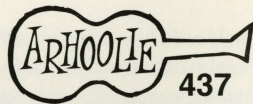


THE MADDOX BROTHERS & ROSE

Vol. 2 - "America's Most Colorful Hillbilly Band"



1. NEW MULE SKINNER BLUES (1703)
2. I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WAS TRUE
(Arnold-Fowler) (1589)
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(Hank Locklin) (3428)
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28. RED SILK STOCKINGS AND GREEN PERFUME
(Vocal: Fred) (*)
29. GARDEN IN THE SKY (2004) (Vocal: Cal)
30. DEAR LORD, TAKE MY HAND (1883)

(*) = From acetates, not previously issued.

The Maddox Brothers & Rose:

Rose Maddox - vocals; Cliff Maddox - mandolin (died in 1949); Fred Maddox - bass and vocals; Henry Maddox - mandolin (after 1949) and lead guitar; Don Maddox - fiddle; Cal Maddox - rhythm guitar, harmonica, and vocals; Mrs. Lulu Maddox - vocal on #5; plus steel guitarist Bud Duncan and lead guitarists Jimmy Winkle, Roy Nichols, and Gene Breeden. Most members of the band also sang or yelled.

All recordings made between 1947 and 1951 in Modesto or Pasadena, California.

The number following titles indicates the matrix number of selections issued on 78 rpm records, if known.

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Re-issue edited and produced by Chris Strachwitz

Cover by Beth Weil

Cover left to right: Cal, Henry, Rose, Don, & Fred Maddox

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The Maddox Brothers & Rose



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AMERICA'S MOST COLORFUL
HILLBILLY BAND

The Maddox Brothers & Rose

Vol. 2 - *"America's Most Colorful Hillbilly Band"*

There will never be another band like the Maddox Brothers & Rose. From their 1937 start as a bunch of desperate migrant laborers (and music amateurs) who fast talked their way into a radio show at Modesto's KTRB this Alabama-born, California-based family band refused to shackle themselves to any established style. Though firmly rooted in the Southeastern music tradition, their postwar search for a new sound and fresh approach to Country Music was a deliberately competitive and conscious effort. It sent them cutting across recognized boundaries to ultimately reach a crossroads where pop, gospel, boogie, folk and blues intersected with dazzling showmanship and unorthodox presentation. The result was a vibrant, kaleidoscopic mix that quickly established them as one of the top national acts, fittingly touted as "America's Most Colorful Hillbilly Band."

Even their late arrival at a small, independent, but aggressive record label in Pasadena, Ca. was remarkable. "I recall very vividly when they came into our office. They had their stage

uniforms on and they had no appointment," recalled A&R man Don Pierce. "They said 'We've noticed that T. Texas Tyler is on every jukebox and radio in the San Joaquin Valley where we work and we have selected you to record us.' Now, that's pretty strong! And I said 'Who the hell are you?' But they were really rather impressive because you got the feeling that nobody could hardly stop these people. They were irrepressible." As Cliffie Stone said, "The Maddox Brothers and Rose came from down here and just took this part the country by storm."

The group matched their ambition with an equally self-assured sound. "It was just something we had to do," is how the late Fred Maddox, band founder and bassist, explained it. "After the war, we started playin' dances but people just couldn't hear you. We just had one little ole amplifier we sang through and the crowds started to get...restless. We heard about Bob Wills bein' electrified, so we got pick ups for the guitars, mandolin, and fiddle, bought amplifiers. It made us feel it more, because we

could really hear it and we could feel what we was doin' and the people could feel it more too, see. And we were known as the loudest band in the country. The louder you get, and the more power you put behind it, it puts it into the people's feet and in their bodies, see? That's what we did, and it made us do a show."

"They played hillbilly music," said guitarist Roy Nichols, "but it sounded real hot. The mandolin was a lot of that hot feeling, Henry played real loud. Nobody else turned it up as loud as they did, and it sounded good." Onstage, the band leapfrogged from novelties to rockabilly to sacred songs with acrobatic acuity. Clad in their garish, elaborate Nathan Turk costumes—the first country music act to adopt such extremely stylized wear—they were raw, wild, raunchy, primitive, hard-headed and hard driving. All (except Cal) had literally learned to play onstage, as they recorded these songs, the Maddoxes shattered and recreated country music with both shocking irreverence and impeccable, blooded authenticity. It was a startling break, one that electrified the public.

Their fans included some of the biggest stars in country music. On a 1949 visit to Nashville, Don Pierce recalled a meeting with Hank Williams. "He said, 'Don, I tell you the act you've got

that's really something is that Rose Maddox. I've got a song for that broad. I wrote this ('How Can You refuse Him Now?') with Rose in mind, and I'll tell you why: when she sings songs like 'Tramp on the Street' and 'Gathering flowers,' she sounds pure as the drifted snow, then she'll turn around and sing my 'Honky Tonkin'" and sound just like a gal that's straight out of a cat house! What's she like anyways? I says, 'Well straight out of a box car, you know.' He says, 'My kind of gal! Right out of Alabam', where I'm from.' And he gave me an acetate of the song and I took it out to Rose, she made it and ole Hank was delighted." When Rose and Hank met in California the following year, he told her 'You are as important to hillbilly music right now as Roy Acuff was ten years ago.'"

"The Maddox Brothers and Rose always had their own style, but you must remember their home was Alabama," said Bill Monroe, who first met them at their February 1949 Grand Ole Opry debut, "and I always thought they sang a lot of the Old Southern style. I had heard their records quite a bit before they got to Nashville and all that interested me that night was gettin' to see her and get acquainted. She had a beautiful voice and was a beautiful

lady. Rose has satisfied many a listener with her singin'. She puts the feelin' in it and sings it like it should be sung. I think she's done a lot for country music."

In fact, there's really no way to measure the band's impact. From the artistic influence and artistic headway Rose single-handedly provided for virtually every girl singer in country music (Kitty Wells, prior to 1952's "I Didn't Know God Made Honky Tonk Angels," was covering Maddox hits to little notice) to the band's introducing the rhinestone spangled costumes which became standard (at their Opry debut, comic Rod Brasfield marveled "they's the dressed-uppin'-est bunch of folks I ever seen! Lookit the grapes and vines on them britches") to their aggressive

presentation of the slap-driven, R&B tinged war-cry that became rockabilly (Elvis' bass man Bill Black had idolized Fred long before they all met at the Louisiana Hayride), the Maddox Brothers & Rose always roamed a stylistic frontier few others visited. Brazen, audacious, refreshingly chaotic and altogether joyous, their first recordings (heard here) still sound wild today; just imagine the sock they had when first heard during the late 1940s.

*Jonny Whiteside,
Burbank, California, Spring 1995*

(Excerpted from his forthcoming, still untitled Rose Maddox biography, due Fall '95 from the Country Music Foundation & Vanderbilt University Press).

Note: Although "New Muleskinner Blues" was listed as present on Volume I of the Maddox Brothers & Rose (Arboolie CD 391) a duplicate of the group's theme song, "I Want To Live And Love" is actually heard in its place.

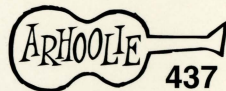
On Vol I, Arboolie CD 391 we boosted the bass response but did not cut any of the high frequencies. Some reviewers and customers complained, although the bass is easily cut back on your amplifier. The original recordings vary in quality but we have not boosted the bass response on this release. Some of the commercially unissued acetates made at KTRB in Modesto, have oxidized and George Morrow has done the best job possible using the No Noise system to de-click and restore the original sound as well as possible.

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