

CATHY BARTON
& DAVE PARA
On a day
like
today



FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. FSI-107



CATHY BARTON & DAVE PARA

On a day like today

With Ed Trickett and Skip Gorman

When we recorded the *Golden Ring* (FSI-16) over twenty years ago, we were caught up in the spirit of traditional music—its spontaneity, its power as a binding force, and its ability to express the gamut of themes and experiences of the human condition, from the frivolous to the serious, the grand to the banal. It was more a sustaining point of view about the music than a statement about the performers—a belief in the song rather than the singer.

Cathy Barton and Dave Para, as much as any folk musicians I know, carry on that sense of the importance of folk music, the value of digging for old musical gold, of travelling far and wide to collect old songs and tunes, and of being friends with, rather than exploiters of the old-timers who have provided such wonderful musical foundations for us all. Cathy, with a Masters degree in folklore, is both knowledgeable and incessant in her journeys for songs and tunes. Dave's dedication to the music of the old-time string bands has yielded an engaging synthesis of humorous stories and high-energy songs. Together, they are an absolutely first-rate combination of savvy, respect for the music, and competence in bringing it to us with just the right spirit and freshness.

Cathy and Dave have lived in Missouri for much of the recent past, and the music on this record has roots in that part of the country, including two songs by Bob Dyer, Bard of Boonville, Missouri, where Cathy and Dave make their home. Cathy plays the hammered dulcimer with the certainty of an old pro and the delicacy and nuance of a sensitive listener for what songs and tunes really have to offer. Her banjo and guitar playing likewise reflect both strength and restraint. Dave's banjo and guitar playing is clear and tasteful, with an occasional bit of string band impishness thrown in. And their voices fit together like hand and glove. Listen to "Go March Along," one of the many brush arbor hymns they have learned from Glen Branscum of Onia, Arkansas.

Together, Cathy Barton and Dave Para represent the absolute best in carrying on the spirit of the folk music revival—musical artistry, an appreciation of the traditional roles played by traditional music, an awareness of the dedication it takes to unearth treasures, and a personal warmth, humor, and integrity that makes you smile. The *Golden Ring* was onto something, and so are they.

Ed Trickett
Bethesda, Maryland
January, 1986

Notes by Cathy Barton and Dave Para
Recorded by Sandy Paton
Cover photograph by Sandy Paton
Back photograph by Sam Griffin
Jacket design by Walter A. Schwarz

This album is also available as a cassette: Folk-Legacy C-107

CATHY BARTON & DAVE PARA

On a day like today

FSI-107



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INTRODUCTION

You can call us both "children of the folk revival." Five-year-olds don't get to coffeehouses and nightclubs much; at least they didn't in 1960. We had to be content with listening to the records our older sisters were buying and playing at different ends of the country. Many of these folksongs from the pop charts were fun, easy to sing and told a story, and a lot of the spirit we first heard on those records can be found in our music today.

For different reasons, we both ended up in the rolling prairies of mid-Missouri, where we found rich, living musical traditions, like the old-time fiddling that thrives in fiddling contests from one end of the state to the other. All these dance tunes have been a great way to feed growing interests in instrumental music.

At about the same time Cathy began to play the hammered dulcimer, I bought a better guitar and the two of us met at the Chez Coffeehouse in Columbia, Missouri, where we began to listen to Folk-Legacy's records. The songs we first sang together we learned from Sara Grey's record with Ed Trickett, and they're among our favorites yet. The songs and choruses by the Golden Ring so inspired us and our friends that we formed a little group of our own, modestly called the Wooden Hoop. It was Folk-Legacy's treatment of traditional music, both by traditional singers and contemporary interpreters, that induced us to learn traditional material from our own region. The people we have come to know in Missouri and the Ozarks have both sustained and encouraged our efforts.

