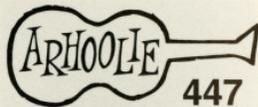


THE MADDOX BROTHERS & ROSE

"On the Air: The 1940s"



1. Theme & A COWBOY HAS TO YELL
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Theme out & station break
 18. GATHERING FLOWERS FOR THE MASTER'S BOUQUET
 19. I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WAS TRUE
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 31. FREIGHT TRAIN BOOGIE
 32. KTRB Theme out
- # 1-6: KFBK—Sacramento, Ca., Feb. 19, 1940 - The Maddox Brothers & Rose: Cal Maddox—guitar, harmonica & vocals; Fred Maddox—bass & vocals; Rose Maddox—vocals
- # 7 -17: KGDM—Stockton, Ca., December 29, 1945—same as above, but add: Henry Maddox—mandolin & vocals
- # 18 & 19 : only appearance on the Grand Ole Opry-WSM, Nashville, Tn., Feb. 19, 1949 (transcribed by KTRB, Modesto, Ca.).
- Cover photo: Courtesy Rose Maddox
Cover by: Wayne Pope
Edited & produced by Chris Strachwitz and released by contractual agreement with Fred & Rose Maddox

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Maddox Brothers & Rose

ON THE AIR

First time on records
KFBK 1940 &
KGDM 1945
Their first recorded
radio broadcasts



THE MADDOX BROTHERS & ROSE

"On the Air: The 1940s"

The Maddox Brothers and Rose, a family group originally from Alabama, became one of the hottest acts in Country music during the late 1940s. They beat their way to California during the terrible days of the Great Depression in the early 1930s and though they never found gold growing on trees, they sure picked their share of fruit, trying to survive. Singing kept the family's spirits up and brother Fred was the one who finally got sick of working from sunup to sundown. He went to KTRB in Modesto, Ca., and told them he had a band. The manager said he'd give them a try but they had to have a girl singer! Eleven-year-old Rose was instantly appointed as the girl vocalist! Not only did they quickly gain enormous popularity throughout California via their radio and personal appearances, but by 1947 their first records (note Arhoolie CDs 391 and 437) were heard on juke boxes and radio stations all over the West Coast. The powerful and directional signal of the Mexican station, XERB, broadcasting from Rosa Rito Beach in Baja California, just south of Tijuana,

probably gave them the most widely heard airings. At night XERB's signal could be heard in all the western states.

By the early 1940s, the music of the Maddox Brothers and Rose was primarily focused on their vocal harmony, although it still contained some of the cowboy images made so popular in the many western movies of the day. By the end of the decade, however, it had evolved into music mainly geared to dancing, but also to entertain with comedy, specialty, and novelty numbers.

The Maddox Brothers and Rose quickly became a show band with custom-tailored cowboy outfits and delightful comedy routines. As the work playing dances became more demanding, the family members were augmented with other outstanding musicians and young Rose was a very special attraction. Their extroverted, lively and humorous presentations have never been equaled in the annals of Country Music history. They were never corny or phoney as was so often the case with Hollywood-type western entertainers.

This CD presents two radio broadcasts recorded during the very early career of the Maddox Brothers and Rose which give us an interesting and delightful insight into what their music was like before any of their commercial records were made. The first broadcast features Rose with only brothers Fred and Cal on February 19, 1940, aired over radio station KFBK in Sacramento, California.

This radio appearance was the result of the group's winning a talent contest held at the California State Fair the previous fall where they won over fifteen other competing bands. Part of the prize was a one year contract to appear on KFBK, which not only reached much of Northern California, but was apparently aired simultaneously over the California Network, which included KFWB in Hollywood, the Arizona Network, the Oregon Network, and the Washington Network, giving the group extensive exposure up and down the West Coast. According to Rose, the program was sponsored by Anacin, the headache medicine. This 15-minute acetate disc, which was made of one of the broadcasts, did not include the commercials, which apparently were given at the start and end of the program.

The other program which has survived is

from December 29, 1945, and was broadcast over KGDM in Stockton, California. This program was thirty minutes in length, but again no commercials were included although there is a station break midway through the disc. Cal and Fred had returned from the Armed Services by this time and were joined by Henry on mandolin. Unfortunately the acoustics of this program are not as good as the KFBK transcription. Also the discs were somewhat worn at the end of each 15 minute side, and you'll have to excuse some surface noise.

These first radio programs present a fascinating glimpse into the sound of the Maddox Brothers and Rose in their formative years. We hear a mixture of old-time singing, sentimental songs, blues, yodels, and Western cowboy songs. On the later program, from after World War II, the group plays the theme song which was to be their trademark for the next ten years. The addition of Henry on mandolin hints at the sound which was yet to come and gave the music a fuller and even more authentic southern hillbilly feeling. Honky Tonk-type songs became more dominant. We also hear one of the first recorded versions of Woody Guthrie's now famous "If You Ain't Got The Do Re Mi" which the Maddox family then knew

as the "Dustbowl Blues." They had met Woody and his cousin Jack on several occasions before the war in various bars and picked up several of his songs including the "Reno Blues" (retitled "Philadelphia Lawyer") which later became one of the Maddox Brothers and Rose's biggest hits (heard on Arhoolie CD 391).

