

EVERHART ALIVE AT AVOCA with Bluegrass Playground

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 31081



M
1630.18
E94
E94
1985

DICK ZION, Stringbass

BOB EVERHART, Guitar-Harmonica

SCOTT GOSSON, Guitar

DAN McELROY, Banjo

MUSIC LP

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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EVERHART
ALIVE AT AVOCA
with Bluegrass Playground

SIDE ONE

1. The Children are Crying
2. Wabash Cannonball
3. Columbus Stockade Blues
4. Waiting For a Train
5. Walking The Floor Over You
6. Sioux City Sioux
7. Jambalaya

SIDE TWO

- 1a. Muddy Waters
- 1b. Going Down This Road Feeling Bad
2. T For Texas
4. Time After Time
5. Jack Darby
6. Amazing Grace

Executive Producer—Bob Everhart
Recorded and mixed at Avoca, Iowa,
Old-Time Country Music Festival, Sept. 1, 1984
Engineer—Phil Nusbaum
Mastered—Rainbow Studios, Omaha, Nebr.

All original material is written and composed by Bob Everhart and
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Cover photo taken at Avoca Festival

BOB EVERHART INTERNATIONAL FAN CLUB
c/o Mrs. Philip Everhart
106 Navajo
Council Bluffs, Iowa, 51501

MY SPECIAL GRATITUDE TO:
Phil Nusbaum, KUNI Radio and National Public Radio, and
The Iowa Arts Council, for making this recording possible.

Bob Everhart . . . alive, and well, in Avoca!

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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MUSIC LP

Bob Everhart

ALIVE at AVOCA

Normally, the insert for my Folkway's albums are devoted to the songs I have either written or recorded, and the words and stories behind those songs.

Since this album was recorded live at the 9th annual Old-Time Country Music Contest & Festival in Avoca, Iowa, and since most of the words have already been recorded on paper at some time or another, I'd like to devote this insert to the festival itself, and the fellows that performed with me, Bluegrass Playground.

In 1983, Bluegrass Playground won the National Bluegrass Band Championship, and ultimately had their own album of strictly bluegrass music recorded and released. Since that win, they have gone on to do a number of concerts and festivals with me, some good, and some not so good like the Indianapolis Shriners Country Western Festival during the Indianapolis-500. Our check bounced so high, I've never been able to recoup it, but the experience was a nice one, even if the money was terrible.

The members of Bluegrass Playground have come from other various musical backgrounds, and geographical locations, and are made up primarily of Danny McElroy on 5-string banjo (he's basically the leader of the group), and comes from east-Tennessee. Scott Gosson, who comes from Oregon, is one of the finest flat-top guitar pickers around, and always does a marvelous job picking, especially on Jimmie Rodgers tunes. On the upright bass is a superb musician, who also owns his own repair shop in Omaha, as well as a nightclub of sorts called the City Limits Saloon in north Omaha, one of the few hold-outs for acoustic and bluegrass music in the city. His name is Dick Zion, and hails from Montana. On the mandolin is a Bill Monroe addict, who turned to bluegrass music a little later in life than most to pick and enjoy it. Lyle Miller is from Nebraska, and most of the guys refer of him as the playboy of the group.

These fine musicians performed their last concert, with this line-up, at the Avoca Festival, during the actual recording of this album. So it is a special and significant treat to offer their talent as a fitting tribute to the growing trends in traditional acoustic bluegrass music. Each of these musicians will go on to other bands and create new musical trends.

It is also with some pride that I present the first four songs on the album as being performed by Bluegrass Playground, without me. They are an excellent bluegrass band, and blend magnificently with me when we perform old-time traditional country music together.

The weather was very strange at Avoca when we did this. Going into the festival it was very very hot. On Friday night it became very windy. On Saturday it rained, and on Sunday it turned very cold. Somewhere in all that weather extreme we managed to keep somewhat in tune, but for those occasional "mis-tunes" we apologize.

