



DOM FLEMONS

TRAVELING WILDFIRE



DOM FLEMONS

TRAVELING WILDFIRE

“THE AMERICAN SONGSTER”

DOM FLEMONS

TRAVELING WILDFIRE

1
SLOW DANCE WITH YOU
2:59
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

2
DARK BEAUTY
3:22
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

3
IF YOU TRULY LOVE ME
4:33
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

4
TRAVELING WILDFIRE
6:09
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

5
IT'S COLD INSIDE
4:30
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

6
**WE ARE ALMOST DOWN
TO THE SHORE**
3:01
Jimmie Strothers arr. by
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

7
NOBODY WROTE IT DOWN
3:55
Dominique Flemons-Carl Gustafson-
Billy Branch-Natalie Litza/
8Bells Publishing LLC, ASCAP

8
SADDLE IT AROUND
3:40
Gary Davis/
Chandos Music Company, ASCAP

9
BIG MONEY BLUES
2:26
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

10
OLD DESERT ROAD
3:33
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

11
RABBIT FOOT RAG
2:42
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

12
TOUGH LUCK
2:11
arr. by Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP

13
SONG TO JCB
3:58
Eric Andersen/EMI U Catalog, Inc., ASCAP

14
GUESS I'M DOING FINE
(FEAT. SAM BUSH)
4:42
Robert Dylan/Universal Tunes, SESAC

15
SONGSTER REVIVAL
(FEAT. JAMES FEARNLEY)
2:49
Dominique Flemons/
American Songster Music, ASCAP -
Andrew William Hutt/See No Evil Music, ASCAP

THE MAKING OF TRAVELING WILDFIRE

When I started working on my new album *Traveling Wildfire*, I wanted to capture a different side of my music career, focusing on my own songwriting. I have to admit this album is quite a departure for me because I decided not to present a historical concept record like my previous Smithsonian Folkways album, *Dom Flemons Presents Black Cowboys* (2018). Instead, I spent a lot of time combing through my record collection and personal archives to gather inspiration for the 15 songs on the album. Ever since I started performing professionally in 2005, I've mainly focused on presenting the lesser-known songs and stories of tradition-bearers who are at the foundation of American roots music. I've done this while playing an array of musical styles and vintage instruments rooted in tradition. This time around, I wanted to shift gears and bring my original songs into focus by highlighting stories written with my own pen.

In the years leading up to the pandemic, I traveled over 500,000 miles while on tour with my wife Vania and our daughter Cheyanne Love—until it all came to a sudden stop in March 2020. In the month prior to the lockdown, I had just returned from the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada, celebrating the legacy of Black cowboys and the history of the Black westward migration. I quickly made another trip to New Orleans for a special recording session with Branford Marsalis for the soundtrack to the Netflix original movie *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Towards the end of



February, I played at the Grand Ole Opry and then a few days later a deadly tornado ripped through Nashville. Shortly afterwards, on the day we returned to our home near Washington, D.C., the president announced a quarantine lockdown that would change our lives overnight. In a moment's notice, I went from traveling around the world to being isolated at home for a long, extended period of time.

After spending close to a full year of not traveling and not performing at venues, I found myself listening to double the amount of music in my record collection. I also spent a lot of time focusing on recovering my physical and mental health along with moving my family to our new home in Chicago. In the process of building a new life during the pandemic, I also witnessed the political, social, and cultural movements that were bringing longstanding change to the American identity. So, I wanted to reflect on some of these moments by presenting them in an audio impressionistic painting that is based on my personal epiphanies, spiritual evolution, and real-life experiences during a precarious time. These 15 songs will also give the listener a glimpse into the personal side of my music repertoire that intersects with my love of country, western, blues, Americana, and folk music. I have carefully selected these songs because they individually symbolize the themes of true love, family legacy, survival, time travel, and the juxtaposition between light and dark while leaving room for more interpretations.



Traveling Wildfire begins with a romantic invitation that leads into a dark, reflective and meditative mode. It then weaves through the themes of hope and humor as it rises above the hard times with strength and lightheartedness.

