

NO SPEED LIMIT

SWEET VIRGINIA



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ARHOOLE 521

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1. **SWEET VIRGINIA** (Randal Eller)
(Tradition Music Co./BUG Music)
2. **BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN HOME**
(P.D.) (arr. by Steve Barr – Tradition Music Co./BUG Music)
3. **NEW EAST VIRGINIA BLUES**
(arr. by Ryan Blevins) (Tradition Music Co./BUG Music)
4. **BORN A RAMBLER** (Steve Barr)
(Tradition Music Co./BUG Music)
5. **HENRY BOX BROWN** (Steve Barr)
(Tradition Music Co./BUG Music)
6. **WHIPLASH** (Josh Pickett)
(instrumental) (Tradition Music Co. & Pickett Music Co.)
7. **BLUE NIGHT** (Kirk McGee)
8. **WAYFARING STRANGER** (P.D.)
(arr. by Amber Collins & Josh Pickett – Tradition Music Co./BUG Music)
9. **HOMETOWN** (Steve Barr)
(Tradition Music Co. & Mountain Heritage Music Co.)
10. **BLUEGRASS LULLABY** (Steve Barr)
(Tradition Music Co. & Mountain Heritage Music Co.)
11. **JESUS IS ALIVE AND WELL**
(Terry Breedlove) (Tradition Music Co./BUG Music)

12. **GRAYSON COUNTY BLUES** (Steve Barr) (Tradition Music Co. & Mountain Heritage Music Co.)
13. **THERE'S YOU** (Josh Pickett) (Tradition Music Co. & Pickett Music Co.)
14. **QUECREEK** (Mine) (Julie Ann Miller)
15. **RUBY** (Are You Mad At Your Man)
(Cynthia Mae "Cousin Emmy" Carver)

AMBER COLLINS – vocals

STEVE BARR – banjo

JOSH PICKETT – guitar & vocals

RYAN BLEVINS – mandolin & vocals

JACOB ELLER – bass

Produced by Chris Strachwitz, Joe Wilson,
& No Speed Limit

Recorded live at the Blue Ridge Music
Center's small indoor theatre off the Blue
Ridge Parkway near Galax, VA

Engineered, mixed and mastered by David
McLaughlin (Shepherd Productions –
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It was at the National Folk Festival in Richmond, VA that I encountered this dynamic, young, talented band of musicians from the western part of Virginia with powerhouse teenager, Amber Collins as lead singer. When she belted out Cousin Emmy's "Ruby" I felt that traditional country music was indeed alive and well in that part of the country. Joe Wilson of the NCTA (National Council for the Traditional Arts) in Washington, D.C., producer of this fine festival, who had known Steve since childhood, introduced me to the band. I was also impressed by the wonderful mix of original songs, contributed by several members of the band, and traditional material arranged in unique ways. All band members seemed deeply steeped in the marvelous local traditions – and their songs reflected the same good taste, most of them from the pen of banjo player, Steve Barr.

Although the members of No Speed Limit are still very young, they are totally devoted and determined to make music their careers. They are also very

conscientious and disciplined and were able to make this recording at a "live" performance with no overdubbing or other "repair" jobs that are possible in a more formal studio setting. On the morning of the first day of this two day recording session (when we also recorded the Whitetop Mountain Band – note Arhoolie CD 522) the banjo player, Steve, broke the head of his banjo. Although he struggled playing with a new head throughout the afternoon, the banjo just wouldn't stay in tune! On the second day Steve was able to borrow Sammy Shelor's banjo (he of the Lonesome River Band) who was acting as the assistant engineer. As a result the group decided to use only the selections recorded on the second day! The invited audience was rather small by that time of the evening, and so we decided to omit the applause even though it was warm and appreciative. As with many folks in that region of the country, the band members are deeply religious as you will notice from several of the songs they sing or have composed.

