

Bluegrass Clippings

Yellowstone Bluegrass Association

Country of Origin Labeling Proposed for Bluegrass Instrumentals

Do you know where your favorite bluegrass instrumental came from? Is it a Serbian march of the military sort? Is it an old East Indian zitar contest standard? Although the origins of many instrumentals played in this area today have been lost to the ravages of time and bad memories, one source which seems to produce an endless treasure of good, solid tunes to pick is the Emerald Isle, Ireland. You may know a number of these tunes, or you may, at least, know them by a different name.

"The Red Haired Boy" can often be heard on Friday night in a Billings jam session. I heard the same tune at a jam in an old French army barracks (now converted to low cost housing for immigrants) in Konstanz, Ger-

many. The pickers (mostly of Irish extraction) at that particular jam called it "The Little Beggar Man". The tune I recognized as "Did You Ever Go to Meeting, Uncle Joe?" the folks at this particular jam called "Miss McCloed's Reel". Finally, when someone called "The Devil's Dream" I thought I'd hop right in. Although not a different tune all together, it was definitely a challenge for me to recognize it. I played along with an arrangement I had learned from the late Gilbert Thrasher, a Butte Irishman, and almost brought the tune to a stop. It seems the participants weren't fond of someone (I later covertly learned) messing with the notes to such an old and respected tune.

I guess, one could say that play-

ing (for a fiddler, at least) Irish tunes in an American way is like someone speaking English with an accent. We Yanks might leave a little something out, add a double stop or two, or drive the rhythm harder, but usually the basic tune is the same.

Just remember, when playing Irish tunes with those true to Irish tradition, however, you're the one with the accent!

Membership Dues are now being accepted. You must be a paid member for 2006 to receive discounts at upcoming events.

Pete & Anne Sibley
May 20, 2006
8:00 pm
Cisel Hall, MSU-Billings

Yellowstone
Bluegrass Association
March/April 2006

Prairie Winds Cafe, Molt

- 3/04 Southbound
- 3/11 Highway 302
- 3/25 Elk River Ramblers
- 4/01 Highway 302
- 4/08 Spur of the Moment
- 4/15 Long Time Lonesome Dogs
- 4/22 Bob Zuklic

Hit and Run: Officer Harper, Where Are You?!

Who: Hit and Run Bluegrass
Where: Petro Hall on the campus of MSU- Billings
When: March 28, 2006 at 7:00pm
Once again, Hit and Run is coming to the Magic City. The last time this band blew in Yellowstone Bluegrass Association

members were shocked! Most of the chatter seemed to hinge on one member of this five piece group which blasted out of the musical blender that is Colorado.

They all sing well. The mandolinist, John Frazier is very good. The bassist, Erin Coats is

very good and pretty. The banjo player, Larry Ganji Jr., (the newest member and a Montanan) is excellent. Todd Livingston is a great dobro hand. Rebecca Hoggan, however, is unbelievable on guitar AND she's ... well, a SHE!

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Local Artist, Roger Brownlee: An Interview by Dave Webinger

DW: Roger, how long have you been playing guitar?

RB: 30 years off and on. I had a college roommate who played guitar and I mentioned one day, "I wish I had your talent." He told me that talent was myth. "I can play because of practice, practice, practice." That how I (Roger) got started playing.

DW: Do you practice a lot now?

RB: I play everyday. I leave my guitar out all the time. I pick it up every time I walk by it.

DW: Do you read music?

RB: No, I play by ear.

DW: I notice that you play up and down the fret board.

RB: Yes, I play up and down the neck. I have

learned to find chords up and down the neck. I would like to learn more about scales; this is where lessons would have come in handy.

DW: Do you like to sing?

RB: So-so, but tobacco has not done my voice any good.

DW: What is your favorite music?

RB: 1960s Folk music, Country style, Peter, Paul and Mary, Gordon Lightfoot, Chad Mitchell Trio, Brothers Four, Joan Baez, Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell, and Marty Robins. I grew up in Houston, Texas where Country was very popular.

DW: Who is your favorite bluegrass band?

RB: Kane's River

DW: Tell me about your Martin guitar.

