

# Reviews

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## What They're Sayin' About Steel String "Americana"...

"Paul Asbell's 'Steel String Americana' is a wonderful album! What I keep coming back to is how musical it is... I've actually been a fan of Paul's guitar playing for quite a few years - I think he's one of the best-kept secrets in American music today!"

*David Bromberg, acoustic guitar legend*

"...Steel String Americana is... a sumptuously recorded showcase for the myriad wondrous tones of the solo acoustic guitar- played by one who knows how to extract them all... Definitely one of my favorite guitar CDs of 2002."

*Vintage Guitar Magazine, "Check this Action", Dec. '02, written by Dan Forte*

"...veteran guitarist Paul Asbell fingerpicks his way through a stylistically diverse collection of tunes plucked from the great American musical canon and arranged and played with finesse, imagination, and humor. Asbell's beautiful instrumental versions of the 1960s pop hit "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" and the venerable jazz standard "Stardust" seem right at home in a set that also includes... a funky fingerstyle rendition of Jerry Reed's "Amos Moses" that just might make you reassess the original."

*Acoustic Guitar Magazine, in the April '03 "Hit List" section*

"Solo acoustic guitarists tend to specialize in one genre, but Paul Asbell delights in exploring a spectrum of styles. With steady hands and a relaxed sense of swing, he tackles bouncy ragtime fingerpicking, crisp flat-picking, and lush, jazzy chording with equal aplomb... Asbell - who began his career backing Otis Rush and Magic Sam in Chicago blues clubs - knows how to sneak passing chords and moving bass lines into his arrangements without obscuring the melody or cluttering the groove. Fretting a bevy of vintage Martins and boutique flat-tops, (he) reveals his mastery of dynamics, phrasing, and timbres on this impressive debut."

*Guitar Player Magazine, in the November '02 "Reviews" section*

"Asbell's amazing guitar work elevates (the pieces) to a higher level. "Stardust"... is pure gossamer, while his wistful, aching treatment of "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" simply stuns... A fine effort."

*"Minor 7th" acoustic guitar reviews, Nov/Dec, '02*

"Finally got to sit down, back home and give your cd some play...can't take it off... One of the most exciting new things I've heard in years!. It's so cool to hear a new slant on the music I love. So few have ever really added to the genre... "Boy Howdey"!! I think you should turn some heads with this one!"

*Roy Bookbinder, acoustic blues great*

"Asbell... plays acoustic guitar at a high level... without piling on the ruminative charm that sustains so many other purveyors of folk blues. His singing is pleasantly expressive, cornpone bound up with conviction."

*DownBeat magazine, in the July '03 "Reviews" section, p.74*

"One of my Top Five CD's of 2002"

*Dan Forte, CosmikDebris online music 'zine, January '03 Issue #91*

"Going back to the '70's, ...Paul Asbell (has been) an inventive and always-interesting electric guitarist... On this solo debut, Asbell emerges as a major league acoustic player who offers a seamless 20th century Americana blend of folk, blues, early jazz and pop music."

*Sing Out! Magazine, in the Spring '03 CD review section*

"The performances are clean and well played, with bright, crisp production highlighting his acoustic and National steel playing... All are played with care and attention to detail and melody and make for quiet and relaxed listening."

*Dirty Linen, Dec '03/Jan '04, Recording Reviews, p.107, review by Jim Lee*

"...mesmerizing... Best Vermont CD of 2002."

*Burlington Free Press, Dec. 19, '02*

## What They're Sayin' About Roots and Branches...

"Few pickers work from as broad a stylistic palette as Paul Asbell. His latest album includes stunning interpretations... (and) a keen ear for timbral shading. ...his remarkable picking takes center stage. Exquisite 6-string sounds."

*Guitar Player magazine, June, '05 issue, "Rants and Raves"*

"Asbell's virtuoso solo performance pays homage to his amperaged Chicago roots while presenting his daunting skills... Though no where near as well known as Leo Kottke, Duck Baker, Roy Bookbinder or the late John Fahey, Asbell's consummate mastery of blues, folk, early jazz and olde-timey music warrants his name being mentioned in the same breath as his esteemed predecessors."

*Dave Rubin, PlayBluesGuitar.com CD Review*

"Asbell lays down intricate, pianistic patterns... yet keeps a serious blues feel going. (His) dexterity... and imagination... are evident throughout... Bolstered by high, clear vocals, the music is evocative and brilliant."

*Blues Revue, Oct/Nov 2005, review by Tom Hyslop*

"(Roots & Branches) doesn't let up... Paul Asbell is a guitar master, and has come up with a diverse album that usually only reaches such a consistency via a 'various artists' compilation."

*Blues Matters magazine, 9/05 issue*

## From Reviews of Kilimanjaro...

"Mark well the name of Paul Asbell, lead guitarist and inspiration behind Kilimanjaro, an accomplished assemblage of unknowns. ...Asbell, who wrote the nine tunes... sparkles throughout with clarity and precision worthy of George Benson- though without Benson's artifice. The upshot is a balanced blend of instrumental jazz, pop, and R&B. ... An auspicious debut."

*"Boston Phoenix" magazine, December, 1981, in a 3-out-of-4-star album review*

"Kilimanjaro radiates with individual talent. Their ability to incorporate and balance their skills, in live performances and in the studio, has won over audiences around the country. ...Led by composer/guitarist Paul Asbell, Kilimanjaro has begun to establish itself as a band with a clean, unique sound that is, simply put, good jazz. ...(Although) much of his style comes from his blues techniques, Asbell has great versatility, able to go from delicate picking to the unique sounds he elicits from his Roland guitar synthesizer."

*"Jazziz" magazine, Jan/Feb 1984*

"Each of the nine tracks is instrumental, highlighting the light and nimble-fingered guitar work of Paul Asbell. ...the musicianship is first-rate and everything is pleasing to the ear."

*"Billboard Magazine's Top Album Picks", February 21, 1981*

## What They're Sayin' About Paul...

"Paul played to a packed house, to an audience ranging in age from seven to seventy-eight, and he managed to keep that diverse audience rapt for a show that lasted over two and one-half hours. ...The variety was incredible, and the quality of the playing even more so... Each person came for their own reason, and each walked away at the end of the evening feeling like they had experienced magic."

*Arlene Boumel, Coral Springs, FLconcert presenter, in a 3/29/05 RMMGApost*

"Paul is an incredible player as well as a great instructor...his versatility and knowledge of the guitar and music idioms is amazing. ...The sheer volume of useful information in the hand-outs will keep me busy for years. There was not a wasted moment and it was very enjoyable."

*Healdsburg workshop participant, AcousticPlayerMagazine.com Forum. 08/26/05*

"Can a guy with a couple of guitars, on his own, keep a jaded, media-inundated 21st century audience on their toes for two hours? The answer is a resounding YES!! ... If you have a chance to see Paul play, please do... his Steel-String Americana and Roots and Branches CD's are a "must listen". Oh, and you'll tap your foot. The guy's got chops. I guarantee."

*Tom Young, moderator, in a concert review on AcousticPlayerMagazine.com/forum Forum. 03/21/05*