We owe a lot of our music to "good and gentle people" like fiddlers Taylor McBaine and the late Kermit Moody, Grandpa and Ramona Jones, young fogies Jim Ruth and Spencer Galloway, and to our more recent friends the Patons and this wonderful musician Ed Trickett; and it is incredible luck for us to live next door to someone as creative and sensitive as Bob Dyer, whose songs again grace our record. These people have taught us much more than new songs and tunes by sharing their talents with us; they have made making music synonymous with "making friends."

For these "neighbors," be they in Toad Suck, Arkansas, or Bethesda, Maryland, we hope they can hear a little part of themselves in our music, and to our listeners we hope to add to your own repertoires, or give you some music to remember.

Dave Para

ABOUT THE SONGS

ON A DAY LIKE TODAY
(Copyright: Bob Dyer, Songwright Pub. Inc.)
Side 1, Band 1.

Cathy: guitar
Ed: guitar
Dave: just a'singin'

Of this song, our next-door neighbor writes:
"I wrote this song in 1981 when I was living in a rented farmhouse near what was once a town called Gooch's Mill, not far from my hometown of Boonville, Missouri. The house was on a hillside, and from my front porch I looked south across a field of clover and a bottomland

bean field to the thickly wooded hills bordering the Petite Saline Creek. It was a lovely place to be reminded by the changing seasons why I have chosen to live out my life in central Missouri.

"The song came on a late summer day when I found myself noticing the first subtle signs of autumn and silently wishing the moment could last forever, while at the same time realizing that what I so deeply loved about this landscape was its constantly changing color and texture. The song is my way of having the best of both these worlds."

*On a day like today, in the heat of this
late summer weather,
There's a haze in the trees and the sound
of the bees in the clover;
There's a hawk in the sky, there's a shine
on the wide river's water,
And I feel deep inside something wanting
to stay here forever.*

*But the seasons keep changing,
And the days just keep running away,
And forever's a gift you're forever
giving away.*

*On a day like today, in the last golden
days of October,
There's a chill in the air and a light
haze of frost on the clover;
There's a fire in the trees, there's a
sound in the breeze like a whisper,
And I feel deep inside something wanting
to stay here forever.*

*On a day like today, in the heart of a
long, bitter winter,
With the light from the moon making stars
on the snow in the clover,
I sit down by the fire in the heat of its
slow, dying embers,
And I feel deep inside something wanting
to stay here forever.*

*It's a morning in spring, and the dew on
the jewel weed still glistens,
And I almost can hear new life being
born as I listen;
I walk down by the spring and I drink
from its clear flowing water,
And I feel deep inside something wanting
to stay here forever.*

JENNY GET YOUR HOECAKES DONE/RYE STRAW/SHIPS
IN THE CLOUDS
(Traditional)
Side 1, Band 2.

Cathy: banjo
Dave: guitar

The first tune comes from the repertoire of Grandpa Jones, who sings words to it that are reminiscent of those to "Bile Them Cabbage Down." The second tune is known in many parts of the country and carries titles like "Joke on the Puppy" and "The Unfortunate Dog," all of which circumvent the scatological reference in the real title. We avoid it here as well. The last tune was learned from Lisa Ornstein on a Folkways record by the same title. Living and playing in Quebec now, Lisa probably doesn't play Appalachian tunes like this one anymore. (CBP)

THE LILY OF ARKANSAS
(Traditional; arr. copyright Bob Coltman)
Side 1, Band 3.

Dave: guitar
Cathy: hammered dulcimer

Bob Coltman, of South Chelmsford, Mass., sang this song for us during our first trip to New England with Ed Trickett. Bob said he found the words in *Ozark Country* by Otto E. Rayburn (Duell, Sloane & Pearce, New York, 1941) and put them to the tune of "Walking in the Way With Jesus," recorded by West Virginia fiddler and singer Blind Alfred Reed, who can be heard on Rounder 1001. Rayburn's informant told him that "The Lily of Arkansas" was popular all over the Missouri "Laplands" — the border region in the Ozarks where some say Arkansas "laps over" into Missouri, or vice versa.

