



Elizabeth Cotten - Live!

1. Freight Train ————— 4:51
2. Washington Blues ————— 4:58
3. Jumpin' Jack ————— 3:40
4. Shake Sugaree ————— 4:26
5. Shake Sugaree / Banjo Story, Rattler — 5:37
6. Vastopol ————— 4:28
7. Guitar Story ————— 4:15
8. Oh Babe, It Ain't No Lie ————— 5:50
9. Elizabeth Story, et al.,
Honey Babe, Your Papa Cares For You — 8:07
10. Spanish Flangdang ————— 2:35
11. 'Til We Meet Again ————— 1:20

All songs composed or arranged by Elizabeth Cotten.
#1 © by Sanga Music Co., #2,4, & 9 © by Stormking
Music Co., #8 © by Vastopol Music Co.



Elizabeth Cotten

Live!



ELIZABETH COTTEN ~ LIVE!

Elizabeth (Libba) Cotten performed with love and pride. Her songs reflect her traditions, her independence, and her inspiration. Her songs have been performed and recorded by a wide variety of outstanding artists including: Pete, Peggy, and Mike Seeger, Peter, Paul, and Mary, the Grateful Dead, Taj Mahal, Fred

Neil, and Maria Muldaur.

Anyone who had ever been present when Libba had an instrument at hand, and a few friendly ears, knows that the soul of her music was inseparable from the audience, for whom it was recreated in each time and space.

The musical traditions from which her

songs derive are remote to modern understanding. She has been occasionally construed as a blues artist, but the roots of her music lie not in the heavily African traditions of the Plantation areas, but in the more eclectic culture of the Southern Appalachians. She was born near Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in 1892; her mother was a midwife, and her father was a miner. Her grandparents were landholders, and according to her tale, viewed the Civil War with some perspective, chiefly concerned that the advancing Union Army would steal their horses.

The traditional sources underlying her work are also represented in tonality and feeling by the music of Mississippi John Hurt, John Jackson of Virginia and Joseph Spence of the Bahamas, but her guitar and banjo styles were unique. She played these right-handed instruments left-handed, without reversing the strings. This style brings the rhythmic effect and emphasis inherent in the thumb to the middle and upper strings, while sustaining the traditional alternating bass with the fingers. On this record, this effect is most apparent in the building of rhythmic intensity in "Jumpin' Jack."

This album is a sampler of performances

during her ninth decade. If you were fortunate enough to attend one of these fine evenings, this record will bring it all back. If you never heard her in person, this record will provide a clue to the love and admiration she engendered. Elizabeth Cotten died June 29, 1987 at the age of 96.

Elizabeth wrote "Freight Train" when she was 12. The trains running through Chapel Hill were a link to the outside world, to opportunities and the future. First recorded by Peter, Paul, and Mary in the early 1960's, this song has become known throughout the world.

"Washington Blues" and "Jumpin' Jack" are instrumentals of Libba's creation, which display her inventiveness as a musician and her technical prowess. "Washington Blues" was written at the time she first began performing professionally, at the age of 70, in coffeehouses around Washington, D.C., and the tune is the subject of a transcription and analysis which, along with an excellent article, appeared in the January 1980 edition of Frets magazine.

"Shake Sugaree" is a song for the worldly child in all of us. As Libba tells us on the record, it evolved over time and the trials of daily existence. This song also has received

wide recognition. Fred Neil made a beautiful recording of it in the late 1960's.

"Vastopol" is an instrumental of traditional derivation, which grows out of an open D tuning. The name probably relates to Sebastopol, Georgia, a lumbering town in the 1800's. This is one of the very few "country blues" tunes Libba plays; here her style is reminiscent of Furry Lewis.

"Oh Babe, It Ain't No Lie" was recorded by The Grateful Dead. Elizabeth feels this to be as close to a blues as anything else she has written, although its musical form does not correspond to traditional blues tonality. Its lyrics express an irony matched in intensity by a calmness, revealing the inner strength that underlies all her music.

"Spanish Flangdang" is a traditional favorite among country guitar pickers. The tune grows out of an open G tuning. Elizabeth interprets it with a wistful

quality, which is her own.

"Til We Meet Again" is a traditional hymn which Elizabeth always included as an expression of her deep religious faith and her love for her audience.

The very existence of this album is directly attributable to the efforts and kindness of a few individuals: Nancy Covey, Chris Strachwitz, and John Ullman. May they prosper and their kind increase.

Elizabeth's career was a miracle brought about by generosity of spirit; to a large extent Libba's own, and also that of the following folks: the Seegers, Alice Gerrard, Irene Namkung, Johsel Namkung, Larry Ellis, Johnine Rankin, Charles and Judy Laird, Sharon Rufener, Moe Asch, Harold Leventhal, Manny Greenhill, Taj Mahal and Mimi Farina, as well as those who had made Libba at home in their homes, and in their clubs and halls, over the years.