SIDE ONE "EVERHART ALIVE AT AVOCA"

The Children are Crying (Bluegrass Playground)
Wabash Cannonball (B. Everhart)
Columbus Stockade Blues (J. Davis)(B. Everhart)
Waiting For A Train (J. Rodgers)(B. Everhart)
Walking the Floor Over You (E. Tubb)(B. Everhart)
Sioux City Sioux (E. Britt)(B. Everhart) Guest fiddler, Shawn Pittman
Jambalaya (H. Williams)(B. Everhart)

SIDE TWO "EVERHART ALIVE AT AVOCA"

Muddy Waters (J. Babcock)(B. Everhart)
Going Down This Road Feeling Bad (W. Guthrie)(B. Everhart)
T For Texas (J. Rodgers)(B. Everhart)
Summertime (I. Gershwin)(B. Everhart)
Time After Time (B. Everhart)
Jack Darby (B. Everhart)
Amazing Grace (J. Newton)(B. Everhart)

INSTRUMENTATION:

Bob Everhart - 12-string guitar and harmonica
Danny McElroy - 5-string banjo
Scott Gosson - Martin flat-top guitar
Lyle Miller - mandolin
Dick Zion - upright bass
Shawn Pittman - fiddle

Now we'd like to devote the rest of this insert to this amazing festival that takes place every Labor Day Weekend in Avoca, Iowa, at the Pottawattamie County Fairgrounds.

It all started in 1976, when the Bicentennial Commission approached me to conduct and direct an old-time fiddlers contest. I agreed to do that, on the condition that it was expanded to include all the musical art styles of the settling pioneers. They agreed to this, and eventually with the help of a lot of willing volunteers, we put together a really fine old-time acoustic musical event, one not like any festival anywhere.

The attendance was phenomenal, the music was incredible, and the people were "real." There wasn't any hype, and still isn't. It's an event attended by people from around the world wishing to enjoy at their own pace, acoustic music in the traditional flavor. There are now a lot of acoustic music events, but none so devoted to traditional musical art forms.

As the years hummed by, and the sixth one was finally reached, the facility that I had been using to have the event (Westfair on the east side of Council Bluffs) decided it was time to expand their "profit" margin, and insisted that liquor be sold on the grounds. Since we had never done this in the previous six years, and since most of the people that came to the event came primarily because they don't need liquor to have a good time, and also because we had consistently advertised the event as being free of liquor and drugs, I objected strenuously to this new turn of events.

As it turned out, it was an ultimatum from the Westfair people. Either sell the beer or get out. And if I chose to attempt to move the event, they let it be known that they would duplicate everything I had done the previous six years.

I moved to the Pottawattamie County Fairgrounds in Avoca (some 35 miles distant) and set the wheels in motion to "move" a festival. It was exceedingly difficult. And the financial returns the first year of the move was hard to overcome. It took a lot of my own hard earned money singing songs to keep the festival going.

But, the choice of the new location was a right one. Avoca is a beautiful rural village nestled in the Nishnabotna Valley. The name in translation means "peaceful valley," or if you are from France, of which I was informed while in Paris performing a concert, "avoca" means legal representative, or lawyer.

So much for the semantics. Westfair immediately lost a lot of money. Yet, they attempted the same "imitation" again the next year, and lost manifold amounts of money. It was in that second year that I realized we would be able to survive. If it had been as bad as the first year, I doubt that we would still be doing this marvelous festival. As it is, we are now in our tenth year, and the future looks bright with the participation of such sponsors as Hohner, Levi-Strauss, KLM Airlines, Flatiron, Hyatt Regency, and many others. The prizes, including a round-trip air-fare to Europe and a concert tour there now exceeded far beyond \$10,000.00 in value.

Other interested parties like Dan Friedlander from the Chicago area who works in public relations took a liking to the event and started coaching me on better ways and means of presenting acoustic music on an international scale. We appointed Ambassadors to foreign lands to represent their respective countries with performing artists doing strictly acoustic, rural, or country music from their lands.

Other opportunites popped up, real estate developers from Carson City, Nevada, Charles and Steffie Branstetter became interested in a music that didn't knock your head off to listen to, and immediately began setting up the ways and means to conduct a similar event in California, using their own young Charles Branstetter as their arrow-head to success.

Veracruz, Mexico, which had an article in the Mexico City News (the only English newspaper in all the Spanish speaking countries), prompted interest from their carnival committee to conduct an acoustic music event in Mexico.

And many other imitators suddenly discovered that acoustic music was a money-maker if prompted properly. Some of course that tried to imitate what was already being done did not fare so well, but those that have creativity as well as a strong desire to promote have managed to present some very nice festivals in the mid-west. Where once there was not a person willing to step forward to promote a musical art form not in the commercial mainstream, there are now many willing to do just that.

Regional, national, and international television have been at the Old-Time Country Music Contest. Even the BBC came to video-tape three days of musical happenings. That program was finally aired in over 22 foreign countries. And, it was with a great deal of satisfaction and pride that I was asked to narrate the show. The BBC flew me to their Ealing Green studios near London, and for three days we worked on editing, narration, fill-ins, and final production. It turned out to be a beautiful representation of America's traditional music, values, morals, and good times.