Vance Randolph includes it in *Ozark Folksongs* (Missouri State Historical Society, 1946) with a melody different from the one we learned from Bob. Randolph says the song is derived from the British ballad "The Lowlands of Holland" and prints a second variant. We further confuse the song's lineage by adding two verses from Randolph's second version to the first. (DP)

*My father built the boat,
The ship that sailed the sea,
With four and twenty good sailor lads
To keep him company.*

*The wind and the waves kept a-beatin'
While sailin' on the sea;
Lie low, the Lily of Arkansas
Has parted you and me.*

I fear my love's been drowned,
I fear my love's been slain;
I fear my love's been drowned
On his way to France and Spain.

There's girls enough in Texas
And I know there's one for me,
While my own dear and lonely one
Is far away from me.

Neither will I marry,
I'll tell you the reason why:
I love the girl who once loved me,
I'll love her till I die.

My father built a bonny ship,
A ship that sailed the sea;
I only have the one true love,
He's far away from me.

DANCE AT WINDY'S PLACE/RAGTIME ANNIE
(Copyright: Nonnie Presson/traditional)
Side 1, Band 4.

Cathy: banjo
Dave: guitar
Ed: hammered dulcimer

This song was written by the late Tennessee musician Nonnie Presson, who with her brother, Bulow Smith, comprised the Perry County Music Makers, who recorded a few sides and performed in the years before World War II. (One song is included on a New World Records anthology titled *Going Down the Valley* — NW 236.)

Nonnie played a large zither and wrote and sang songs all her life. In the mid 1970's, Nonnie, Bulow, and their niece, Virginia, recorded two albums for Davis Unlimited Records and appeared at the National Folklife Festival. Folklorist Charles Wolfe has called Nonnie the most creative old-time musician he ever met, with an ability to write a song in the 1970's that sounded like it came from the 1890's.

Steve Davis told us that Nonnie said she wrote this song about the dances she remembered from years ago in Perry County. With the exception of roasted rabbit and some stills we've not located, the song reminds us very much of the dances we've attended in Stone County, Arkansas. (DP)

The sun is sinking and the work's all done,
Everyone's busy and we're all on the run,
Getting ready for the dance at Windy's place.
Ma's cooking supper and it smells so good,
Roasting rabbit on a hickory wood.
Everybody's happy when we go to the dance
at Windy's place.

Old Grandad and Grandma, too,
Dance to the rhythm of the Shoo Fly Shoo
While Uncle Ben and wood-legged Bill
Tell tall tales about the homemade still.
The fiddle will scream and the banjo ring
All night long until the bluebirds sing.
Everybody's happy when we go to the dance
at Windy's place.

Two little girls with their skirts in a whirl
Dancing around like humming birds,
Leaning on the arms of the boys that they
love best.
All the little babies have gone to sleep,
Dreaming of drums and Little Bo Peep.
Everybody's happy when we go to the dance
at Windy's place.

JIMMY IN THE SWAMP/MISSOURI MUD
(Traditional)
Side 1, Band 5.

Cathy: hammered dulcimer
Skip: fiddle
Dave: guitar

These two tunes come from the first volume of *The Old-Time Fiddler's Repertory* (University of Missouri, 1973), a compilation of Midwestern fiddle breakdowns, pieces, quadrilles and waltzes collected by R. P. Christeson of Auxvasse, Mo. Christeson recorded these and many other tunes from Robert E. "Uncle Bob" Walters, an excellent fiddler from Nebraska with an apparently large and varied repertoire. (CBP)

GO MARCH ALONG
(Traditional)
Side 1, Band 6.

Since 1973, I have been travelling as often as I can to the Arkansas Ozarks, and now the area is like a second home to me. On one of my first trips to the area, I recorded this song and many others from a stone mason, Glen Branscum, of Onia, Arkansas. Glen is fond of old brush-arbor camp meeting hymns, and he remembers hearing many of them sung by his grandfather, who was a preacher.