Banjo player and the band's main composer, **Steve Barr**, is the son of



Rebecca and Thomas Barr. I was very impressed by the many songs Steve had composed, especially by his song "Henry Box Brown" which is based on the true story of a slave who had mailed himself to freedom in Pennsylvania. Steve was born in 1975 in Galax, VA where he still makes his home today and has been playing music since he was four years old. If you call Steve on his phone you will hear a message in a delightful, heavy regional accent telling you that he is indeed thankful, glad and proud to be from Grayson County, VA. Steve has worked most of his life in his dad's fiddle shop in Galax and gives credit for all his musical abilities to the local and regional musicians of Southwest Virginia. He says: "Without them this beautiful art would no longer be here for us to enjoy." Steve is also a superb teacher of just about all string instruments, especially of children who come to his father's shop in Galax for lessons in groups of about half a dozen and he has over one hundred of them!

In 1986 Steve made his first recordings, a cassette release, featuring blue-

grass banjo classics. When he was 13, Steve traveled to Italy where he played his banjo wherever he could. Later that year he met and got to play with the master himself, Earl Scruggs. Five years later the state of Virginia sponsored Steve to play his music in France and subsequently he also appeared at a big 4th of July celebration in Switzerland. Steve credits Joe Wilson as his #1 hero who he feels taught him the importance of originality and tastefulness of music. Steve was asked to join the NCTA's "Masters of the Steel Stringed

Guitar" which toured up and down the East Coast. One of the highlights of Steve's life was just recently when No Speed Limit was asked to play at the inauguration of Virginia's new governor, Tim Kaine in 2006.

Singer **Amber Collins**, still a teenager, is from Saltville, Virginia, and is a founding member of No Speed Limit. She has been singing gospel music since she was two years old, first only in local churches, but later she toured with the Country Gospel Music Association where she was the Teenage,



Young Performer, and A capella Artist of the Year from 1998 – 2002. She was introduced to bluegrass music in 2004 at the “Saltville Jam” held in that town every Monday night. Her biggest bluegrass influences in the last year and a half have been Dan Tyminski and Russell Moore.

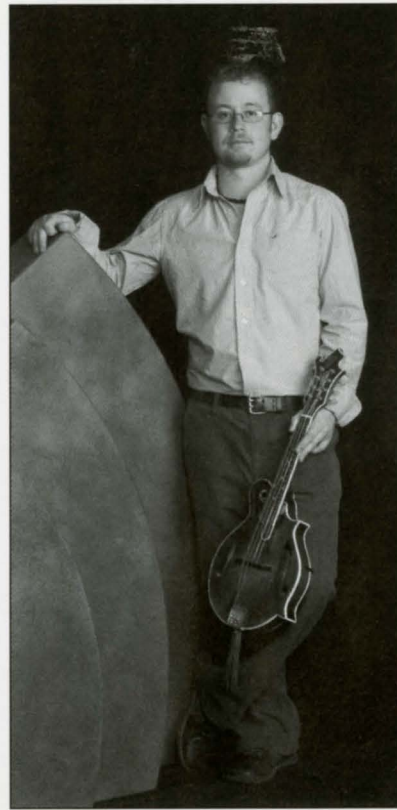
Guitarist **Josh Pickett** is from Hillsville, VA and sings harmony as well as occasional lead, as he does here on his own composition, “There’s You.” Josh became interested in music at age eleven when he heard a cousin

play at a family gathering. After getting a guitar from his parents for Christmas he has hardly let it out of his hands! He started playing professionally with the local group, Fast Forward which played mostly on week ends and cut a record called “1420 Broken Heart Avenue.” By the time Josh graduated from high school, he had several accomplishments under his belt including winning the International Guitar Championship at Merle-Fest in 2001 when he was 17. At the time he was the youngest to ever hold that title.



After that Josh went to Nashville to play music full time and toured widely with the hot bluegrass band, Valerie Smith & Liberty Pike. Josh obviously fits in well with this high energy band, No Speed Limit but he also teaches at the Surry Arts Council in Mt. Airy, N.C. as well as at Barr’s Fiddle Shop in Galax. He has over 50 students both in North Carolina and Virginia besides doing studio session work at his recording studio in Hillsville.