RB: It's a Martin CEO II Limited Addition. The back and sides are made of selected Makassar Striped ebony. The inlay is abalone. I bought it at Hansen Music. I still would like to have a nice Gibson guitar.

DW: What would you like to add in closing?

RB: The best thing I have done in my life is to learn how to play the guitar. It has given me more pleasure and peace of mind than anything I have ever done.

DW: See you next issue!

||| *"I play every day. I leave the guitar out all the time. I pick it up every time I walk by."* -
||| Roger Brownlee

Master Lutheir in Bozeman by Banjostan Moser

Ever had your wife take a swing at you with the \$5,000.00 guitar, miss, hit the stovepipe and put a few dozen fractures in that baby? Or how about seeing how hard that hardshell case really is by driving over it with your SUV, accidentally leaving the guitar inside. Maybe just a slight fall down the stairs. No matter what the story is, you are in luck living in Montana, because Kevin Kopp, authorized Martin repairman, former Gibson employee, and luthier, is virtually in your backyard at his shop in Bozeman.

Its almost worth needing a repair just to get to see the inside of Kevin's shop. Located behind Kevin's house, he has a large shop with all of the tools necessary to build his own guitars which he has recently started doing. Whether he's working on a 1940's Gibson or an almost new Gilchrist mandolin, people all over the west trust their instruments to this avid kayaker, from fret replacements to neck sets to major rebuilds. Kevin's repairs are incredible. His years at Gibson's custom shop and his love of the craft have given him a lot of

"Kevin is a busy guy, but ...he's worth waiting for, and reasonably priced." -
Stan Moser

knowledge. He can tell you rosewood from Brazil vs Central America, literally, he can tell you a lot about your guitar even if its unmarked.

Kevin is a busy guy, but if you want the best repair around, he's worth waiting for, and very reasonably priced. If you can't reach him, Music Villa uses him exclusively and you can normally entrust them with your instrument, where Kevin will pick it up. If you want to reach Kevin directly, he is at (406) 585-3504.

Jam in Laurel
Every Tuesday
River of Life Church...7pm
Last Tuesday of the
Month - Laurel Pizza Hut

Yellowstone Bluegrass Festival

The YBA will sponsor the Yellowstone Bluegrass Festival on August 4-6, 2006. We received approval from the ZooMontana Board to allow us to hold it at the zoo.

If your band is interested in appearing at the festival, please contact any YBA Board member. Also please consider volunteering to help with organizing the Festival.

This is a very exciting opportunity for the YBA, ZooMontana and anyone interested in bluegrass and old time music.

Mr. Monroe Takes Advantage of Irish Minstrels

There are many stories which shine a little light on Bill Monroe's personality and business sense. In front of the camera or microphone, most folks who knew and worked with "Bill" said and continue to say nice things about him. But, he is often accused of being more than a little arrogant, self serving, and opportunistic.

Although unsubstantiated, I think we have all heard the stories about the tunes "Bill" wrote. In regard to certain tunes (it is said), that all the father of Bluegrass did to create them was say they were his. "Walls of Time" is one that

Peter Rowan wrote, but Pete was more than happy to share the credit with Monroe. Kenny Baker was less interested in sharing credit with "Bill" on the instrumental "The Road to Columbus". Of anyone, Kenny donated probably the most tunes and ideas for which his boss got the credit. Whatever you say BOSS!

The sons and daughters of St. Pat might also have a bone to pick with Mr. Monroe over a certain traditional Irish ballad. The Irish traditional title is "The Black Velvet Band". Monroe called his "The Girl in the Blue Velvet Band". The story of both is about a man who

receives some stolen goods (a watch) from a young lady. In Monroe's fable, the young man gets sent to San Quentin (the crime occurred in "Frisco") for ten years. Irish tradition has the young man exiled, "far from me friends and relations" for seven years. As one can easily guess, the band of black or blue velvet keeps the you lady's hair neat and tidy. Monroe leaves out a chorus. The Irish chorus— *Her eyes they shone like diamonds-you'd think her the queen of the land-and her hair it hung over her shoulder-tied up with a black velvet band.*

Helena Handbasket: How far would you go?

