

= How to Grow a Woman from the Ground =

How to Grow a Woman from the Ground is a 2006 album by Chris Thile and the How to Grow a Band , credited to Chris Thile . It was released on Sugar Hill on September 12 , 2006 . The album is named after a song on the album ; a cover of the original by folk singer Tom Brosseau .

The album debuted to positive reviews from major music critics , with critics calling the album ? fantastic , eclectic ? , and ? genius ? . The album earned Thile a Grammy Award @-@ nomination in 2006 .

= = Conception and production = =

For one of his side projects , Chris Thile knew he wanted to form a string quintet composed of mandolin , violin , banjo , guitar , and bass with childhood friend and fiddler Gabe Witcher , but didn't know which direction he wanted to take the band . At the Telluride Bluegrass Festival in Telluride , Colorado , Thile met banjoist Noam Pikelnny and later commented that ? every note he played was something I wish I ? d played ? . It was then that Thile realized that he wanted to ? put [his] stamp on the traditional bluegrass ensemble ? . Thile wanted to get five musicians together for a Nashville jam session in 2005 , after he found talented bluegrass musicians that could fill the positions . The bassist Thile was searching for , Greg Garrison , was recommended to Thile by Pikelnny , who had performed alongside Garrison in the Cajun jam band Leftover Salmon . The guitar position was filled by Chris Eldridge , from the bluegrass band the Infamous Stringdusters . The five musicians met up in Nashville one day in 2005 and decided that they needed to ? do something musical together ? . A few nights later , the group met again ? just to drop a ton of money , drink too much wine , eat steaks , and commiserate about our failed relationships ? . That night , they came to an agreement and formed a bluegrass band .

The quintet decided to make this project serious and record an album . The album was recorded over the course of two days in 2006 at Sear Sound Recording Studios in New York . The album was not recorded digitally , but rather on tape . In an interview with the United States magazine Guitar Player , Chris Thile explained the old fashioned style in which the album was recorded :

It was recorded at Sear Sound in New York using two vintage Telefunken ELA M 251 E mics into a Forsell Technologies FetCode preamp . Most of it was recorded onto the same Studer 1 " two @-@ track that was used to mix Sgt. Pepper 's Lonely Hearts Club Band ! Everything was tracked live , and I ? ve decided never to record wearing headphones again unless I absolutely have to . Wearing headphones is bullshit , because you ? re in your own little world playing to a mix that no one will ever hear but you . What ? s the point ?

How to Grow a Woman from the Ground was self produced by Thile , and had no guest musicians , just the quintet . Other than the band , which in promotion of the album was named the How to Grow a Band , the album had a fairly small production crew ; an engineer , an assistant engineer , two mastering people , and an artist .

= = Musical style = =

How to Grow a Woman from the Ground takes influence from different genres , ? drawing equally from traditional bluegrass , progressive acoustic , and singer / songwriter traditions ? , with one critic calling the majority of the album very ? roots oriented ? . The album has a bluegrass or progressive bluegrass core ; bluegrass mandolinist Ronnie McCoury became the album ? s official ? bluegrass guru ? to ensure that there was ? someone who could make sure we didn't do anything clichéd or trite ? . In regard to the album ? s style , Thile said that ? All in all , How to Grow a Woman from the Ground is a bluegrass record . There are definitely some musical things that are out of the ordinary , but it sounds like a bluegrass record to me . It ? s not all like ? Brakeman ? s Blues , ? but ? Brakeman ? s Blues ? doesn't sound out of place , and neither does ? The Beekeeper ? sound out of place . It ? s all related . ? Much of Thile 's work on the album was influenced by his divorce , and Thile claims that he could relate to the title of the album , a Tom Brosseau song . Thile said that he "

got my ass kicked by the last relationship I was in . This girl just left . It created a pretty serious complex for me . I ? ve always been able to talk to girls , but I ? m scared of them . I just could relate to it . Like , man if I could just grow one , that would take care of a lot of problems . "

= = Critical reception = =

How to Grow a Woman from the Ground received positive reviews from country and bluegrass music critics . Allmusic called it " fantastic " , and JamBase described it to be " a tasteful string dinner " and stated that " this is only the beginning of great things to come " . However , some critics found particular tracks to pale in comparison to the rest of the material . The Arizona Republic stated that the album was " amazing " , except for " Dead Leaves and the Dirty Ground " because " Thile [couldn ' t] quite match Jack White 's musical hysteria " . Music Box also said that tracks like " Stay Away " and " I ? m Yours If You Want Me " " completely fell flat " . Regardless , the review still stated that " the bulk of How to Grow a Woman from the Ground is remarkably engaging " . Bullz @-@ Eye criticized Thile 's vocal quality , saying that " his voice often lacks the strength and / or character to carry the song " . On the contrary , the previously mentioned JamBase article complimented Thile 's vocal strength , saying " it 's the soul in Thile 's voice and the heart and intensity of the musicianship that give the album its power . "

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

Chris Thile ? mandolin , lead vocals , producer
Noam Pikelny ? banjo , vocals
Greg Garrison ? bass , vocals
Chris Eldridge ? acoustic guitar , vocals
Gabe Witcher ? fiddle , vocals
Ronnie McCoury ? " bluegrass guru "
Loren Witcher ? artwork
Gary Paczosa ? mastering
Fred Forsell ? mastering engineer
Matthew Gephart ? engineer
Ethan Donaldson ? assistant engineer

= = Chart performance = =