

## **Grant Dermody, Crossing That River (self ? released, 2003)**

Seattle based harmonicist and musical adventurer Grant Dermody has created a name for himself by his work with the old time band the Improbabilities, (and if you like old timey music, you will love the Improbabilities) as well as backing up other musicians and teaching harmonica workshops.. Grant and 16 other collaborators have created a musical journey that draws from old time string bands, rural and urban blues, ragtime, gospel, country, calypso, and jazz. The combinations run from duets to full bands. What holds it all together is a pervasive mood created by the alchemy of true friendship and kindred spirits playing music that they love. It is a subtle but very satisfying quality that grows with repeated listening.

Grant plays both Marine Band diatonic harmonicas and the 270 Chromatic. His playing has a natural virtuosity that is relaxed and confident, yet fiercely emotional. He brings out the raspy tone of these wood bodied instruments and his timing is dead on. He puts as much care into the spaces between the notes as he does with the notes themselves. Many of the songs also showcase grants rich baritone vocals.

It is difficult to summarize the diversity of the 15 tracks in a paragraph, but here are some of the highlights: A harmonica duet with Joe Filisko "I'm Gonna Cross That River of Jordan (One of these Days)" with Grant on vocals. A hypnotically driving version of Joe Louis Walkers "I'll Get To Heaven on My Own". A skip James tune "Look at the People Standing at the Judgement" with lead vocal by John Cephas. Most of the Improbabilities join him for a rockin old timey number "Greasy Coat" with Richie Stearns on Banjo, Scott Meyer on Fiddle, and Forrest Gibson on Guitar. A moody blues ballad "What Comes Around" with Julian Priester on trombone and Bob Kechley on piano. Overall, this recording leaves very little to complain about, and much to savor. Highly recommended.

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