The album starts with three original country love songs, “Slow Dance with You,” “Dark Beauty,” and “If You Truly Love Me.” I wrote and arranged these to be country waltzes, guided by the ethereal sound of the pedal steel. I have always been influenced by the variety of songwriting styles within the country music genre and the themes of love gained and love lost. I wrote these songs thinking about some of my favorite country writers like Charley Pride, Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Ernest Tubb, Jimmy C. Newman, and Hank Williams, to name a few. I wanted to present these songs at the beginning because they touch upon the subject of Black love and romance, which country music does not commonly feature, even though its subject remains vital to listeners.

I wrote the title track, “Traveling Wildfire,” right around my birthday on August 30, 2021, while my family and I sat in a hotel room in Nashville being bombarded by Hurricane Ida. As we waited out the storm and watched simultaneous reports of flooding in New Orleans and massive wildfires in California, I began to write about the fragile uncertainty of living through the pandemic and the looming dangers of



traveling down the road. With this cinematic audio experience describing the scene in front of me, I implore the listener to let the restless beat of the marching bass drum lead you into the depths of the quiet floating atmosphere of “Traveling Wildfire.”

“It’s Cold Inside” was written in 2014, after my professional and personal life unexpectedly unraveled in front of my eyes. In 2010, an injury I suffered on stage brought many years of both physical and mental exhaustion, including extreme body trauma that continues to follow me after years of hard, worldwide traveling. I wrote the song in a dark period of my life and set it aside until I decided to revisit it for this album. I found that the lyrics held new relevance for me. It became clear that many people around the world have been physically and emotionally strained by the pandemic and the surrounding political, social, and cultural changes that have followed in its wake. With “It’s Cold Inside,” I extend my hand to them in good faith.

While the album is focused on original material, I would be remiss not to mention the several powerful traditional and contemporary folk songs in this collection. As the shutdown continued from 2020 to 2021, I began to reassess my life as a musician. I started to look for music to add to my repertoire that might inspire people in the years following such a traumatic political, financial, and worldwide health crisis. I was

reminded of a traditional folk song which I had heard 20 years ago. While attending Northern Arizona University in the early 2000s, I found a copy of the Library of Congress's album, *Negro Religious Songs and Services* (1943). The album features the original field recording of "We Are Almost Down to the Shore," sung by African American banjo and guitar songster Jimmie Strother. The song's origins date to the late 1800s, appearing as "Fighting On! Hallelujah!" in the 1887 songbook *Jubilee and Plantation Songs: As Sung by the Hampton Students, Jubilee Singers, Fisk Students, and Other Concert Companies* and as "Fighting On" in the 1891 expanded version of Thomas P. Fenner's *Cabin and Plantation Songs as Sung by the Hampton Students*. These songbooks were published during a period of Virginia history when the Hampton Institute funded a traveling group of Black and Indigenous students to present the stories and music of "their people." While there are melodic elements connected to the songbooks, the lyrics to Strother's version of "We Are Almost Down to the Shore" are unrelated to these published versions of the song.

Jimmie Strother was born and raised in rural Culpeper, Virginia, before moving to Baltimore as a medicine-show performer. After losing his sight in a steel mill accident, he was no longer able to work and was forced to make his living by playing music on the streets in the roughest and poorest section of Baltimore's Black red-light district.

On April 2, 1935, Jimmie Strother shot and killed his second wife Blanche Greene in their Culpeper home. In his testimony, Strother strongly asserted that she had been physically and emotionally abusing him through cheating and physical violence. When he shot in her direction, he said he meant to scare her away but sadly killed her. He was charged with murder and then sent to the Virginia State Prison Farm in Goochland County. On June 14, 1936, John A. Lomax and Harold Spivacke recorded him on location at the prison, singing and playing “We Are Almost Down to the Shore” on the five-string banjo along with a dozen other numbers. With the powerful lyrics sending messages of hope and survival, I could not help but be inspired to arrange “We Are Almost Down to the Shore” showcasing its country gospel roots. This song is a definitive testament to the resilience of people who have been oppressed, marginalized, and displaced from their homes.

