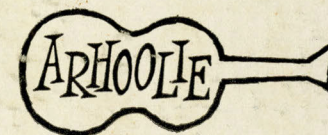


Watermelon Hangin' On the Vine

HODGES BROTHERS





F 5001

WATERMELON HANGIN' ON THE VINE

BY THE HODGES BROTHERS

with John White

FELIX HODGES - fiddle; RALPH HODGES - mandolin, guitar & vocal
JAMES HODGES - rhythm guitar; JOHN WHITE - string bass and vocal
Recorded at the studios of WAPF - McComb, Mississippi

SIDE I

1. WATERMELON HANGIN' ON THE VINE —
lead vocal by Ralph Hodges
2. BILE DEM CABBAGE DOWN — instrumental
3. GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE HILLSIDE —
John White lead vocal
4. WAIT FOR THE WAGON — instrumental
5. CHARMIN' BETSY — John White lead vocal
6. BOGUE CHITTO FLINGDING — instrumental
7. GOING DOWN THE ROAD FEELING BAD —
John White lead vocal
8. CARROLL COUNTY BLUES — instrumental

SIDE II

1. ON THE BANKS OF THE OHIO —
John White lead vocal
2. HOOKNOSE IN TOWN — John White
lead vocal
3. LONESOME VALLEY — John White lead Vocal
4. IDA RED — instrumental
5. NEVER ALONE WALTZ — instrumental
6. HEAVENLY LIGHT IS SHINING ON ME —
John White lead vocal
7. SIX WHITE HORSES — Ralph Hodges vocal
8. MOUNTAIN DEW — John White lead vocal

Side I recorded by Chris A. Strachwitz on July 19, 1960
Side II — 1 to 5 recorded by John White in December 1960
Side II — 6 recorded by John White in April 1961
Side II — 7 & 8 same as side I

Cover and lay-out by Wayne Pope

Liner notes by Chris A. Strachwitz and Bob Pinson



Monroe's band and other popular recording groups of the 30s, 40s, and 50s. They have also written many of their own songs and have made some juke box records for Trumpet and Whispering Pines labels. Born and raised in Bogue Chitto, Miss. the three brothers have made music their business for the past 15 years but also help-out on their small farm. Music has always been a family matter and Felix learned many of his fiddle tunes from his uncle John Stewart, while his father-in-law is supposed to be quite a whizz on the 5 string banjo. Ralph today usually plays lead guitar but was brought up with the mandolin. He is also the lead singer in the group when they perform their own songs. James, the youngest, gives solid rhythm backing. Most of the vocals on this LP, which consists of traditional numbers, are contributed by the bass slapping John White who hails from Bell County, Kentucky, and now works as an announcer at station WAPF in McComb, Miss. He, like the Hodges Brothers, has toured around the area with shows featuring comedians and variety acts - often known as medicine shows - and has gained a wide knowledge of old-time songs. The group as it appears on this record can be heard every morning bright and early over WAPF to awaken the many listeners in the country side with their happy and often lively sound. But these daily radio programs are only a part of the musical activities of the group: dances, picnics, variety shows, carnivals, and political rallies all require the services of a popular local band. Of no less importance are their appearances at local churches. The Holiness, Pentacostal, and other denominations which place strong emphasis on music during their worship, engage the Hodges Brothers frequently to supply the music and to help out when the congregation joins in the singing.

The traditional repetoir of the band reflects the variety of occasion at which their services are used: for old-timers there is the **Never Alone Waltz** and the breakdowns like **Bile Dem Cabbage Down**, old fashioned harmonizing on **Watermelon Hangin' On The Vine** and **Gathering Flowers On The Hillside**, Negro type blues like **Going Down The Road Feeling Bad** and **Six White Horses**, sacred numbers such as **Lonesome Valley** and **Heavenly Light Is Shining On Me**. Novelty songs which were perhaps frequently used at variety shows: **Mountain Dew** and **Hooknose In Town**, instrumental dance tunes such as **Wait For The Wagon**, **Bogue Chitto Flingding**, **Carroll County Blues**, and **Ida Red**. A wonderful version of **Charmin' Betsy** and finally an old ballad about a murder **On The Banks Of The Ohio**.

During World War II, with the mass migration of workers from the mechanizing rural South to the northern, western, and eastern industrial centers, the US saw a boom in what was then generally referred to as "hillbilly" music. The country had become aware of these "Native American Melodies" and "Old Time Melodies of the South," as they were referred to on publicity sheets distributed by the Victor Company during the prosperous Twenties when the record industry discovered that there was quite a market for this music. Most of the early records were recorded and sold in the South and strong emphasis was placed on locally-known performers and material. Much of the "folk music" of America was recorded for commercial firms during the late 20s until the Depression hit the land and phonograph records became a luxury which the rural public could no longer afford. However the music, just like other traditions, did not die; after all, this music was not dependent upon the record business for it's continued existence, as is the case with the "pop" music of today. The music moved with the people, changed, and was influenced by other musical styles, and by the late 40s its main stream had been funnelled into the hands of Tin Pan Alley. But just as in the case of the Negro blues, the traditional, old-time style continued "back home" and groups like the Monroe Brothers, Blue Sky Boys, Gid Tanner, and J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers, just to name a few, even made their way into the recording studios, which by the 30s were rather reluctant to invest in material which appealed almost exclusively to the often jobless "folk" of America. Very much in the way in which the "country" blues evolved into "Rhythm and Blues" and later "Rock and Roll," so did the old-time music of the white Southerners change to "hillbilly," "Country and Western," and finally "Rock-a-billy" utilizing gimmicks of the electronics industry to create odd and weird sounds, neglecting and even frowning upon the natural qualities of string instruments.

Yet, despite the pressures from Tin Pan Alley, the entertainment industry in general and the "top 40" stations (also often referred to as "formula radio!") in particular, traditions have survived and many younger musicians have carried on the music which they heard their fathers and grandfathers play. Such is the case with the Hodges Brothers. Felix on fiddle, Ralph mandolin and guitar, James rhythm guitar, and on this occasion supplemented by John White on bass, they have learned much of their material from older relatives, but were also impressed by Bill

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