ist like Miller can play arrangements like these is no reason to assume that with tab in hand so can you or I. Each Tab Book put out by Kicking Mule should have the logo Caveat Emptor clearly emblazoned on its cover. This does not, of course, detract from the music within.

**Guitarist's Choice** is a fine album to hear, relax to, and appreciate. Interestingly, despite the eclectic choice of songs, the material represents the folk process as it exists in modern society. As explained on the liner notes: "[Miller] swap[s] tunes at the drop of a note... if he likes a tune he works it up." His material comes from oral as well as media sources. One must wonder, however, about the effect of this album on the next generation of guitarists. If television, word of mouth, old records, and movies have created the Dale Millers of today, then one must assume that Miller's records will continue the process. The dynamic of the folk process is then only enhanced, not hindered, by the use of popular culture. This record, along with the remainder of Miller's current releases, can be highly recommended, not only for its entertainment value, but for a close look at the spectrum of music considered to be part of America's folk heritage by one of its finest interpreters.


Reviewed by Bruce Harrah-Conforth

In Bob Brozman one finds both musicologist and entertainer. His particular sphere of interest revolves around the National resonator-type guitar, in all of its manifestations: guitar, Hawaiian guitar, ukulele, tenor guitar and mandocello. For those unfamiliar with this type of instrument, the National Company produced guitars from 1926 through 1934. The instruments had metal bodies and
metal resonating sound-cones for increased volume. Originally very popular among Hawaiian bands, the guitars gradually became accepted in country music and blues circles. As Brozman states in his liner notes: "The strident tone of the National instruments provides ample opportunities to take the sound of the guitar a little further away from what is expected."

In keeping with all of Kicking Mule's musicians, Brozman weaves an eclectic mix of folk and pop, finding influences in the music of Bix Beiderbeck, Louis Armstrong, Charlie Patton, and Sol Hoopii. While this may seem surprising today, it should be remembered that such a musical melange is actually a more accurate musical posture than that of being a blues or a jazz purist. Almost all rural blues musicians recall having jazz standards as part of their repertoire, as do country musicians and most jazz musicians cut their teeth on blues. The pop/folk mix, therefore, is not only appropriate for Kicking Mule's artists, it also accurately reflects the music of America. Unlike many of Kicking Mule's performers, however, Brozman limits himself to a specific time period in American history. His liner notes give us insight into his choice: "The music comes from an era of social, economic, technological, and musical upheaval which fascinates me to no end." The period is the 1920s and 30s, and it is represented by such standards as "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Anniversary Waltz," and "If I Could Be With You," as well as blues such as "Hard Times Blues," and "One Steady Roll," and a medley of "Maui Aloha Favorites."

That Brozman has mastered the art of steel guitar is made quite clear through his fluid yet precise playing. In addition, he is accompanied by 11 other musicians, taking turns in assuming the identity of several different ensembles, each suitable to the music in question. It is this accompaniment that I find particularly attractive about the album. Kicking Mule has a penchant for producing solo artists, but it must be remembered that while Dale Miller may produce an excellent version of "Manhattan," it was not written for solo guitar. Brozman's work, therefore, remains somewhat truer to the original intentions of the composers whose songs are included on this album.
The production is of superior quality, and one can almost imagine the pieces as actually sounding this way in their original performances in the 1920s. Indeed, Brozman states this as his intent: "On Big Boy Stomp I've tried to recreate the uninhibited but solid sound of a small-band hot jazz of the late 1920s--inspired by the K.C. Tin Roof Stompers." Brozman, in this sense, brings an additional air of musicological merit to Kicking Mule's stable of performers. Snapping the Strings is a slice of inspired musicality and enthusiasm.


Reviewed by John Bendix

The Appalachian (or Mountain or fretted or lap) dulcimer has become known far beyond its geographical "home" in the last 35 years, due largely to the national exposure given to it by performers like Jean Ritchie and Richard Farina. Folklorists such as Alan Lomax and Sam Rizzetta have helped in this process, as have the members of the "how to build and play it" school like Howie Mitchell. Such exposure has encouraged dulcimer performers to extend their musical vision beyond tunes heard in Appalachia, and the two recordings under consideration here belong to this new expansion of vision.

Mark Biggs attempts what might be called "fusion-folk" music by combining jazz and folk elements, "out of a desire to expand the recognized boundaries and conventional idiom of the dulcimer" (liner notes). Taking his cue from George Gershwin, Biggs explores the potential of the dulcimer by emphasizing plucked and bowed playing styles, with tunes accompanied by guitar or bass and the percussive effects provided by bell trees, brass chimes, and marachas. Most tunes are his own, exceptions being