



PROGRESSIVE
RAGTIME BLUEGRASS 2

and other instrumentals
played by

ROGER SPRUNG

and his
Bluegrass All-Stars

featuring

5-STRING BANJO-ROGER SPRUNG

lead guitar - Jon Sholle

rhythm guitar - Hank Miller

back-up guitar - Larry Dunn

mandolin - Jody Stecher

fiddle - Gene Lowinger

bass - Frank Benedetto II

drums & washboard - Bob Thompson

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FA 2371

**PROGRESSIVE
RAGTIME BLUEGRASS 2**
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Dill Pickle Rag	Chinatown	Silver Rainbow
Shoot The Turkey Buzzard	Puff The Magic Dragon	Arkansas Traveler
Misirlou	Tiger Rag	How High The Moon
	Sweet Georgia Brown	Georgia Camp Meeting
	Gie Gordons	That's A-Plenty

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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PROGRESSIVE RAGTIME
BLUEGRASS #2

Dedicated to Paul Robeson by Roger Sprung

Shot for the Folkways program was learned from Walter
Burt Ray in Western Ga. North Carolina on the
of Roger's annual trips to the South. It is a
land of the Wild Geese which appears in



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believed this effect is ascribed to. We get
the feeling of an approaching parade. Roger Sprung
and his Michael Herzog's Folk Jazz Band in
which he spent many a happy dancing hour.

However, with the effect of steel strings, tenors
and steel finger picks and electric amplification
the performing sound has been pushed away
and new things have emerged.

PROGRESSIVE RAGTIME

BLUEGRASS #2

Dedicated to Paul Cadwell by Roger Sprung

Notes - by Lionel Kilberg

SIDE I

- Band 1. Dill Pickle Rag
- Band 2. Shoot The Turkey Buzzard
- Band 3. Misirlou
- Band 4. Chinatown
- Band 5. Puff The Magic Dragon
- Band 6. Tiger Rag

SIDE II

- Band 1. Sweet Georgia Brown
- Band 2. Gie Gordons
- Band 3. Silver Rainbow
- Band 4. Arkansas Traveler
- Band 5. How High The Moon
- Band 6. Georgia Camp Meeting
- Band 7. That's A-Plenty

The new sounds on this album are the product of the instrumental facility, ingenuity and imagination of Roger Sprung. The titles of some of these pieces are known far and wide, and others are the result of research. The arrangements are an entity in themselves and a product of the virtuosity of a group of polished musicians. They are reminiscent of early and exciting Jazz Records; but don't be misled, this is not all Jazz. It is something new, different and exciting.

The banjo style that is used by Roger is a combination of the known and much used styles as well as a style which, for want of a better description, I call classical. In this style, phrases are more fully melodic and less confined to arpeggio patterns. In addition they are heightened through a new dimension of syncopation.

For this style Roger gives credit to Paul Cadwell whose instrumental style is radically different from that which we are prone to expect.

The 5 string banjo and the mandolin did not make the transition from folk music to jazz in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The reason was their subdued tone and volume qualities. However, with the advent of steel strings, resonators, steel finger picks and electronic equipment the performing boundaries have been pushed away and new things have emerged.

The First Piece on the album is the Dill Pickle Rag, which was learned from Paul, who tells us that in 1907 or 1908 when it was written it swept the country as a Rag. The Rag is a piece of music that is highly syncopated. The melodic line and banjo approach to this was learned by Roger from Paul but in this recording he combines the Bluegrass and Rag styles.

Shoot the Turkey Buzzard was learned from fiddler Byard Ray in Walnut Gap, North Carolina on one of Roger's annual treks to the South. It is reminiscent of the Wild Goose Chase which appears in Progressive Bluegrass #1. The Haunting frailing style makes you want to play it over several times before moving on.

Misirlou originally a Greek melody used in the folk dancing world, was recorded many years ago as a popular rumba. Roger approaching it with taste, does it to the accompaniment of drums, bass viol and slap guitar.

Chinatown certainly needs no introduction, having been familiar to at least 3 generations.

Puff the Magic Dragon will be familiar to most as a popular song that stayed with us for several months only recently. Here in an all instrumental version Roger brings out new possibilities for it's treatment.

The Tiger Rag has been described to us by Al Bluhm, a one time member of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, as being the Pep Pill inserted at functions that needed a boost because they were dragging. Roger learned it while working with Bob Thompson's Dixieland Footwarmers at Jimmy Ryan's. Bob plays the washboard on this number and is the percussionist throughout.

Roger has pointed out that the standard dixie land group usually consists of Trumpet which he has replaced with his banjo: Trombone replaced by two guitars: Clarinet, replaced by Mandolin and fiddle: and Bass and Drums which remain. There is also an additional Guitarist whose sole purpose is to tie the group together with straight chord rhythms.

