the surprise for me," Anger continues, "because he was able to do so many things so well. He's such an underappreciated guitar player. He brought this baritone guitar [built by David Berkowitz] that is *the* guitar from which all guitars emanate." Among the other guitars that can be heard on *Heritage* is a Mexican model, played by Willie Nelson, that belonged to Anger's late father-in-law. Anger himself played guitar on some tracks; his axes included a koa Santa Cruz, a Tacoma Papoose, and the mysterious "pencil guitar": "You get a couple of pencils, lay the guitar on your lap, and play it like a hammered dulcimer. If you get good erasers then you have a nice range of tone. What's really hip is when you go to double pencils, it's like [jazz vibraphonist] Gary Burton with double mallets!"

Sensing a new creative era dawning for him, Anger looks forward to more and equally eclectic collaborations. "There are a lot of situations available," he says. "That's what's really exciting. I guess I've built up a little equity in my name, and I'm hoping to be out there more as myself."

—Derk Richardson