Mandolinist **Ryan Blevins** grew up in the small rural community of Cleghorn Valley, VA and developed a love for traditional music from his father. At age six he started to take banjo lessons from Carson Cooper, which soon led to guitar, mandolin, and fiddle. During high school, Ryan and Jacob Eller had their own rock band and both played with their fathers in the family and friends’ band, Cleghorn. After high school, Ryan attended Berea College in Kentucky and was a founding member of the Berea College Bluegrass Band along with his college mentor, Al White. With this band Ryan toured Ireland in





2004 and Japan in 2005 and had just recently returned in time for this session with No Speed Limit where his smooth vocal harmonies have added depth to the band.

Bass player **Jacob Eller** is the rock solid foundation of the band's driving rhythm. He was born into a family of traditional musicians and instrument makers. With his father, Randal Eller (who composed the title song on this CD) along with his brother Josh, Jacob played in the family band, Cleghorn for the past decade. Jacob and Josh also played in the band, Canebreak, along with Ryan Blevins. In high school he played drums with Ryan, but received a string bass for Christmas in 1997 and that ended his drum career. Jacob is also one of the original members of No Speed Limit and counts bassists Barry Bales, Jason Moore, and Mike Bub as his major musical influences.

*Chris Strachwitz – 2006
bios based on notes from the musicians*

1. Sweet Virginia (Randal Eller)

Sit down here and listen to my story
I'm a long, long way from home
A homesick girl who came out here
Looking for a place of my own.

I rode into town with a dream in my
Head and hopes for the future looked strong
But it didn't take long to realize
I'd be better off at home.

My job ran out and so did my money
I'm as broke as I can be
I soon found out that back on the farm
The dog eats better than me.

I'm sittin' right here on the side of my bed
Can't believe I'm all alone
Gonna swallow my pride and call my
Mama for a one way ticket back home.

Chorus:
Sweet Virginia, are you calling me tonight
Sweet... Virginia
You can make everything alright.

I'm standing in line at the railway station
Waiting for my chance to say, "Give me a one
Way ticket towards Old Dominion
(Cause I) won't last another day."
I'm sittin' on the train trying to be
Patient, my feet just won't sit still
By this time tomorrow I'll be back home
Eating Mama's home cooked meals.

Chorus

2. Blue Ridge Mountain Home (PD)

3. New East Virginia Blues

(PD, arr. by Ryan Blevins)

I was born in East Virginia, North Carolina I did go
There I met a fair young maiden, name and age I
did not know
Name and age I did not know.

Oh her hair was dark and curly,
and her cheeks were rosy red
On her breasts she wore white lilies,
where I longed to lay my head
Where I longed to lay my head.

I don't want your greenback dollars,
I don't want your watch and chain
All I want is your heart darling
Say you'll take me back again
Say you'll take me back again.

The ocean's deep and I can't wade it
And I have no wings to fly
I'll just get me a blue-eyed boatman
For to row me oe'r the tide
For to row me oe'r the tide

I'll go back to East Virginia
North Carolina ain't my home
I'll go back to East Virginia
Leave those North Carolinians alone
Leave those North Carolinians alone.

4. Born a Rambler (Steve Barr)

I was raised up in a cabin, underneath that lone-
some pine
I was born to be a rambler, I've rambled all my life.

Roll-on, roll-on rolling down that railroad track
Long gone, long gone, I ain't never coming back
I was raised up in a cabin underneath that lone-
some pine
I was born to be a rambler, I've rambled all my life.

Late at night, I'm all alone, there's no one to call
my own
I'll go back to Carolina and I sing a rambling song.

Roll on ... rolling down that railroad track
Long gone I ain't never coming back
I was raised up in a cabin underneath that lone-
some pine
I was born to be a rambler, I've rambled all my life.

Roll on ... rolling down that railroad track
Long gone, I ain't never coming back
I was raised up in a cabin underneath that lone-
some pine
I was born to be a rambler, I've rambled all my life.

5. Henry Box Brown (Steve Barr)

All the days, of his life
Worked so hard, just to survive
All the nights, that he cried
So much pain, he could not hide.

