



The phenomenal Boston song machine **TWISTED PINE** delivers a cabinet of inventions with its self-titled summer of '17 debut release [July 14, 2017] from Signature Sounds Recordings. The all-original album showcases a new force in Americana: four versatile players and singers writing and improvising across forms in bluegrass, folk, funk, jam, and vintage radio pop. With festively unpredictable live shows, Twisted Pine follows Americana masters Nickel Creek and Punch Brothers on a genre-bending, limitless trajectory.

Twisted Pine's album expands on the early life of the ensemble, which formed around a common obsession with the American bluegrass repertoire. The group rose fast in Boston, in the urban incubator of conservatories and Back Bay venues that produced label roster-mates Lake Street Dive and Crooked Still, plus Sarah Jarosz, Gillian Welch & David Rawlings, Esperanza Spalding, and Annie Clark (St. Vincent). Twisted Pine took an extended residency at the Cantab Lounge, the Mass Ave. dive bar in Cambridge where the raging Northeast bluegrass scene coalesces on Tuesday nights. The players, most of whom were still at Berklee College of Music, built those first set lists with deeply satisfying bluegrass interpretations. They ventured out during school-year summers to play festivals, and won first place in the prestigious band competitions at MASS MoCA's FreshGrass Bluegrass Festival and Thomas Point Beach Bluegrass Special. Their resume grew: Joe Val Bluegrass, Green River Festival, Otis Mountain Get Down, RockyGrass (where they were runners up in a wicked sudden death band competition), Musikfest, Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival, Ossipee Valley Music Festival, Celtic Connections (Glasgow), Club Passim's Down Home Up Here Bluegrass Festival, and many more. With a festive, anything's-possible stage presence, Twisted Pine built a reputation for stellar musicianship, string virtuosity, and luminous harmonies, all of which remain their hallmarks.

Twisted Pine evolved into something more than an interpreter of vintage American works; the band began to arrange bluegrass treatments of pop covers like Blondie's "Heart of Glass", and a mashup of Bill Monroe and Vulfpeck -- which went viral when Vulf re-posted the video. A certain inventiveness, combined with a compelling and growing list of each player's originals, caught the attention of Signature Sounds.

"As soon as we learned that Signature Sounds was interested, we made a conscious decision to focus on writing and arranging our own original music," said Dan Bui, Twisted Pine mandolinist. "As a group we had never done that, and there was a bit of a growing phase where we were learning how to write together and seeing what came out. There was kind of an unspoken understanding that stylistically it was going to be a bit different, but we never sat down and said we were going to write in any particular style, like we were going to write poppier songs or whatever. What came out was just us finally being able to express ourselves, drawing from all of our musical and personal influences."

The influences on the ensemble are vast -- as all four have studied music from childhood, and traveled widely -- but the most obvious are these: Dan Bui (mandolin, vocals) is a devotee of virtuoso picking and experimental bluegrass and jazz. Kathleen Parks (fiddle/lead vocals) was raised in a household of Celtic music and jazz, which set deep roots for her insane fiddling, velvet film-noir vocals, and a roving interest in pop song forms. Chris Sartori (bass, vocals), frequently seen around Boston on electric bass in funk, jazz, and R&B settings, is arbiter of the deep pocket and the improvisational grooves. Rachel Sumner (guitar/lead vocals) is a student of the song: an omnibus of British ballads, obscure folk tunes, avant garde orchestral work, and radio pop. Her vocals have the crystalline clarity of Appalachian field recordings.

The excitement of Twisted Pine's live show — Parks and Bui's neo-jazz interplay, Bui and Sartori's funky rhythm section, Sumner and Parks' astral harmonies — comes through in the big pop sound of Twisted Pine, which was co-produced by the band and Dan Cardinal [Josh Ritter, Lori McKenna, Darlingside, Ballroom Thieves] at Dimension Studios.

"Dan Cardinal was able to pick up on our vibe instantly, and really steered us in the right direction," says Dan Bui. "His biggest influence on the album can be heard sonically. Dimension has kind of been a go-to spot for making records in the Boston bluegrass/folk scene lately, but Dan also brings in a wider sonic sensibility that he tastefully put to use on our record. Crunchy Wurlitzer piano, distorted guitar amps, and a swirling Leslie speaker all found their way onto the record. But he was always very thoughtful of what the song needed and was calling for and he provided invaluable advice and feedback throughout the process."