

ALICE STUART

ALL THE GOOD TIMES



APHOOLE 9034

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1. LEAVIN' HOME
2. I'LL PAWN YOU MY GOLD
WATCH AND CHAIN
3. BEATNIK (Alice Stuart)
4. SEVEN DAFFODILS
5. BLACK JACK DAVID
6. JAMES ALLEY BLUES
7. EVERYDAY DIRT
8. ONCE I HAD A SWEETHEART
9. STACKERLEE
10. BAD GIRL
11. SEVEN BEERS WITH THE
WRONG WOMAN
12. I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER
13. ALL THE GOOD TIMES
14. NOBODY KNOWS YOU WHEN
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15. FOLLOW ME HONEY, I'LL
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17. KASSIE JONES
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19. THREE JOLLY ROGUES
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This is **Alice Stuart's** first album recorded over 35 years ago. She still has a very active musical career and has a new album out. You can visit her web site at **www.alicestuart.com** and email her at **astuart@speakeasy.net**.

The following are Chris Strachwitz' original notes for the album.

One night this spring a friend of mine called and told me that a new girl singer from Los Angeles was performing at a local coffee-house. I was far from over enthused at the prospect of having to listen to yet another folksy singer – but decided to go anyway. She was singing a funny song – and she had a light natural swing – I liked her sound – she went on into a blues – not about cotton fields or the B&O railroad – but a very moving message that had meaning for all of us of urban background. Old ballads, which had never been my favorite diet, became fresh and alive – “Black Jack David” had a beautiful swing to it that I hadn’t heard since Cliff Carlisle’s old record of the song. Her voice was not pretentious – she wasn’t overly dramatic – she was a natural – a fine stylist but with deep respect for the

material she was using. Her humor was delightful and refreshing – especially in these days when it seems most folk singers are looking for their doom – she was alive – full of energy and good fun – but sensitive and each song seemed to tell you a good deal about her inner feelings. She had selected her material with great taste; she sang ballads, blues, funny songs, country “heart” songs, contemporary folk songs, and her own love songs and novelty tunes. Each song had her personality stamped on it. I knew right that evening that this girl was destined to be one of the most interesting and important folk artists.

Born June 15, 1942 in Seattle, Washington, Alice Stuart was raised by her aunt in Lake Chelan, Washington – a small country town – with no radio station until just a few years ago – and perhaps more isolated than many rural southern communities. The culture of Lake Chelan was rock and roll, football games, high school dances, church functions, and high school plays. During

visits, Alice’s mother sang a little around the house – “Western things – like ‘Rubber Dolly’” and her grandmother also was musically inclined. Alice enjoyed Elvis Presley but she also liked classical music and learned to play the piano and later became lead drummer in the high school band. She wrote her own rock and roll songs and sang them at school functions. As a graduation present she got a baritone uke from her mother and learned a few things from her Burl Ives songbook.

Alice was on her own now – for a while she stayed with relatives in Arizona – but soon she returned to the Northwest. She tried to find work in Seattle – but no luck. Finally one day while walking through the streets looking for some kind of job, she came by the Pamir House – better known as the “P” House – a local folk music hang-out. She didn’t have the nerve to go in right then – after all, what did she know about “folk music?” But she heard that if you could sing you might find work there and a few days later she got up the nerve

to go in. With her baritone uke she auditioned – and – was hired! \$2 a night wasn't much – but she heard a new kind of music and she met singers who knew a lot of songs. Mike Atwood, Dave Coffin, Don McAllister, Jerry Murry, and Dallas Williams were some of the local troubadours who helped her increase her embarrassingly small repertoire – she only knew ten “folk songs” when she started! But her aim in life had always been to be an entertainer and she had natural musical talent. Although concerned about being “ethnic” for a while she soon began singing anything she liked – just like the older songsters like Mance Lipscomb or J.E. Mainer, Alice wasn't concerned about the sources of her songs – books, radio, television, records, or other singers – if she liked it, she would learn it – and make it her own song. She was quick to pick things up and only had to hear a good song once or twice. For a while, like many of her friends, she would copy songs pretty much the way she heard them – but one day she

heard Bob Dylan and she knew that she could be herself – that she could sing songs the way she felt they ought to be sung – she was finally free to grow.

Alice worked hard to be a good singer. For a while she played with the G. E. Murry Trio – then she made a record with Mike Hall and Steve Lolar and in the summer of 1963 she became a regular on the weekly KING-TV Hootenanny. This lasted until December 1963 when she went to Los Angeles and got married. One night folk singer Paul Hansen heard her at a hoot in Los Angeles and was very impressed. Later he introduced Alice to his friend Barry Olivier, founder/director of the Berkeley Folk Music Festival, and subsequently she was invited to appear at the 1964 Berkeley Festival.