Rather than continue a tirade on the wonderful aspects of the Old-Time Country Music Contest, Festival, and Pioneer Exposition of Arts & Crafts, lets let some of the real journalists talk to you about it.

In closing, the best gift I can give you other than my music, is a personal invitation to attend this wonderful festival. It's not just me that makes it work, hundreds and hundreds of willing volunteers work tremendously hard making the festival a nice place

for you to come. And if you have a good time, and want to come back again and again, and if you remember fleeting fragments of each year's event, much like a little wispy daydream of joyous sunshine and shared brotherhood on a cold winter's day, most likely it will be Avoca you are thinking of. Here then, is EVERHART, ALIVE AT AVOCA! Bob Everhart, 106 Navajo, Council Bluffs, Iowa, 51501. Write, we'll send you everything you need or want to know about a remarkable event. The only one like it in the world. And thanks for listening.

Bob Everhart

Mexico City THE NEWS

VISTAS

February 19, 1984

DEDE SUAREZ

Another member of the Veracruz Be-Back Club, country music artist Bob Everhart has made good his yearly declaration of "I'll be back"! He views our picturesque port as the ideal spot to spend two or three months each year in order to refresh his perspective and do some writing and composing.

Although much of Everhart's year is taken up with bookings and folk music festivals in Europe, he has time for recording dates in the states (Folkways Records) TV performances (The Louisiana Hayride) various radio shows, and scheduled U.S. concerts. Next month takes him to Torremolinos, Spain; then it's on to Holland, England, Germany and Denmark, winding up in Paris in May.

As president of the National Traditional Country Music Association, Bob's heart and talent, as well as his followers, are supremely involved in preserving the traditional style of country and folk music, shunning the use of amplifiers and other electronic gadgetry that deafens audiences after the first four bars. (Everhart, the perfect gentlemen and absolute professional made no criticism of other musi-

cians' styles during our interview. That last reference to audiences going deaf is simply this columnist's own viewpoint.)

The 9th Annual National Old-Time Country Music Contest & Pioneer Exposition will be held in Avoca, Iowa over Labor Day weekend, August 31-September 3. Although February is a bit early to think of Labor Day, Bob has extended a kind and generous invitation to all our readers: Anyone who presents this column from VISTAS at the Labor Day festival will be admitted at no charge. This annual celebration was created by Everhart at the urging of the Bicentennial Commission in 1975. Since its inception, the National Old-Time Country Music Contest and Pioneer Exposition has offered a valid alternative in music, arts, crafts and pioneer entertainment. The event has gained world-wide recognition: the *National Geographic* magazine picked it as one of the top ten festivals in the state of Iowa; National Public Radio rated it as the top one in that state and the United States Conference of Mayors put it in the top 22 in the whole country.

Our local folk musicians

have been invited by Bob Everhart to participate in this year's festival. He feels the string instruments, especially the quaint harp that is used in this region will be a colorful and most welcomed representation of Veracruz folk music.

I found Bob comfortably installed in a camper-trailer in Los Arcos Trailer Park that faces the coastline a few miles south of the port. A mutual friend, Henry Salazar was kind enough to arrange an interview with both the artist and his loyal travelling companion, "Snoopy," a 1½ year old fox terrier. Part of Everhart's yearly self-renewal in Veracruz is his work on a continuing series of children's travel books, published by Prairie Press. Snoopy is the central character of the current photo-story of this year's stay in our area.

Midway through the interview Bob graciously consented to an impromptu mini-concert for a group of over 60 Americans who were at the same trailer park on a Caravan Tour two-day stopover. Everything came together well; Bob's music on the guitar and harmonica plus his vocalizing style is the kind you listen to for hours. His ap-

preciative audience stomped and clapped to the beat and sang along.

Speaking of the Caravan, it is a far cry from the covered wagon caravans that followed the dusty trail of the Old West. The modern-day caravan seen cruising down the highway and pulling into our port these days, are made up of pretty slick rigs, some outfitted with TV, air conditioned and microwave ovens. Still present, however, is the adventuresome spirit of the early pioneers who travelled together.

As in the days of settling the Old West, the key person who keeps things moving is the Wagon Master. His job was and still is to guide, lead, trouble-shoot with the aid of his trusty side-kick. Today's side-kick, called the "Tail Gunner," is actually an expert mechanic who brings up the rear making sure the wagon-party stays together and in good shape. Rounding out the staff is a bilingual interpreter to help everyone on the tour enjoy local events along the way.