It is impossible for me to sing "Go March Along" without picturing Glen in my mind. He usually wears a hat, but when he begins one of these hymns, he immediately takes off his hat in reverence. (CBP)

Go march along, go march along,
I will see you again, I will see you again.
Go march along, go march along,
I will see you on that Judgement Day.

My father's gone to glory,
I will see him again, I will see him again.
Go march along, go march along,
I will see you on that Judgement Day.

My mother's gone to glory,
I will see her again, I will see her again.
Go march along, go march along,
I will see you on that Judgement Day.

(Similarly: brother, sister, etc.)

JIM BLUDSO OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE
(Words: P.D.; music copyright: Dave Para)
Side 1, Band 7.

Dave: guitar
Cathy: dulcimer

We set the melody to this verse written in 1871 by John Hay, formerly one of Lincoln's private secretaries and later Secretary of State under McKinley and Roosevelt. In a pamphlet with another ballad, "Little Breeches," Hay's poem was immediately popular and widely reprinted throughout the U.S. and England and was later included in the collection *Pike County Ballads*, the title referring to Hay's home county in Illinois, bordering the Mississippi River. His instant literary success put him on the same lyceum circuit with Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Horace Greeley.

In his biography of Hay in 1933, Tyler Dennett says, "'Jim Bludso,' in the facile words of John Hay, is the voice of Abraham Lincoln, the kind of story he would have liked to tell, the kind of a moral he would have liked to point." (DP)

Well, no, I can't tell where he lives,
Because he don't live, you see.
Leastways, he's got out of habit
Of living like you and me.
Oh, where have you been these last three
years,
That you have not heard tell
How Jimmie Bludso lost his life
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He weren't no saint, them engineers
Are pretty much all alike:
One wife in Natchez under the Hill,
Another one here in Pike.
A careless man in his talk was Jim,
An awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked and he never lied,
I reckon he didn't know how.

And this was all the religion he had:
To treat his engine well,
"Don't ever be passed on the river
And mind the pilot's bell."
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,
A hundred times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle against the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats have their day on the Mississippi
And her day come at last.
The Movastar was the better boat,
But the Belle, she wouldn't be passed.
And so she came tearing along that night,
The oldest craft on the line,
With a negro squat on her safety valve
And her furnace crammed rosin and pine.

And the fire broke out as she cleared the bar
And burned a hole in the night.
Quick as a flash, she turned and made
For the willow bank on the right.
There was running and cussing, but Jim
yelled out
Above the awful roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle against the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burning
boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had faith in his cussedness,
For they knowed he'd keep his word.
And, sure as you're born, they all got off
Before the smokestacks fell,
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He weren't no saint, but on Judgement
I'd run my chance with Jim
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
Who wouldn't shake hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead sure thing,
And he went for it, there and then,
And Christ ain't gonna be too hard
On a man who died for men.

NEIGHBORS

(Copyright: Charley Sandage; Beebe, Arkansas)
Side 2, Band 1.

Cathy: autoharp
Dave: guitar

Charles Sandage of Beebe, Arkansas, wrote "Neighbors" with some of the people of Mountain View in mind, but Dave and I can add plenty of other people and places to Charley's list.

I learned "Neighbors" from the Grandpa Jones family who have sung it several times on the Grand Ole Opry. They in turn learned it from the Tom Simmons family of Mountain View. (CBP)

*Choose your friends for their power,
Trade your love for their gold;
It seems like a sign of the times.
But some folks remember
What neighbors are for,
And some of them are neighbors of mine.*

*I have lived among some good and
gentle people;
I have walked in a strong, growing land.
I have sung songs I know
I will hear once again
Being sung by some heavenly band.*

*Building cities of steel,
Building highways of stone,
We've forgotten what this good earth is for.
But somewhere there's land
Still held in God's hand,
And some of it lies near my door.*

*I hear talk every day
Of a world going wrong,
I hear talk of the times left behind.
But a long summer's night
Full of fiddles and song
Is a sound that I hold in my mind.*

JOHN AARON'S FAREWELL TO CUYAHOGA

(Copyright: Ken Bloom)
Side 2, Band 2.