Bluegrass and Oldtime musicians are not your run of the mill individuals. Their motivation for playing the music they do and for playing with the folks they play with often don't make sense to non-players. For example: Why would a band from Helena, Montana travel all the way to Molt, Montana (250 miles or so) on one of the coldest days of this mild winter to play tunes for the eggs over medium crowd? Each member of the group Helena Handbasket probably has his or her own reason for making the trip. Maybe, however, there doesn't have to be a reason for everything!

The Helena Handbasket crew is: The Paynes, Candy (bass, vocals) and Dave (guitar, vocals), The Gundersons, Terry (fiddle, vocals) and Jim (concertina, vocals), and Less Benedict (banjo, vocals).

During my quick and informal phone conversation with the attorney, Candice Payne, she said that she felt an invitation by YBA members, Larry and Laloni Larson, was enough for her to make the long journey. Candy was raised and has lived in many parts of the Yellowstone Valley, including Billings. She took

Helena Handbasket appeared for the first time anywhere on February 18, 2006 at the Prairie Winds Café, Molt, Montana

the opportunity to visit her mother, also a big acoustic music fan, who lives in Livingston. Thanks to Helena Handbasket from YBA and "Bluegrass Clippings" for making the trip.

The CD Addict

The World's Greatest Bluegrass Singers by CMH Records, Los Angeles, CA

This CD, as the title would suggest, is a compilation of groups with vocalists singing some of the biggest hits ever in bluegrass.

Fans of the most traditional bluegrass will appreciate this recording more than most. Lester Flatt, The Osborne Brothers and Jimmy Martin are just a few of the famous voices that can be heard on the **World's Greatest Blue-**

grass Singers.

You won't hear anything better anywhere than Mac Wiseman doing "Dark Hollow".

Get a copy of **The World's Greatest Bluegrass Singers** and don't lend it to anyone.

Another Great Deale by the Good Deale Bluegrass Band

I have a copy of an old TV program that was recorded in Maggy Valley, North Carolina. It

was called, "Fire on the Mountain". It's on old VHS and just about worn out. One episode of this short-lived program featured Del McCourey and the Dixie Pals. The Dixie Pals were, in some ways, better than Del's current band. I loved the fiddler, John Glick.

The Good Deale Bluegrass Band is the group John now plays for. Mike Auldridge plays dobro. I could go on and on about this group.

"The Loner" is a super bluegrass number!

Yellowstone Bluegrass Association

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We're on the web at
www.
yellowstonebluegrass.org

American Legion Seeks Bluegrass Band

The American Legion on Broadwater Ave is looking for a Bluegrass Band to play Sunday afternoons 3-8pm. If your group is interested, call Al Hardy at 652-6111.

Showcase: April 7, 2006
Lincoln Auditorium...7pm.

VIPs & Contacts

President	<u>Mike Rolison</u>	628-8639
	608 Date Ave	
	Laurel, MT 59044	
Vice-President	<u>Chuck Bishop</u>	248-3645
	592 Constitution	
	Billings, MT 59105	
Sec Treas	<u>Terry Indreland</u>	652-4677
	2811 Gregory Drive S	
	Billings, MT 59102	
Board	<u>Trent Indreland</u>	
	<u>Stan Moser</u>	
	<u>Mark Harmala</u>	
	<u>Barry Gum</u>	

TEN JAMMANDMENTS

1. **Thou Shalt Tune Thy Instrument**-There are too many good cheap tuners not to do this
2. **Thou Shalt Listen**-If you can't hear the lead instrument or vocalist... **YOU ARE PLAYING TOO LOUDLY!**
3. **Thou Shalt Pass** - Who picks next and when should be apparent by clockwise or counter clockwise turns in the circle. If you want to skip, let the next person know **AHEAD OF TIME.**
4. **Thou Shalt Welcome Others**-The jam cannot be too big if pickers are polite.
5. **Thou Shalt Share in the Selection**-Take turns. Don't monopolize the jam.
6. **Thou Shalt Try New Stuff**-(refer to Jammandments 2 & 4)
7. **Thou Shalt Let Others Know When You Are Not Jamming**-Your band is practicing, for example.
8. **Thou Shalt Not Raid**-Don't interrupt a jam by calling musicians away to jam elsewhere.
9. **Keepith Thy Rhythm Steady**
10. **Thou Shalt Not Speed**-Do not start a song too fast for the others to play.