

Brother to the Wind

[Craig Bickhardt](#)

CBCD 1003

Available from [Craig Bickhardt's web site](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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It's not hard to see why so many celebrity musicians have chosen to record Craig Bickhardt's songs. He's written an unbelievable 800 of them and at least 100 artists have culled the backlog, including Johnny Cash, Poco, Tony Rice, B.B. King, Art Garfunkle, Iain Matthews, and Willie Nelson. As if that weren't enough, on ***Brother to the Wind***, Janis Ian, Beth Nielsen Chapman, Lloyd Maines, Tim O'Brien, Rusty Young, and a clutch of other very fine writers, players, and session people have pitched in to make a great CD really shine.

Bickhardt possesses a quintessential folkie's voice while strumming a mellow acoustic guitar. The basic band includes bassist Byron House and percussionist Tommy Geddes—the former an expressive bass player whose acoustic lines in *Carrying a Dream* are themselves dreamlike, the latter as subtle and rounded as House—and the pair fits Bickhardt like a warm breeze flowing over a meadow. Then there's everyone else, a complement of top-notchers who likewise ease into each cut, creating a wistfully spacious sound centering the writer's vocals as they raise visions of early America and its rural bedrock.

Not a cut on ***Brother*** is less than engaging, as the guy sings with conviction, a friend telling tales, reminiscing, pondering the perplexities of everyday life. There's no lack of clever turns of phrase either:

*"I hold down my first job before I learned to shave
I still recall Old Dodger and the sound advice he gave
If you want to build a fortune
Better guard each well-earned cent
Any day you save a dollar is a day well spent"*

...and then there's my favorite:

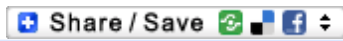
*"All my days were numbered from the moment of my birth
It's taken me 10,000 just to learn what I is worth"*

Both are from *A Day Well Spent*, a track featuring just Geddes and Bickhardt, showing just how accomplished Craig is as a fingerpicker as well as a chord chaser, executing a trove of complex lines and riffs. The guy can stand shoulder to shoulder with the best, and therein we see why so many flock to his work: not an inch of the craft is neglected anywhere in ***Brother to the Wind***. This is an MOR CD but it's the kind of middle-of-the-road that makes the pavement well worth driving and contains its fair share of toetappers like *If He Came Back Again*, featuring Rusty Young's seductive lap steel. No matter where you go on this release, you land on fine singing, playing, and story-telling.

Track List:

- Life with the Sound Turned Down (Bickhardt / Parker)
- Carrying a Dream (Bickhardt / Collins)
- Brother to the Wind (Bickhardt / Collins)
- Even a Cowboy Can Dream (Bickhardt / Alfonso)
- A Day Well Spent (Craig Bickhardt)
- If He Came Back Again (Bickhardt / Alfonso)
- This Old House (Bickhardt / Schuyler)
- Lord Franklin (traditional)
- The Real Game (Bickhardt / Schlitz)
- Donald and June (Craig Bickhardt)
- Prayers for You (Craig Bickhardt)
- Where in the World (Bickhardt / Schuyler)

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