There are two western-themed country blues songs on the record that came to me as a result of my album, *Dom Flemons Presents Black Cowboys*. “Nobody Wrote It Down” is about the generations of Black pioneers who helped build America. In 2018, songwriter and musician Carl Gustafson contacted me to co-write several songs and instrumentals for his conceptual album, *Moja: A Musical Saga*. We got together for two co-writing sessions along with blues harmonica legend Billy Branch and wrote “Nobody Wrote It



Down." Since all three of us have deep western roots in our family ancestry, we wanted to pay tribute to the unknown heroes of the Old West. While Billy sings the lead on the version of "Nobody Wrote It Down" featured on *Moja: A Musical Saga*, I loved the song so much that I decided to record my own version, with the blessing of my two co-writers.

The second western song is "Saddle It Around," which comes from the repertoire of the legendary gospel songster Reverend Gary Davis. I first heard "Saddle It Around" when a friend contacted me to discuss on his radio program the history of the Black West. Afterwards, he provided me with a curated playlist of western songs that included a recording of "Saddle It Around" from the album, *At Home and Church, 1962-1967*, released in 2010 by Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop. The song first struck me because I found the picking pattern to be very different from any other Rev. Davis song I had ever heard. The fragmentary story also intrigued me: the journey of a Black cowboy traveling down the road only to be arrested for no crime, and for no reason at all for that matter. Having worked with Stefan for several years, I contacted him and inquired about the origins of the song. He told me that Rev. Davis had learned it from a husband-and-wife guitar duo, Crete and Clara Fowles, when he was a young boy living in Laurens County, South Carolina. He was so excited to hear



that I was going to learn the song, he sent me another version from his personal archives that featured additional lyrics. From these two versions, I made a composite of the story and rearranged the verses to tell a single narrative. I also added the train section at the end paying homage to other Rev. Davis songs where he lets the guitar do the talkin'.

Moving into the second half of the album, the traveling spirit of the blues permeates the songs "Big Money Blues," "Old Desert Road," and "Rabbit Foot Rag." Also, I wanted to incorporate an aspect of the Hollywood cowboy into the overarching narrative to add a motion picture-like quality. I wrote these songs in the style of the blues ballads of the Mississippi Delta and Piedmont blues songsters, which use clever wordplay, striking imagery, and fingerpicking finesse. While listening to the repertoires of songsters like Papa Charlie Jackson, Crying Sam Collins, Mississippi John Hurt, Big Bill Broonzy, Blind Willie McTell, and Thomas Shaw, I became heavily influenced by the blues music of the 1920s, which was not codified by a standard 12-bar structure. While working with Music Maker in North Carolina, I met several contemporary Piedmont blues masters in the region, including John Dee Holeman, Boo Hanks, Algia Mae Hinton, Fris Halloway, Captain Luke Meyer, Macavine Hayes, Haskell "Whistlin' Britches" Thompson, and Precious Bryant who taught me parts of their repertoires. Many of these players traveled on the medicine show circuit in the segregated South; hearing their stories inspired me to create these two

twisted tales of the traveling blues. And in true medicine-show spirit, “Rabbit Foot Rag” is a guitar showpiece made for old-time buck dancing accompanied by the bass notes of the stone mason jug. Though born from hard times in the modern era, these songs show strength with humor and dignity just as they did 100 years ago.

Reaching into the sound of the banjo’s ancestral roots on the song “Tough Luck,” I play a custom five-string gourd banjo made by luthier Bob Thornburg. I was introduced to his banjo work through my dear friend and mentor Mike Seeger, who featured his own custom gourd banjo on the *Southern Banjo Styles* album. The headstock for my banjo is a composite design inspired by banjos of the mid-19th century. On the back of the banjo’s calabash body, Bob designed a family tree featuring me, my wife Vania, and our daughter Cheyanne Love as depictions of Sankofa birds. Sankofa is an Ashanti proverb that means “go back and fetch it,” demonstrating the power of reinvigorating the future by bringing the lessons of the past into the forefront. The birds are all sitting on branches alongside three leaves, which is a symbol of Haitian culture harkening back to the banjo’s Afro-Caribbean roots. The throaty tone of the nylon gut strings on the skin head emphasizes the literal rebirth of the banjo as it may have sounded centuries ago when it was a homemade instrument in the Black communities of the South.

