

Traditional Music from the Hoosier State

SAIL AWAY LADIES

D.G. "Somethin' like that. That's 'Sail Away Ladies.' That's that's the 1st thing I ever learned to play on the fiddle."

PT "Oh Yea?"

D.G. "Yea. I just lucked into that. Had a copy of the Harry Smith collection... and on that among other things was that thing by Uncle Dunt Stevens and I, I figured out, I figured out by fooling around on the mandolin that it would be in the key of G. And luckily it was in standard tuning, and I just started playing around with it and it was just really handy, it sat... you, you know you can play that whole tune with just 2 fingers on, on the fiddle. And I believe that's how I did start it. But it... the, the bowing is so nice on it... There's, It's Its, That tunes all in the bowing... that I didn't have that fiddle just right in tune. And that, that tune it makes a big difference in that tune... to get those, those nice ringing sound of those 5ths. I gotta get my ear warmed up as well as my fingers when I start playing."

PT "So when you stumbled on to that collection you weren't playing fiddle?"

D.G. "Well, what actually happened was, we just happened to have... have that one, that one record from, from that Harry Smith collection. At At our home. Well my, my mother was. she grew up in New York City and and was, ~~I don't~~ you know, I don't know what. In with the, the artsy leftist crowd of those days and got into Woody Guthrie & Pete Seeger and that that whole gang of stuff, and we had a whole bunch of Folkways records. Leadbell and the whole business. And, umm. Somehow got a hold of this one thing ~~and~~, ^{and} from that Harry Smith collection, ~~umm~~ and that was just, that was just really neat. Ah. It was back, it was back in the early 60's, oh I was like in junior high school or something and like, you know, the folk thing ^{was} that, it was big. You know. And I, And and for some reason or another just. I met ~~I~~ met up with a bunch of guys who were really into the New Lost City Ramblers and were learning to play the banjo and all that, and mandoling and they, they were going around knocking on everybody's door looking

for, looking for grand, great old instruments in people's
and, dammit they were finding them too. ^{Oh, they} they still
those guys have got, Oh I remember those guys. Uh."

PT "Where was this at."

DB "[This was in, in Northern New Jersey] And uh, Ric Schoeber
... he was part of that, that gang of people. Boy I remem-
ber him. He'd show up with a new Martin guitar
every every week. I mean a new old Martin guitar
that he'd found somewhere. Those were the days,
man, they were everywhere. And um, the um. But
anyway. [None of these guys had a fiddle, None of
these guys had learned to play a fiddle and] this [this
fiddle right here was sitting behind the piano, my
sister had tried to play the violin for a short while
and for a short while had borrowed one my grand-father's
violin. ~~the~~ My grandfather was a violinist among
other things. And uh, she'd had borrowed this fiddle,
and he'd ~~had~~ never bothered to get it back, it was
sort of one of his extra fiddles, one of his extra
violins, and you know, there it was. So I took it
out of the case and began fooling around with it
and that's how I got started on the fiddle.] I love
the fiddle. Fiddle's the world's greatest musical instrument.
I I really think that's true 'cause it's just neat
when you see how many different, how, how, how
there's so many different cultures in the world, how,
all the different nations of the world, and just
about all of them have taken up the violin. Uh.
Even the ones that had something like a violin
before, have taken up the violin ^{to} and have done
their own thing with it. Everybody's got ^{a different} their own
way of playing it. It's It's good. Anything you like
to hear?"

PT "Last At Battleground last summer I think you play some
Luther Strong. You know a tune from him."

DB "Oh I I love, I love Luther Strong stuff and I like I
really like that old, that old Kentucky style of fiddling.
There's a whole bunch of neat tunes."

Gilder Boy

DB "Something like that. That that's one of those tunes that rambles all over the place. Kinda little pipe bits and pieces get left out and put in. I think, I'm not positive what the name of that is. I think he called Gilder Boy. -- You, isn't that strange."

Give the Fiddler a Dram

DB "That's Give the Fiddler a Dram... One of only 15 or 20 tunes with that name... That's Luther Strongy."

PT "Is he a pretty typical Kentucky fiddler, do you think or

DB "Oh, I don't know."

PT "Is there such a thing as a typical?"

DB "I don't know, ^{there's} just a few, a few of those guys who got recorded back... back when, who have a certain sound to their fiddling. I don't know, there may ^{yet} be people down there that play like that. I don't get to travel & find out... But, there's something neat about that stuff I..."

Rymers Favorite

DB "That's a considerable lot different from the way that he played it, too."

PT "Yeh, ~~well~~ well he had piano backup."

DB "Yeh, and it was a very proper fiddling that he did, too."



Evening Star Waltz

DB "I tend to play loud. But then I don't know, that, that's the way. If you ever wind up playing 'for for dancing, you know, that you have to. And that's about it. You gotta be able to play pretty, pretty loud and just straightforward like."

Just Like a Nigger

Talk about drones and bluegrass fiddling & double stops.

DB "Well it depends on what key you're playing in too, like, that, that comes in A. Like all that DG fiddling. (fiddles) That kind of thing, you know, which is the ^{the} sort of thing you'd run into in A tuning, too. A lot of unisons. ^{whereas} That other stuff is, I don't know. I ^{generally} like to playing a lot of stuff in D & G, uh, more than A. Maybe just because of the variety, ^{from} the change from the bluegrass type stuff. Although, ^{you} there's a lot of stuff that I like. Especially in A tuning."

Old Joe Clark

DB "There probly aren't too many Fiddlers around here that play 'Old Joe Clark' that way."