Day and night, he was told just what to do
Forced to work, so that he could get some food

Then one night he slipped away
So freedom could be found
The day they mailed the man
Henry "Box" Brown

Standing there, now on the run
He found a friend, there in Richmond
Placed him down, flat on his face
Closed the box, with no escape.

Day and night, he was tossed from side to side
In the dark, he could feel the bumpy ride
Each hour as he rolled around
He prayed to God out loud
The day they mailed the man
Henry "Box" Brown

Two feet wide and not very deep
The box was small, he could not sleep
Two whole days he could not eat
His head was pressed against his feet.

Far away in a little Pennsylvania town
The box arrived, all the folks were standing 'round
They pulled him out, he gave a shout
He's thankful he was found
The day they mailed the man
Henry "Box" Brown

6. Whiplash (Josh Pickett) - instrumental

7. Blue Night (Kirk McGee)

Blue night I got you on my mind
Blue night I can't keep from crying
You met someone that was new
You quit someone that you knew was true

Blue night I got you on my mind

Blue night, blue as I can be
I don't know what'll become of me
Where we used to walk I walk alone
With an aching heart because my love is gone
Blue night blue as I can be

Blue night I'm all alone
I used to call you on the telephone
I used to call and it made me glad
Now I call and it makes you mad
Blue night 'cause I'm all alone.

Blue night all by myself
Since you put me on that shelf
There's just one thing that you must know
You're gonna reap just what you sow
Blue night, all by myself.

8. Wayfaring Stranger

(PD, arr. by Amber Collins & Josh Pickett)

I'm just a poor, wayfaring stranger
While traveling through this world below
There is no sickness, toil or danger
In that bright land to which I go.

I'm going there to see my mother
I'm going there no more to roam
I'm just going over Jordan
I'm only going over home.

I know dark clouds may hover o'er me
I know my path may be rough and steep
But golden fields lie out before me
Where weary eyes no more shall weep.

I'm going there to see my father
I'm going there no more to roam
I'm just going over Jordan
I'm only going over home.

When life for me down here has ended
And they place me 'neath the sod
I drop this cross of self-denial
And enter in my home with God.

I'm going there to see my Savior
Who shed for me his precious blood
I'm just going over Jordan
I'm only going over home.

9. Hometown (Steve Barr)

I see you, you see me
Walking down old Main Street
Back in the place that we call home
Come on in and gather round
Lots of joy can be found
I love the old hometown.

Chorus:

Then you go far away another time another place
Missing ones that you love now that they're gone
Making plans to return find your soul before it burns
Take the chance all alone then you'll come back home.
Come on in and gather round
Lots of joy can be found
I love the old hometown.

One by one you will find
The folks down here they treat you kind
You will meet new friends before you go
Come on in it's time to eat

Fellowship and rest your feet
Kick right back and make yourself at home.

Chorus 2X

10. Bluegrass Lullaby (Steve Barr)

Way up in the mountains, where I go on
Friday night
Play some mountain music as we dance all
through the night
Sing a bluegrass favorite, all these things I've not
forgot
James, he played the fiddle loud and clear, he
played it hot.

All the years as he played the late night dance
James was waiting for the chance
Maybe he would find romance
Then one night as he played the notes real high
There standing in the light, with a sparkle in her eye
Was his bluegrass lullaby...bluegrass lullaby.

Down beside the river she became his lovely wife
All that I remember was there, right by his side
Then I seen him kiss her on her lips for quite a while
Live happy for ever, on her face she had a smile.

Then it changed as they drove home late one night
His car began to fly, it landed on its side
On his knees it was James he was all right
But what an awful sight on the ground that lone-
some night
Was his bluegrass lullaby ... bluegrass lullaby.

Way up in the mountains where I go on Friday night
Folks they stop and listen and they ask if he's all right

James he's very sad now he has lost his lovely wife
Still he is so lonely but he's thankful for his life.

Now you know how this tragic story goes
All these things that I have told was because I
loved her so
Looking back, all the days they passed me by
And still I wonder why my sister had to die
She's my bluegrass lullaby ... bluegrass lullaby.