After the complete broadcasts, this CD presents a few more air checks, including the two songs the band performed on their only appearance on the Grand Ole Opry, a bunch of songs they did for KTRB in Modesto when their sponsor was Regal Pale Beer, and some selections which were recorded at various studios in Hollywood with added musicians who constituted the "hired hands" at their live appearances.

All of these recordings survived thanks to Fred Maddox's interest, care and devotion to the family's heritage. These acetates were originally rescued by Rose's sister Alta Troxel who lives in Modesto. When radio station KTRB was changing formats, they called her and offered to let her take what she wanted since the station planned to throw out all this old material. Later Rose got the records from Alta but gave them to Fred when she moved to Oregon. He brought a box full of old acetates to me one day and suggested I go through them and pick out some good numbers.

On several occasions around 1948 or 1949 I had the pleasure of hearing some of these broadcasts live over KTRB in Modesto and it was an unforgettable experience! I wish cassette recorders had been invented back then! Fred's announcing and singing, both featured on this CD, had a twang that was pure music to my ears.

Let Rose Maddox tell you a bit about the selections on this album: "'Gathering Flowers For The Master's Bouquet' was a national hit for us—the Opry brought us to Nashville specifically for that song. Our segment was broadcast on the Prince Albert portion of the program, which was the network part, but it didn't go to California, except KTRB carried it that night and they recorded it for us. The whole band drove to Nashville and we did a bunch of shows on the way back through Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The old Ryman Auditorium had no dressing rooms—just stalls in the rest rooms and we had to do our rehearsing in there! Bill Monroe was there and so was Minnie Pearl.

"We had gotten the beer sponsor Regal Pale just after we had moved from Modesto to Hollywood in 1949. We went back up to KTRB and recorded a whole lot of songs for them, 100-150 songs on 16" acetate transcriptions. Fred did the commercials."

["The Goldrush Is Over," "Almost," and "Too Old To Cut The Mustard" apparently come from this group of recordings which are all slightly over-modulated and distorted.—ed.]

"For the radio shows we had just the family play and the 'hired hands' were added only for the dances and recording sessions. 'Too Old To Cut The Mustard' we learned from the Carlises while we were both working on the Louisiana Hayride in 1952 and 1953. We were regulars on the Hayride for two years, we'd go back there in January and stayed four months each of the two years. On Saturday nights we'd go in to do the radio show broadcast over KWKH, Shreveport, La. On Sundays we would tape all day long for the early morning programs which were sponsored by Baby Chicks out of Chicago and also fifteen minute programs to be aired at 12:05 midnight which would reach all over the South and Midwest. During the week we would work every night and travel around but we always got back on Saturday night."

"Breathless Love" features Rose accompanied only by Cal and was probably recorded as a 'demo' disc to promote the song which was composed by Alta Troxel, Rose's sister, and was later recorded for Columbia by the group. Fred Maddox, who was a fine singer, bass player,

announcer, and founder of the group, is heard on many of the selections on these transcriptions. Arhoolie issued this material on two LPs entitled **The Maddox Brothers & Rose: On The Air** along with a 7" 45 rpm EP with four songs by Hank Williams (Arhoolie EP 548) made early in his career when he tried to sell his songs to established singers.

"Walkin' In My Sleep" was never released and has Henry switching from mandolin to guitar. Most of the selections at the end of the CD are actually studio recordings which in most cases were never issued. "Nobody's Love is Like Mine" comes from a radio program. "Fried Potatoes" has Roy Nichols on lead guitar. Excuse the sound quality of some of these acetates, but I doubt if anyone will ever find copies in better condition!
(Chris Strachwitz 1996)

Also on Arhoolie:

- CD 391 Maddox Brothers & Rose
America's Most Colorful Hillbilly Band, Vol 1
- CD 437 Maddox Brothers & Rose
America's Most Colorful Hillbilly Band, Vol 2
- CD 314 Rose Maddox
Rose of the West Coast Country
- CD 314 Rose Maddox
\$35 Dollars and a Dream



The Maddox Brothers & Rose at the KFBK microphone.

Ramblin' Rose

The Life and Career of Rose Maddox
by Jonny Whiteside

A groundbreaking study of one of the pioneering women of country music, this biography sheds new light on both the role of women in postwar America and the growth of the Country music business in California before Nashville money interests grabbed it all! **Foreward** by Woody Guthrie.

"Whiteside's portrait of this woman who is the exception that proves the rule is complex, empathetic, and insightful... He has also given us the first history of West Coast country music, and it is a story brilliantly researched and well told." —John Morthland

It's a Depression-era saga right out of Steinbeck. The strong-willed matriarch of a rural Alabama family uproots her husband and six children and through sheer will-power drives them westward to California, on foot and by boxcar, a journey of two thousand miles, to where a new life begins. Four years later, at age eleven, youngest daughter Rose Maddox steps to the microphone for the first time to sing on radio with the family band. Within a week, the Maddox Brothers & Rose receive a thousand letters, launching the group on a country music career.

Vanderbilt/CMF Press - 256 pp, 6" x 9", 32 ill., bibliography, discography, index/cloth \$27.95



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