Sweet Georgia Brown which has an unusually outstanding Mandolin solo by Jody Stecher and equally interesting guitar solo by Jon Sholle a 15 year old wonder, is another that demands replaying.

Gie Gordons another folk dance tune is Scottish in origin and since it is a walking dance it didn't require too much to make a march of it. To heighten this effect it is crescendoed in. We get the feeling of an approaching parade. Roger learned this at Michael Herman's Folk Dance House in which he spent many a happy dancing hour.

Al Bluhm tells us that the first time he heard Silver Rainbow was in 1912 at the Crystal Palace on 14th street and 4th avenue. The player Piano, which was a popular device due to there having been no juke boxes at the time, was playing it. The first part of this piece is rarely heard, but on this album it's all there. The solo and ensemble work on this piece made Al comment that they were really ragging it.

On every record album you have you will find one cut that you can't help going back to. When you pull out the album to play for yourself or someone else, you tend to play it. That's the way I feel about the Arkansas Traveler. Hank Miller and John Sholle have the swingiest double Guitar solo and Roger uses three different people's styles as well as his own.

The first time around it's Hobart Smith's melody. Second Paul Cadwell's style. Third is Vess Ossman's who died in the 20's and lastly and lastingly bound together by Roger's own.

In How High the Moon a standard of many years duration, Gene Lowinger, who had been fiddling through the rest of the album, borrowed the bass from Frank Benedetto and with Bob Thompson on Washboard added still another different sound to this album.

Georgia Camp Meeting was another piece acquired from Paul Cadwell. "It was a Cake walk," says Al

Bluhm, " composed by Kerry Mills in the 1900's. It was a big hit throughout the country. The Cakewalk was a dancing contest popular amongst the Negro Population of the day and the couple that won got the cake. "Thus the origin of "You take the cake."

This is believed to have been the second Cake walk written, the first Smoky Mokes written by Abe Holzman in 1898 was recorded by Roger in Progressive Bluegrass #1.

Thats-A-Plenty a traditional Dixieland tune, was part of Roger's Jazz repertoire for many years and when he got together with Fred Ross, of the vaudeville team Ross and Ross, he realized that the 5-string banjo could do much with it.

Roger in recording this album almost drove the engineers to drink by insisting that the musicians stay close together while recording rather than spread about on different microphones and the spirit of cooperation is obvious in the way they spark each other.

Writing notes for an album of this calibre is like stealing money because after one listening they practically write themselves. If you haven't been reading this while listening, it's time you put down the notes and concentrated on enjoying yourself. Thanks for reading me.

Lionel Kilberg

I DEDICATE THIS ALBUM TO MY FRIEND
PAUL CADWELL WHO HAS INSPIRED ME
WITH MANY NEW IDEAS FOR THE BANJO.

ROGER HOWARD SPRUNG



Roger Sprung-
5 String Banjo



Hank Miller-
2nd Guitar



Jody Stecher-
Mandolin



Larry Dunn-
Backup Guitar



Bob Thompson-
Drums



Gene Lowinger-
Fiddle



Jon Sholle-
Lead Guitar

Frank Benedetto II-
Bass



COUNTRY MUSIC ON FOLKWAYS RECORDS

OLD TIME & BLUEGRASS

by John Cohen

This is to serve as an introduction to one segment of the Folkways catalog which represents something of the seeds and sources for a dynamic aspect of American folk music which has found a voice in the cities and colleges in recent years. For the most part, this is mountain music derived from the rural south.

There is now an excitement about this music throughout the colleges and cities, amongst young people who are finding a voice in this music, and who are making it their own voice.

There are a great range of approaches to this music, and a great many styles involved; yet inherent in this movement is a desire to remain close to the traditional ways of playing the music.

The movement, diverse as it is, has taken on a structure which has its heroes, artistic leaders, legendary characters, a sort of language of its own, and several senseless confusions and stereotypes applied to it.

Much of the clamor about this music has come from banjo pickers & guitar singers who have brought the music to everyone's attention by their very enthusiasm. It is their excitement about the music which has communicated first. But there is much more to be heard and understood.

These spirited musicians are often 'put down' for being merely 'ethnic imitators' by the very same people who recognize that traditional folk music is the only aesthetically complete folk music to be heard.

Although it is relatively new in its present situation, this music is part of one of the oldest American traditions. It has its roots in the music of the early settlers, and has received fresh vigor over the years from developments within American culture which have introduced new sounds and new instruments to this tradition, as well as new rhythms and harmonies to accompany the changing social functions the music has performed.