My introduction to the song "Tough Luck" comes from a recording made by banjo songster Clarence "Tom" Ashley on the album, *The Original Folkways Recordings of Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley, 1960-1962* (1994). The liner notes to the album mention that it may be of African American origin, though there are no definitive written sources for the song. My inspiration for learning it came from a conversation I had with my mentor and Black old-time fiddler Joe Thompson, whose uncles (born in the 1880s) had performed it when he was growing up in Alamance County, North Carolina. I have found that it has a clear proto-blues melody, which I emphasize in my current arrangement. I have also written two new verses to the song and added a bridge section to fill out the melody. While showcasing the power of the gourd banjo, I have added the sound of the marching bass drum to give the song a Mississippi fife-and-drum feel. This is meant to showcase the evolution of Black music from its origins within the blues and the string-band tradition while showcasing the rhythmic undercurrents of the song's Afro-Caribbean and Appalachian roots.

The next two songs come from two of contemporary folk music's most celebrated singer-songwriters: Eric Andersen and Bob Dylan. Both artists spent an early portion of their recording careers moonlighting at Folkways Records and publishing many of their songs for *Broadside* magazine in 1963 and 1964. This small-time topical song

magazine proved to be an essential springboard for Andersen, as well as Dylan who recorded under the strange pseudonym, Blind Boy Grunt, sidestepping his contract with major label Columbia Records.

Andersen caught my attention as soon as I began listening to the music of the 1960s Folk Revival. His voice, musicianship, and immaculate writing style proved to be a powerful combination and soon I began to find his older albums in my local record store. "Song to JCB" comes from Eric's first Vanguard record, *Today Is a Highway*, which was released in 1965. It tells of JC Burris, a Black musician from Kings Mountain, North Carolina, who was "born in a Georgia shack" near Greensboro, Georgia. JC was the nephew of the harmonica player Sonny Terry, and played a variety of instruments, including the harmonica, rhythm bones, and dancing wooden jig dolls, which he made by hand and sold at his shows. Two highlights of his show included JC playing the harmonica and rhythm bones simultaneously and doing the "hand jive," which is a combination of rhythmic slaps and taps across the legs, chest, and body creating a polyphonic beat. One last feature of his show was when he would tell audiences the story of "Mr. Jack," his main dancing jig doll who would "dance" on a wooden board accompanied by JC scatting a ragtime melody. JC went on to make several records on the Folkways label, accompanying his uncle Sonny Terry as well as blues songsters

Brownie and Sticks McGhee. Later in life, he recorded for Arhoolie Records and remained a fixture on the San Francisco folk scene before passing away in 1988.

In 2015, I met Eric at a show and asked him about "Song to JCB," wanting to know more about the story behind it. He told me that in the early 1960s he met JC Burris in San Francisco, where the performer had hit hard times and needed a place to stay. JC stayed with Eric for a short while until the songster could get back on his feet. Eric spoke very highly about JC and said he was a major influence on his music before he moved to New York City. "Song to JCB" was originally performed as a slow ballad, but I wanted to evoke all of the rhythmic styles of JC Burris's music along with adding an up-tempo Piedmont blues shuffle to the composition.

I first saw Bob Dylan in concert in 1999 when he and Paul Simon passed through Phoenix on tour. In 2012, I met him at a show in Middletown, Ohio, when I was part of the opening act with the Carolina Chocolate Drops. Having had a rare moment to meet him in person brought my musical journey full circle because Dylan's music was the catalyst that made me want to learn guitar and harmonica. Now in fall 2021 as I began to prepare songs for the studio, I had my manager Jeff DeLia contact Dylan's team to see if I might record one of his songs. To my surprise, they responded by suggesting



“Guess I’m Doing Fine.” In January 1964, Dylan recorded this song for the Witmark & Sons publishing company, but to my knowledge never released it on an official album.