Despite mass media, much of our real American folk music still consists of the songs – both sacred and secular, dance music, and other sounds of the various relatively isolated social and cultural groups. The practitioners today are often

still as limited in their repertoire as their forefathers were generations ago, when many of the regional songsters and folk musicians knew only a few selections (but would play them all night long – perhaps improvising on them to create some variety within their repertoire, based on their limited contacts). There simply wasn't much music available to the average field hand but that which was around was shared and accepted by all – it became communal property.

We still have the rural Southern “deep blues,” gospel music, the Rhythm and Blues of the middle class urban African Americans, the Country and Western sounds of middle class whites of Southern background, the Cajun music of the Louisiana Acadians, the “soul jazz” of younger urban African Americans, the traditional Basque songs and dances of Nevada sheep herders, and the polka bands of the Polish immigrants in Chicago. However, an ever growing number of people (even those fortunate

enough to be raised in a rich tradition), no longer identify themselves only with the culture of their forefathers. Neither do they identify with the mass culture of the commercial entertainment media (to which almost every person in the U. S. has been subjected). They are hearing more and more of the music and songs of the many cultural groups not only in this country but from all over the world.

There has been in the last few years an enormous upsurge of interest in the “real thing” – the authentic music of the various ethnic groups. Folk music has always influenced pop music and even serious composers have borrowed its elements. But today thousands – perhaps millions – hear and meet genuine folk artists through commercially available records, concerts, personal appearances, and radio and television.

These listeners are deeply interested in America's folk music and from their ranks have come a group of performers – a large group since music is no longer functional

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in the old sense (as dance music, work songs, etc.) but has become an end in itself. Very few dance – but many sing, play guitars, and swap songs. Their problem is no longer a lack of material – but rather an overabundance of it. The matter of choice and approach has become a major obstacle for many singers. Some have tried to perform the songs in much the same way they heard them from the “original source.” A few sing only their own material, while others interpret traditional material in a more individual way.

As Mance Lipscomb – the Texas songster – was a rare individual in his rural South Texas society, so is Alice Stuart in her adopted world. He knew what songs the local people liked and there was only a limited amount of music he heard. Alice had few, if any, strong traditional ties. Almost everyone she met had different likes and tastes – and the variety of music she has heard since leaving Lake Chelan must have been immense. Just as Mance got his songs from any and all sources, so did Alice, and

their only criteria was whether or not they liked the song. In many instances Mance Lipscomb did not appreciably alter a song – because it was beautiful the way he heard it. Of course, he would never attempt to play it exactly the way he heard it – it always came out Mance Lipscomb style and the same is true for Alice. There are of course many songs which a good folk artist will change completely to suit his or her taste – and many will compose their own. Again we can see the parallel between Mance and Alice – both have made up songs of their own – and both sing songs in an entirely individual way. Mance Lipscomb is of course a seasoned performer – a man who has lived and played his music for over 50 years. Alice is young and growing – but already I see her as one of the finest “songsters” of this new American folk music.

Chris Strachwitz – 1964 (edited 2002)

Leavin' Home was originally recorded by Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers and has been performed by the New Lost City Ramblers from whom Alice heard it. Mike Seeger – member of the NLCR – impressed many at the 1964 Berkeley Festival with the beautiful A. P. Carter tune **I'll Pawn You My Gold Watch and Chain**. When customers at Seattle's "P" House called her **Beatnik** Alice responded by composing this little song. **Seven Daffodils** is a contemporary folk tune while **Black Jack David** is one of our oldest ballads. In the late 1920s New Orleans “songster” Richard “Rabbitt” Brown recorded the beautiful **James Alley Blues** while the humorous **Everyday Dirt** was recorded by its composer David McCarn in the late 1920s for Victor Records. **Once I Had a Sweetheart** is based on an old ballad which Alice rewrote into a completely new song – only the title is the same. **Stackerlee** is a traditional song and a similar version was first recorded by Mississippi John Hurt in 1928 while **Bad Girl** is a ballad collected from Texas Gladden by Alan Lomax. Karl and Harty made **Seven Beers With the Wrong Woman** into a popular novelty tune during the depression days of the 1930s. Tom Paxton is one of the finest of the contemporary song writers and his **Where I'm Bound** is one of his best while the selection **All the Good Times** is another traditional country piece.

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Alice Stuart, a child of the folk music revival and Hootenanny era, was invited to appear at the prestigious 1964 Berkeley, CA Folk Festival by its director, Barry Olivier. She made quite an impression with her pure voice, fine guitar work, and her broad repertoire ranging from Appalachian Anglo ballads, country and cowboy songs, humorous ditties, to rural Blues. These are her first recordings from 1964 (#1-13 originally released as Arhoolie LP 4002) with eight additional bonus tracks featuring several blues and an old ballad, "Lady Margaret" (#16) where Alice plays the banjo.

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