It is part of an active and progressive tradition, yet it has always maintained a terrific sense of respect and preservation for its own past. In this way elements from years ago are still considered as significant to the present day music by those who perform and live with this music.

Within old time string band music, bluegrass and just home performances, are found trances of the old ballad styles of singing, of bagpipe and fiddle sounds from the British Isles, as well as sounds of the sentimental songs from the 19th century, minstrel stage songs, early Negro blues, rhythms from jazz as well as those now found in rock-and-roll.

One significant and important aspect of the current city trend towards this music is that it has presented a way to enjoy and understand the popular music, without sentimentality and without losing the perspective of culture as a whole. It is only in the nature of this perspective that the urban interest differs from the country tradition. This can neither be praised nor lamented, nor can it be overlooked. It must be recognized, for it is the basis upon which an intelligent approach can develop to the many ideas which are being encountered in the current investigation of folk music.

The importance of academic scholarship can not be denied: neither can an excited emotional involvement. It is only when folk music becomes just a form of entertainment, in the more commercial sense of that word, that it is being abused.

That the investigation has become more like an involvement of love or art, is to the credit of the investigators. If city people have found that country music is meaningful to them, then this is a genuine enrichment of their lives.

The more one gets involved in this music, the more one realizes the character of an old tradition at work, and the astonishing directness and simplicity in the approach of the traditional artist. An understanding of the music opens up the possibilities for us all to get the most pleasure and reward from these old songs, and from the people who sing them.

In various college campuses and cities now, folk music societies and festivals are emerging which incorporate active research with song collecting, concert producing, and music playing. At one school, on the event of a New Lost City Rambler concert, the folk music society increased its membership by 100, a panel discussion was held with university faculty and visiting musicians participating, a student string-band was formed, and a local Bluegrass band of country kids was 'discovered' and incorporated into the general university folk song scene. In addition to this, a regular publication was started. At another place, serious discographical research is being done and a record of rare re-issues of early hill music was released. Concerts are being produced employing traditional artists; this is no longer a unique situation. The University of Chicago Folk Festival, the Berkeley Festival, the Friends of Old Time Music, and the Ash Grove in Los Angeles, are all pointing the way towards an intelligent enjoyment of traditional folk music.

Within the Folkways catalog is a group of recording which present the scope and nature of the various facets of this music. Folkways has been consistent in its presentation of this music as it is traditionally and authentically performed. FA2951 (Vol. 1) - Ballads: 27 traditional ballads performed by The Carter Family, Clarence Ashley, Buell Kazee, Carolina Tar Heels, Furry Lewis, Charlie Poole with the North Carolina Ramblers, G. B. Grayson, The Masked Marvel, "Chubby" Parker, many others.
2 12-inch 33-1/3 rpm longplay records

FA2952 (Vol. 2) Social Music: 29 selections performed by Bascom Lunsford, Blind Willie Johnson, Carter Family, Sacred Harp Singers, Bunt Stephens, A Hunt's Ramblers, The Pep-Steppers, Cincinnati Jug Band, others.
2 12-inch 33-1/3 rpm longplay records

FA2953 (Vol. 3) Songs: 28 selections incl. East Virginia, One Morning In May, Sugar Baby, Mountaineer's Courtship, 99 Year Blues, K.C. Moan, Fishing Blues, etc., performed by Uncle Dave Macon, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Clarence Ashley, Cannons Jug Stompers, Carter Family, John Hurt, "Dock" Boggs, Stoneman Family, many more.
2 12-inch 33-1/3 rpm longplay records

The Anthology of American Folk Music FA 2951, FA 2952, FA 2953
This collection is a most comprehensive one, and gives an incisive look into the folk music current from 1927 to 1932 as recorded by the commercial recording companies of that time. Good representation of rural music, with many important artists represented, ed. and annotated by Harry Smith.
Vol. 1 Ballads:
Some Child Ballads, and many other old songs in the ballad tradition, sung as current and popular songs in 1927, etc.
Vol. 2 Social Music:
Dance music and religious music. Both white and Negro traditions. Many instrumental pieces.
Vol. 3 Songs:
Excellent collection of country songs and many blues.
Important artists in this collection.

Clarence Ashley	Miss. John Hurt
Buell Kazee	Furry Lewis
Dick Justice	Jilson Scatters
Uncle Eck Dunford	Eck Robertson
Burnette & Rutherford	Uncle David Macon
Cover & Young	Blind Lemon Jefferson
Carolina Tar Heels	Dock Boggs

Grayson & Whitter
The Carter Family
Kelly Harrell
Frank Hutchison
Charlie Poole
Bascom Lunsford
Jim Jackson
Ernest Phipps
E.V. Stoneman
Blind Willie Johnson