The song’s powerful lyrics about resilience in the face of insurmountable odds have resonated with me since I first heard it on CD 20 years ago. While the “Witmark Demos” are now available on volume nine of Dylan’s multi-volume, *The Bootleg Series*, I first heard the song on a low-budget bootleg CD I found in an underground record store in Phoenix, shortly after I went to my first concert in 1999. After cutting “Guess I’m Doing Fine,” I realized that it would be cool to add a fiddle part to pull out the strains of bluegrass that I found in the song’s structure. I am so fortunate and grateful that my friend Sam Bush was available to add his fiddle to this lively track and bring some of that old-timey flavor to it.

The album’s final track, “Songster Revival,” is a tune I arranged to mimic the sound of a field holler using a fragmented melody on the banjo. When I made my way into the studio, I asked producer Ted Hutt if he had any ideas of how to complete the melody for the recording. I have been a fan of James Fearnley’s work with the Pogues for many years and when Ted suggested that he might be available to be a part of “Songster Revival,” I jumped at the opportunity. Adding his piano accordion to the

mix, the tune became the foundation of the album's final statement. Having Fearnley, Ted Hutt, and Marc Orrell all jamming on this melody with me was a dream come true. This celebratory tune is dedicated to all my friends and fans around the world who I have not seen in many years. Good cheers to you all!

A major focal point of the album is the use of distinctive instruments in the studio. Altogether I am playing a total of 15 instruments on this record, including the Fraulini Angelina Guitar, Deering Sierra Plectrum Banjo, five-string "Sankofa" Gourd Banjo, marching bass drum, snare drum, tambourine, harmonica, hambone, rhythm bones, quills, stone mason jug, electric bass, and Fender Telecaster electric guitar. One rare instrument from my collection prominently featured on the album is "Big Head Joe." This one-of-a-kind oversized six-string guitar-banjo was made by an African American luthier named Robert H. McGinnis, circa 1919. McGinnis was a professional luthier in Harlem who made the instrument to be part of the Clef Club Orchestra led by pioneer ragtime composer James Reese Europe. Lastly, I feature a brand new instrument in my collection: the West German-made Hofner 1967 459 TZ "violin" electric guitar with fuzz tone and a "whammy" bar. Although not a rare instrument, the Hofner brand is better known by its bass guitar model as played by Paul McCartney of the Beatles. Its powerful twin pickups gave me the grit on the album that I always associate with the



DOM PLAYING "BIG HEAD JOE." Photo by Shervin Lainez

1960s, especially the music of the West Coast, whether it be rock 'n' roll, surf music, or country rock.

The combination of my personal collection of instruments with the studio musicians and Lashon Halley's background vocals created an epic sonic landscape. The Mullen Pedal Steel played by Matt Pynn adds a myriad of atmospheric sounds, while David Hidalgo provides extra fireworks with his drums. In addition, Marc Orrell skillfully plays the World Famous Bilhorn Brothers "Style O" Folding Pump Organ, a relic of the WWI era, as well as bouzouki and tubular bells. All musicians on this record, along with the expertise of engineer Ryan Mall and the dynamic vision of producer Ted Hutt, who plays rhythm guitar, and electric bass on several tracks, have brought these 15 songs to life.

The making of *Traveling Wildfire* began with me driving on historic Route 66 from my home in Chicago to Los Angeles for the recording session at Kingsize Soundlabs. As my family and I drove, we witnessed a massive wildfire traveling alongside the highway as we made our way towards New Mexico. Its orange and gray flames were reaching high into the sky, clouding the air, as its smoke consumed the buildings alongside the desert road. That moment reinforced the universal nature of *Traveling Wildfire* as not only a statement of my personal travel experiences but also a metaphor for rebirth in

the wake of destruction. It reminded me that the album is in its own way a statement about emerging from the depths of uncertainty to find a new relevance during this unprecedented moment in modern history. At the same time, the image of the traveling wildfire reminded me of how music and stories can travel from generation to generation bringing important lessons from the past into the present and the future. I carried this notion with me when I arrived in Los Angeles, where I spent a few days with Ted reviewing the songs for the album before hitting the studio for a three-week-long recording session. Although I have kept these original and traditional songs private for many years, I'm finally ready to put them in the spotlight.