Cathy: hammered dulcimer
Dave: guitar
Ed: hammered dulcimer

Somewhere in between songs by the Louvin brothers and Conway Twitty, the amazing Ken Bloom, lately of City Island, New York, taught us this tune at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas. The title is a fully obscured reference to President James A. Garfield. Ken

says he wrote the tune as a hopeful lament, originally on concert zither, but he now plays the tune on the Ukrainian bandura. Performing this tune during the past few years, Ken says he usually dedicates it to the memory of friends Steve Goodman, Duck Donald and Stan Rogers. (DP)

MIKE FINK

(Copyright: Bob Dyer, Songwright Pub. Inc.)
Side 2, Band 3.

Dave: guitar
Cathy: banjo
Ed: guitar

The legend of this hell-raising frontier brag-gart is an American classic and familiar to anyone interested in the folklore of the Mississippi River system. Stories about Mike Fink first appeared in print in 1828, only five years after his death, and remained popular until the Civil War. Interest in the legend was revived in the 1920's and 30's, and hopefully Bob Dyer will renew again the interest with his song.

Bob says the impetus for the song came while preparing a presentation on song and creative writing for a group of 4th graders near St. Louis in 1982. In their Missouri history text, Bob ran across a brief version of the Mike Fink legend and an inspiring picture of Mike riding a tornado. Bob later began to wonder whether Mike Fink was the best role model for grade school children.

Bob, who has recorded the song on his own record, *River of the Big Canoes*, first became acquainted with the legend through the works of his poet-mentor, John Neihardt, "The Song of Three Friends," in his *Cycle of the West*. Two books, Walter Blair's *Mike Fink: King of the Mississippi Keelboatmen* (New York, 1933) and Franklin J. Meine's *Half Horse Half Alligator: The Growth of the Mike Fink Legend* (Chicago, 1956) are especially informative. (DP)

*Well, my daddy was a bear in the Allegheny
Mountains
And my mother was a 'gator in the Ohio.
I was born full-growed at the forks of the
river
And I cut my teeth on a catfish bone.*

*Oh, my name is Mike Fink, I'm a keelboat
poler,
I'm a Salt River roarer and I eat live
coals.
I'm a half-alligator and I ride tornaders,
And I can out-feather, out-jump, out-hop,
out-skip,
Throw down and lick any man on the river.*

Well, I poled the Ohio and I poled the
Mississippi
And I poled the Missouri when she's
choked with snags.
I poled on the wilds and the salts of the
Kentucky
And I never met a man that I couldn't
out-brag.

Well, Betsy is my shootin' iron, she
shouts like the thunder
And she flashes like the lightning and
she kicks like a mule.
I can clip an Indian scalp, knock it
cleaner than a whistle;
I can knock a tin cup off the head of
a fool.

Well, Carpenter's a name that I guess
you've heard tell of;
I taught that critter everything that
he knowed.
But he done me dirt on the Yellowstone
River
And I crossed his eyes with a musket ball.

Well, some say I died on the Yellowstone
River
Or was shot by a man by the name of Talbot.
But if you want to know the truth about
what really happened,
You're gonna have to come knocking on the
devil's door.

SHAMUS O'BRIEN/PIEDMONT/WIDEMAN'S QUICKSTEP
(Traditional)
Side 2, Band 4.

Cathy: hammered dulcimer
Skip: fiddle
Dave: guitar

Art Galbraith of Springfield, Missouri, not only possesses a unique repertoire of fiddle tunes, but his playing style is stately and light, in contrast to the usually driving and strong rhythms of most Missouri fiddlers we've heard over the years. I recommend listening to Art and guitarist Gordon McCann on Rounder 0133 and 0157, not only because they are highly enjoyable, but because I have a tendency to "mishear" tunes slightly and so end up modifying the melodies a bit.