Sally Gooden

DB "Yea theres still I've gotta do that a few times thru before I can get all these tricks in there. That, that's a neat thing. That that one performance, just always always just blew me away because I thought, you know it really was the first piece of fiddling that ever was recorded. That one thing, ^{you know,} it was the 1st piece of fiddling that was ever put on record. And nobodys ^{nobody's} equalled it, yet, you know, it's been 60 years ^{now} ^{almost} and nobodys equalled that, the way he did that, there's just so many neat things he goes thru all the all the little neat tricks in there."

...I think there's a lot of stuff that that sticks with me. ~~But~~ ~~the~~ you know, other stuff gets overaid on it... But... ah. Yea sure I change. I'm always picking up something new. like when I... when you get a hold of a record like that Emmett Kurdy record. That's, it's hard not to ~~get~~ ^{be} influenced by it. I mean that's just so radical. His playing. ~~It~~ ^{It} writes a very radical fiddler."

...you know, a lot of things. The whole Brilliance melody, that would be nice. But... I don't know, there's a lot of things if there's any real system to the way I play, ps to do to what I try to copy to what I leave to chance to the way it happens to move.

Irish Reel

PT "When you go to learn ~~to~~ something. Or when you were learning the fiddle. You obviously listened to a lot of records. How strict did you try to copy?"

DB "That depends, you know, if there was something I really liked, you know, a particular sound. I might try to copy pretty, pretty closely, but I don't know, I think the, the copying closely, you know in bits in pieces. I mean sometimes I listened to a particular recording enough so I felt I was doing a pretty good job of copying the whole thing thru. But, uh, that wasn't, I don't know, that wasn't really intentional. I didn't really intend to do that... To really I mean sometimes I maybe did. I mean like theres ~~it~~ ^{it} would like to be able to play Sally Gooden exactly the way that Eck Robertson did. I mean that would really be neat. Uh, but then once I learned to do that, maybe I would

BLACKBERRY BLOSSOM

PT "I wonder if there's some things you could try to, some questions you could try to answer for me. I don't know if there are any answers. But uh, why do you have a preference for old-timey fiddle over bluegrass? What is there about it."

DB "I don't know, there's just, there's ~~just~~ maybe, maybe just because uh, there don't at least for a long time there didn't seem to be anybody else who was doing it. Now, now things have changed ~~;~~ that's really good. But there's something I've always liked, especially about just the sound of a solo fiddle, Ummm. Or also within the difference between bluegrass and, and older styles. The sound of ~~of~~ just a full band all going at it at once. Instead of just one person taking a solo and everybody else just standing back and chopping. But, but, the thing of, of the texture. The whole feeling of ~~of~~ that whole band ~~;~~ all the different things you can do with a group of musicians in terms of making a nice solid texture of music, It's like... oh there's just all kinds of neat things. Like, I think, there's ~~there's~~ especially neat things you can do with just two fiddles with no other back up to it. Or just just one fiddle for that matter. The sound of the instrument by itself... And then, you know, right there, that's a lot of the difference between bluegrass and old-time stuff."

PT "When you got into playing the fiddle, there probably weren't too many people playing either."

DB "No, No, I must of played for a couple of years before ~~I~~ actually I met ~~I~~ actually met anybody else who was actually playing or trying to play. Met a few. I remember meeting. I guess the 1st I met was a violinist. A regular conservatory student. I think he was, he was in college majoring in violin who was playing with a bluegrass band."

PT "Then the type of music that you play. The type of tunes that you pick, are mostly from southern, southeastern mountains. I know there's a lot of good southwestern style, well you do play Fek Robertson"

DB "Yeah, that's that's an odd thing, I mean like like ^{to} that ^{that} particular piece. You know, I just started off playing that, I guess, I see, that's just sort of a classic, classic version of that particular tune, ~~like~~ You know like you were saying about a a kind of fiddling that sort of transcends regions, ~~that's~~ that's definitely ~~one of those things~~"

Db "I don't know. I like. I definitely like the particular. Well I don't know I think it's the particular mixture, of, of black and white influences & that there are in southeastern fiddling and banjo playing, and fiddle and banjo playing!..

Pr "Do you play any... Do you play Irish music, Do you play Canadian Jigs and."

Db "I, oh I. I got a few. I've got a few tunes like that I play. I guess, you know. If somebody asks me to play the fiddle, I play, I play the southeastern sort of stuff. Cause that's that's my favorite sort of things. That I think, I guess, you know, that I do that the best. But I, you know, I play ~~a few~~ other things, but I get the feeling ^{that they} when I play them that they start sounding more in that direction. Well like..."

St. Anne's

Db "Now if we had done that on the front porch I could have done the foot clogging to. I like to do that, ~~o~~... and aw, I I definitely have a soft spot for Cajun music, too. And and you know. Just all kinds of stuff. And of course I've gotten a lot more in to Irish stuff from meeting Mick Clancy, he's got some neat tunes. But I find that I'll fool around with some of that stuff, but when I get together with him I like to play some sort of back up and let him play lead. Because he's got the right feel for that sort of thing and I... you know. When I play it it isn't Irish any more."

CUCKOOS NEST

Pr "John Summers or Ed Haley"

Db "A little bit of both."

Db "I think that (notes) that high C# in there is a really neat part neat thing in that tune. But then I don't know there's something about some of the notes that Haley played that I don't like... I really, that, that Haley's fiddling just really blows me away. But I really don't like a lot of his tunes. Just the, some of the notes were. I don't know. They just don't suit me right. But some of those things, like those 2 things in C on that album are a couple of my favorite tunes of all."