Visually, the album is a literal pastiche of art. The tintype photography of Timothy Duffy masterfully captures several iconic old-timey images of myself and my family on the road documenting our story in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. The photographs by Rory Doyle were shot at the 2020 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada at sunset on the horizon of the Ruby Mountains. Shervin Lainez's images were taken in the Spring of 2022 at Prospect Park in Brooklyn, NY. Also, there are photos taken by filmmaker Jonathan McHugh and my manager Jeff DeLia who captured a few intimate moments in the studio. Sylvia Marina Martinez designed the stunning series of collages accentuating my Southwestern Black and

Mexican roots. Each layer of artwork personifies the spirit and the sound of *Traveling Wildfire* and I'm proud to release it on Smithsonian Folkways. I hope the mystical charm throughout the album will give listeners a fresh new perspective on my musical journey as "The American Songster."



Photo by Jonathan McHugh

TRACK NOTES

1

SLOW DANCE WITH YOU

*Dom Flemons, vocal, Fraulini
Angelina guitar, harmonica,
marching bass drum; Matt Pynn,
Mullen pedal steel; David Hidalgo,
drums; Ted Hutt, electric bass*



VANIA KINARD

Photo by Timothy Duffy



Photo by Timothy Duffy

VANIA KINARD

2

DARK BEAUTY

Dom Flemons, vocal, Hofner electric guitar, electric bass, tambourine; Matt Pynn, Mullen pedal steel; David Hidalgo, drums; Lashon Halley, background vocals

3

IF YOU TRULY LOVE ME

Dom Flemons, vocal, Fraulini Angelina guitar, harmonica, electric bass, marching bass drum; Matt Pynn, Mullen pedal steel; Lashon Halley, background vocals



Photo by Rory Doyle



Photo by Rory Doyle

4

TRAVELING WILDFIRE

*Dom Flemons, vocal, Hofner
electric guitar, marching bass
drum; Marc Orrell, World
Famous Bilhorn Brothers "Style
O" Folding pump organ; Matt
Pynn, Mullen pedal steel*

5

IT'S COLD INSIDE

Dom Flemons, vocal, Fraulini Angelina guitar, Hofner electric guitar, snare drum, marching bass drum, rhythm bones, bass guitar; Marc Orrell, World Famous Bilhorn Brothers "Style O" folding pump organ, tubular bells; Lashon Halley, background vocals

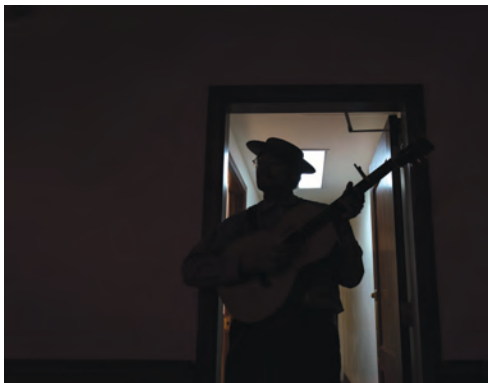


Photo by Rory Doyle



Photo courtesy of the Library of Virginia

JIMMIE STROTHER

6

WE ARE ALMOST DOWN TO THE SHORE

Dom Flemons, lead and background vocals, Fraulini Angelina guitar, marching bass drum Marc Orrell, World Famous Bilhorn Brothers "Style O" folding pump organ; Lashon Halley, harmony and background vocals

7

NOBODY WROTE IT DOWN

Dom Flemons, vocal, Hofner electric guitar, Fender Telecaster electric guitar, snare drum, marching bass drum, electric bass, moans; Marc Orrell, World Famous Bilhorn Brothers "Style O" folding pump organ; Matt Pynn, Mullen pedal steel



Photo by Rory Doyle



Photo by Stefan Grossman

REV. GARY DAVIS

8

SADDLE IT AROUND

*Dom Flemons, vocal, Fraulini
Angelina guitar, Big Head Joe the
Giant six-string banjo, rhythm
bones, marching bass drum*