11. Jesus is Alive and Well (Terry Breedlove)

Gather round children I've a story to tell
I've read in the bible I remember it well
How a Savior from heaven came down to this world
A miracle baby, to a virgin girl.

He brought comfort to the weary, gave sight to
the blind
He fed the hungry, turned the water to wine
He fought every battle, He never did fail
He still has the power, He's alive and well.

Jesus is alive and well
He still holds the keys to heaven and hell
He knows all about us like the woman at the well
Jesus is alive and well.

Then came the dawning of the world's darkest day
They came to the garden and led Him away
Betrayed and forsaken, He died for our sins
But there's more to my story, no this wasn't the end.

For on the third morning at the breaking of day
Mary came to the garden where my Jesus lay
She looked in the tomb there seeking the dead
He was out there walking on the outside instead.

Jesus is alive and well
He still holds the keys to heaven and hell
Mary ran from the garden, they heard her yell
Jesus is alive and well.

Jesus is alive and well
He still holds the keys to heaven and hell
The world don't believe it but I'm gonna tell
Jesus is alive and well.

12. Grayson County Blues (Steve Barr)

Over in the valley, down Elk Creek Road
Drove up to the mountain and watched the river flow
Mamma's in the kitchen, daddy's on the farm
I looked down and I saw a man grab my daddy's arm.

Took off down the hillside, opened up the door
As I landed on my feet, I raised a .44
Then I pulled the trigger, watched him hit
the ground
Scared me half to death and I took off for the town.

Chorus:

Let her roll, on down the road
I'm on the run, nowhere to go
No turning back, no time to lose
I think I've got the Grayson County blues.

Rolling down the highway, nowhere to run
Thinkin' I've just shot a man, I killed him with my gun
Running ninety five, fast as I can go
Now my engine's running hot, I hope that it don't blow.

Rain is falling, the air outside is cold
Day has turned to night now the stars don't
even show

Flying down the mountain, feeling mighty low
Did I do the right thing, well I guess I'll
never know.

Chorus

Driving through the valley, blue lights
straight ahead
A man was down on the ground and his rights were
being read
Walked up to my window, "Why are you alone?
Two men escaped from prison, now one of them
is gone.

I told 'em they could find him at home on
the ground
He tried to rob and kill my dad so I shot that
man down
Drove out to the farm the man was not yet dead
In my mind I can't forget the last words that he said.

Chorus

13. There's You (Josh Pickett)

After endless night of wondering what I was
gonna do
Wondering if I'd find the one to help me walk
life through
Just when I'd given up and thought that I was through
I turned around and there stands you

Chorus:

There's you from somewhere up above
There's you with your everlasting love
There's you, you'll never give up
And if I wonder just what I'm gonna do, there's you

Well I can't help but wonder how you come along
 I've never felt a love or feeling quite this strong
 And if I ever feel all alone
 You're always there with a love that carries on

Chorus

As the years they roll past us were still hanging on
 Nothing comes between us, we're still standing strong
 We'll be right here together until our dying day
 We've got something special that no one can
 take away

Chorus



Sammy Shelor & Steve Barr.

14. Quecreek (Mine) (Julie Ann Miller)

In the Quecreek mine, nine miners went down
 Two hundred forty foot deep in the ground
 The night shift went a mile when there came
 a shout
 Somebody's hit water, everybody get out.

It was over their heads and too fast to outrun
 Together they were tied to live or die as one
 Help came from above but then the drill stripped
 and broke
 So the men penned goodbyes and wives hoped
 against hope.

Chorus:

When the water come up
 When you go through the flood
 In the Lord you can trust
 He will be there with us

Now Jesus was laid in a hole in the ground
 He was dead but on the third day God's hand
 brought him out
 And the miners were buried three nights and
 three days
 But like Jesus Sunday morning all nine men
 were raised.

Chorus 2X

15. Ruby (Are You Mad At Your Man)

("Cousin Emmy" Carver)

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Recorded "live" at the
Blue Ridge Music Center's
small indoor theatre near Galax,
Virginia, by David McLaughlin



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FILE UNDER: BLUEGRASS