The waltz "Shamus O'Brien" was published in 1867 by Will S. Hays, as an answer to Hays' earlier song, "Nora O'Neal," and the words can be found in Randolph's *Ozark Folksongs*. "Piedmont" comes from the repertoire of Art's uncle

Tobe Galbraith, who was one of the finest fiddlers to emerge from the Galbraith family. "Wideman's Quickstep" comes also from Art's uncle and a bit of Art's own improvising. (CBP)

SONG OF THE COWBOYS
(Copyright: Jimmy Driftwood; Warden Music Co.)
Side 2, Band 5.

Dave: guitar
Cathy: banjo
Ed: vocal

When I was in first grade, one of my favorite records was "The Battle of New Orleans" sung by Johnny Horton. Since 1973, it has been a pleasure to know and work with the composer of that song and of this one, Jimmy Driftwood, and his wife, Clea, from Timbo, Arkansas. Jimmy is an extraordinary raconteur and a prolific songwriter. This song comes from his first RCA album in 1959, *The Wilderness Road*. (CBP)

A cowboy's life is a very hard life,
Fighting the wind and the cold,
But I wouldn't trade my cowpunching days
For all of old Midas' gold.
There's horses to break and robbers to fight
And blizzards that'll make you turn pale,
But there's plenty of fun for the son of a
gun
Who can sing and be gay on the trail.

Ki-yi, ki-yippee-i-yippee-i-o,
Ki-yi, ki-yippee-i-yippee-i-o.

We round up the dogies and drift them along,
Corral 'em all over the plains.
We rope 'em and brand 'em and doctor their
bulls
And turn them out loose on the range.
At night, when the dogies are dreaming about
Cowherding just over the way,
The nightriders sit in their saddles and sing
From dark till the dawn of the day.

When St. Peter calls us to come to his range
And punch the wild cattle up there,
I hope all the boys who have rode the long
range
Will come when he gives them the dare.
I want a good horse who can run a fast race,
And a crew that don't care where we go.
We'll ride away off to some desolate place
And sing ki-yippee-i-o.

WAIT TILL THE CLOUDS ROLL BY
(Public domain; add'l verse copyright: Bob Coltman)
Side 2, Band 6.

Cathy: banjo
Dave: guitar
Ed: hammered dulcimer

This song comes from the repertoire of Uncle Dave Macon (Historical HLP 8006), and we learned it from Bob and Melissa Atchison in Mountain View, Arkansas. The song was published in 1884 with words by J. T. Wood, music by H. J. Fulmer, and an arrangement for the banjo. Although the song originally had three verses, Uncle Dave recorded only two in 1939, with his second verse a combination of the original second and third. Knowing only Uncle Dave's version until recently, we asked Bob Coltman to write us a third verse. Drawing from his expertise and his affection for old-time music, Bob offered us the gem we sing here. (DP)

Jenny, my own true loved one,
I'm going far away,
Out on the bound'ring(*) billows,
Out on the deep blue sea.

How I will miss you, my darling,
There where the storm's raging high.
Cheer up and don't be lonely;
Wait till the clouds roll by.

Wait till the clouds roll by, Jenny;
Wait till the clouds roll by.
Jenny, my own true loved one,
Wait till the clouds roll by.

And, Jenny, when far from thee, love,
I'm on the ocean deep,
Each thought of thee forever,
Loving, sweet vigil keep.

Then I will come to you, my darling.
Take courage, dear, never cry.
Cheer up and don't be lonely;
Wait till the clouds roll by.

Jenny, a star up above you
Shines in your lone window;
Sparkles to say I love you,
Afar where the billows blow.

My arms enfold you, my darling;
Never you pine or cry.
Cheer up and don't be lonely;
Wait till the clouds roll by.

* The word (?) here comes from Uncle Dave; the original printed text says "rolling."

PLEASE NOTE: We have chosen to print the texts of the songs as the artists wrote them out for us, not necessarily as they were sung during the recording session.