9

BIG MONEY BLUES

*Dom Flemons, vocal, Fraulini
Angelina guitar*



Photo by Rory Doyle



Photo by Rory Doyle

10

OLD DESERT ROAD

*Dom Flemons, vocal, Fraulini
Angelina Guitar, Big Head Joe the
Giant six-string banjo,
marching bass drum*

11

RABBIT FOOT RAG

(INSTRUMENTAL)

Dom Flemons, Fraulini Angelina
guitar, stone mason jug



Photo by Rory Doyle



Photo by Timothy Duffy

12

TOUGH LUCK

*Dom Flemons, vocal, five-string
Sankofa gourd banjo, marching bass
drum; Ted Hutt, guitar*

13

SONG TO JCB

Dom Flemons, vocal, Fraulini Angelina guitar, harmonica, rhythm bones, "hambone"; David Hidalgo, drums; Lashon Halley, harmony vocals



VANIA KINARD AND CHEYANNE LOVE WITH JODY MAE AND JACKLINE

Jig dolls by JC Burris | Photo by Timothy Duffy



Photo by Jon Sievert

JC BURRIS WITH HIS JIG DOLL, MR. JACK



Photo by Diana Davies

ERIC ANDERSEN

14

GUESS I'M DOING FINE

*Dom Flemons, vocal, Fraulini
Angelina guitar, Big Head Joe the
Giant six-string banjo, marching
bass drum, rhythm bones, stone
mason jug; Sam Bush, fiddle*



BOB DYLAN

Photo by Diana Davies



DOM FLEMONS WITH COMBINED GUITAR-ACCORDION-PUMP ORGAN

Photo by Timothy Duffy

15

SONGSTER REVIVAL

(INSTRUMENTAL)

*Dom Flemons, four-string
Deering Sierra Plectrum banjo,
Big Head Joe the Giant six-string
banjo, marching bass drum,
rhythm bones, quills; James
Fearnley, piano accordion; Marc
Orrell, bouzouki; Ted Hutt, guitar*



CREDITS

Produced by Ted Hutt

Engineered by Ryan Mall

Recorded at Kingsize Soundlabs in Los Angeles;
Track 14 - Sam Bush was recorded by Rick Wheeler
at The Wheelhouse Studio, Leipers Fork, TN

Mixed by: Ted Hutt & Ryan Mall at Kingsize Soundlabs

Mastered by Dave Cooley

Album curated and compiled by Dom Flemons and Vania Kinard

Essay and liner notes by Dom Flemons and Vania Kinard

Collages created by Sylvia Marina Martinez,
SylviaMarinaMartinez.com

Photo used in cover collage and back of booklet collage by
Rory Doyle; photos in collages inside the digipak by Shervin Lainez.

Management: Jeff DeLia of 72 Music Management

Executive producers: Daniel E. Sheehy, John Smith

Production manager: Mary Monseur

Production assistant: Kate Harrington

Editorial assistance by James Deutsch

Art direction, design, and layout by Caroline Gut

SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS IS:

Paloma Alcalá, sales associate; Cecille Chen, director of business affairs and royalties; Logan Clark, executive assistant; Toby Dodds, director of web and IT; Will Griffin, licensing manager; Kate Harrington, production assistant; Fred Knittel, marketing specialist; Seth Langer, licensing assistant; Helen Lindsay, customer service; Juan Carlos Meléndez-Torres, royalty analyst; Mary Monseur, production manager; Sahara Naini, inventory coordinator; Jeff Place, curator and senior archivist; Laura Shanahan, social media coordinator; Sayem Sharif, director of financial operations; Daniel E. Sheehy, interim curator and director; Ronnie Simpkins, audio specialist; John Smith, associate director; Jonathan Williger, marketing manager; Brian Zimmerman, sales and customer service specialist.