John Overton

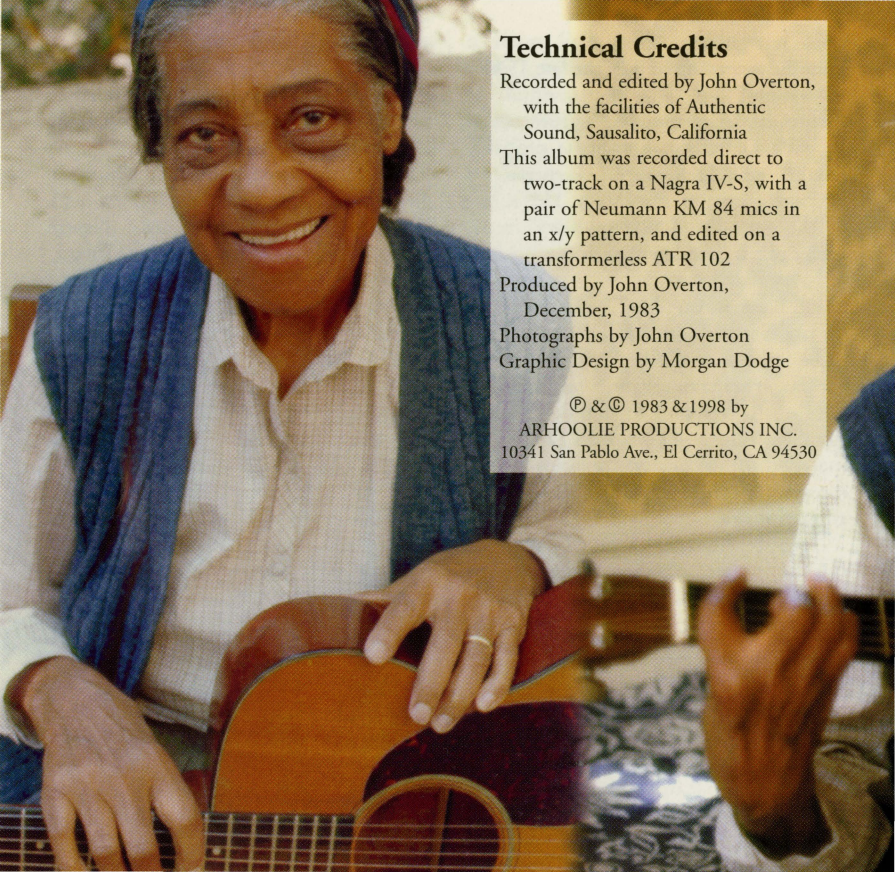
ARHOOLIE RECORDS

Blues • Cajun • Tex-Mex • Zydeco • Country • Jazz • Regional • World Music
For our complete illustrated catalog of CD's, Cassettes, Videos & more, send \$3 to:

Arhoolie Catalog, 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530

To order by phone, call toll free: 1.888.ARHOOLIE (1-888-274-6654)

website: www.arhoolie.com • e-mail: mail@arhoolie.com



Technical Credits

Recorded and edited by John Overton,
with the facilities of Authentic
Sound, Sausalito, California

This album was recorded direct to
two-track on a Nagra IV-S, with a
pair of Neumann KM 84 mics in
an x/y pattern, and edited on a
transformerless ATR 102

Produced by John Overton,
December, 1983

Photographs by John Overton
Graphic Design by Morgan Dodge

© & © 1983 & 1998 by
ARHOLIE PRODUCTIONS INC.
10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530



Elizabeth Cotten ~ Live!

1. Freight Train
2. Washington Blues
3. Jumpin' Jack
4. Shake Sugaree
5. Shake Sugaree / Banjo Story, Rattler
6. Vastopol
7. Guitar Story
8. Oh Babe, It Ain't No Lie
9. Elizabeth Story, et al.,
Honey Babe, Your Papa Cares For You
10. Spanish Flangdang
11. 'Til We Meet Again

Total Time: 50:07 min

Elizabeth Cotten performed with love and pride songs and tunes which reflect her traditions, her independence, and her inspirations. She composed "Freight Train" (made famous by Peter, Paul, & Mary, and others), "Oh Babe, it Ain't No Lie" (recorded by the Grateful Dead), & "Shake Sugaree" among others. This album was recorded "live" for an appreciative audience during her ninth decade. The original LP release won a Grammy in 1984.

© & © 1983 & 1998 by
ARHOOLE
PRODUCTIONS INC.
10341 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito, CA 94530
www.arhoolie.com

THE UNDER: FOLK

