

Mark Lavengood

We've Come Along

Earthwork Music (38 mins)



Smooth bluegrass Americana
from Michigan minstrel



The latest release by resonator guitar and lap steel specialist Mark Lavengood, a native of Grand

Rapids, Michigan, showcases his penchant for smoothly paced songs composed in the spirit of tradition but infused with a contemporary urge to expand the genre's lexicon. The title-track is an extended uptempo ramble highlighting the band's deep instrumental acumen with Lavengood,

Kyle Rhodes (vocals, guitar, mandolin), Jason Dennie (vocals, mandolin, guitar) and Keith Billik (banjo) trading riffs assuredly anchored by Spencer Cain's upright acoustic bass.

Lavengood's nasal voice is an acquired taste, but works well enough within the context of the material. 'Vulpes, Vulpes' is a stirring old-style Western ode to the red fox; the song's evocative lyrics were adapted from a poem by University of Michigan teacher, author and sometime bluegrass musician Russell Brakefield. Lavengood punctuates *We've Come Along's* 11 tracks with a few brief instrumental passages, which amply showcase his stellar flatpicking and slide guitar skills.

DOUG DELOACH

TRACK TO TRY *Vulpes, Vulpes* ▶