CONNECT WITH DOM FLEMONS:

Email: Theamericansongster@gmail.com

Website: Theamericansongster.com

Twitter: [@domflemons](https://twitter.com/domflemons)

Instagram: [@domflemons](https://www.instagram.com/domflemons)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DomFlemonsMusic>

LinkedIn: <http://linkedin.com/in/domflemons>

YouTube: https://youtube.com/c/DomFlemons_TheAmericanSongster

Management: Jeff DeLia of 72 Music Management

Booking Agent: Jon Bell of Madison House

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Special thank you to producer Ted Hutt, engineer Ryan Mall, Kingsize Soundlabs, and the studio musicians who created the cinematic audio.

It is a great honor to release my second album on Smithsonian Folkways on the five-year anniversary of my first release *Dom Flemons Presents Black Cowboys*.

I want to send a special recognition to my wife Vania Kinard who helped every step of the way and provided me with lots of inspiration for the songs on the album. Special thanks to Marina Martinez for working with us to create a beautiful visual design for the entire album package and the cover. This album was made possible by the incredible support of my manager Jeff DeLia and his entire team at 72 Music Management.

A special thanks to the Flemons and Kinard families, my booking agent Jon Bell of Madison House, Vanessa Sanchez, Gregg Kimball, Stephen Winick, Jennifer Cutting, Library of Congress, Dan Sheehy, Bob Dylan, Jeffrey Rosen, Eric Andersen, Timothy Duffy, Rory Doyle, Carl Gustafson, Billy Branch, Stefan Grossman, Folklore Productions, and Jonathan McHugh.

I'd like to dedicate this album to my friends and family members who I lost during the pandemic.

SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS

is the nonprofit record label of the Smithsonian Institution, the national museum of the United States. Our mission is to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In this way, we continue the legacy of Moses Asch, who founded Folkways Records in 1948. The Smithsonian acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings has continued the Folkways tradition by supporting the work of traditional artists and expressing a commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding among peoples through the production, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of sound.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Folkways, Arhoolie, A.R.C.E., Blue Ridge Institute, Bobby Susser Songs for Children, Collector, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Educational Activities, Fast Folk, Folk Legacy, Mickey Hart Collection, Monitor, M.O.R.E., Paredon, Right on Rhythm, UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music, and Western Jubilee Recording Company recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Mail Order

Washington, DC 20560-0520

Phone: (800) 410-9815 or
888-FOLKWAYS (orders only)

Fax: (800) 853-9511 (orders only)

To purchase online, or for further information about Smithsonian Folkways Recordings go to: **www.folkways.si.edu**. Please send comments and questions to **smithsonianfolkways@si.edu**.





"THE AMERICAN SONGSTER"

DOM FLEMONS

TRAVELING WILDFIRE

Dom Flemons has built a reputation on presenting 100 years of American roots music, but now, with *Traveling Wildfire*, his own songwriting prowess comes into the spotlight. Carefully selected from his personal repertoire, these original songs reveal his love of country, western, blues, Americana,

bluegrass and folk music as they tell of true love, family legacy, survival, time travel, and the juxtaposition between light and dark. *Traveling Wildfire* weaves through the themes of hope and humor as it rises above the hard times with strength and lightheartedness.

DOM FLEMONS TRAVELING WILDFIRE

1
SLOW DANCE WITH YOU
2:59

2
DARK BEAUTY
3:22

3
IF YOU TRULY LOVE ME
4:33

4
TRAVELING WILDFIRE
6:09

5
IT'S COLD INSIDE
4:30

6
WE ARE ALMOST DOWN
TO THE SHORE
3:01

7
NOBODY WROTE IT DOWN
3:55

8
SADDLE IT AROUND
3:40

9
BIG MONEY BLUES
2:26

10
OLD DESERT ROAD
3:33

11
RABBIT FOOT RAG
2:42

12
TOUGH LUCK
2:11

13
SONG TO JCB
3:58

14
GUESS I'M DOING FINE
(FEAT. SAM BUSH)
4:42

15
SONGSTER REVIVAL
(FEAT. JAMES FEARNLEY)
2:49



LC 9628

SFW CD 40237
WASHINGTON DC 20560-0520
FOLKWAYS.SI.EDU

Smithsonian

© 2023 SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS

PRODUCED BY TED HUTT

SFW CD 40237