HAZEL DICKENS & ALICE GERRARD

PIONEERING WOMEN OF BLUEGRASS

THE DEFINITIVE EDITION

HAZEL DICKENS & ALICE GERRARD

1. **I JUST GOT WISE** 2:29
(Carter Stanley/Trio Music Company, Inc., BMI-Fort Knox Music, Inc., BMI)

2. **WALKIN' IN MY SLEEP** 2:07

3. **THE ONE I LOVE IS GONE** 3:07
(Bill Monroe/Unichappell Music, Inc., BMI)

4. **WEARY LONESOME BLUES** 2:42
(Alton Delmore-Rabon Delmore/David Platz Music (USA), Inc. o/b/o Vidor Publications, Inc., BMI)

5. **LONG BLACK VEIL** 3:18
(Marijohn Wilkin-Danny Dill/Universal-Songs of Polygram International, Inc., BMI)

6. **COWBOY JIM** 2:02
(Hazel Dickens/Happy Valley Music, BMI)

7. **MEMORIES OF MOTHER AND DAD** 2:35
(Albert Price/Three Wise Boys Music LLC, BMI)

8. **SUGAR TREE STOMP** 2:05
(Arthur Smith/Sony/ATV Tree Publishing, BMI)

9. **MOMMY PLEASE STAY HOME WITH ME** 3:12
(Eddy Arnold-Wallace Fowler-Graydon Hall/Hill & Range Songs, BMI)

10. **GABRIEL'S CALL** 2:13
(Hazel Dickens-Alice Gerrard-Jeremy Foster-Marge Marash/ Wynwood Music Company, BMI)

11. **COAL MINER'S BLUES** 2:43
(A. P. Carter/Peer International Corp., BMI)

12. **DIFFICULT RUN** 1:31
(Lamar Grier/Wynwood Music Company, BMI)

13. **WHO'S THAT KNOCKING?** 2:57
(A. P. Carter/Peer International Corp., BMI)

14. **A TINY BROKEN HEART** 3:01
(Charlie Louvin-Ira Louvin-Eddie Hill/Sony/ATV Acuff Rose Music, BMI)

15. **CAN'T YOU HEAR ME CALLING?** 3:13
(Bill Monroe/Unichappell Music, Inc., BMI)

16. **DARLING NELLIE ACROSS THE SEA** 2:18
(A. P. Carter/Peer International Corp., BMI)

17. **WON'T YOU COME AND SING FOR ME?** 2:44
(Hazel Dickens/Happy Valley Music, BMI)

18. **LEE HIGHWAY BLUES** 1:38

19. **A DISTANT LAND TO ROAM** 2:58
(A. P. Carter/Peer International Inc., BMI)

20. GONNA LAY DOWN MY OLD GUITAR 2:53
(Alton Delmore-Rabon Delmore/David Platz Music (USA), Inc. o/b/o Vidor Publications, Inc., BMI)

21. TAKE ME BACK TO TULSA 2:13
(Bob Wills-Tommy Duncan/Peer International Corp., BMI Red River Songs, Inc., BMI)

22. THEY'RE AT REST TOGETHER (TB BLUES) 3:25
(Walter Callahan/Boot House of Tunes, BMI)

23. JOHN HENRY 1:48

24. JUST ANOTHER BROKEN HEART 2:42
(A. P. Carter/Peer International Corp., BMI)

25. TRAIN ON THE ISLAND 1:39
(J. P. Nestor-Norman Edmonds/Peer International Inc., BMI)

26. LOVER'S RETURN 3:05
(A. P. Carter/Peer International Corp., BMI)

27. I HEAR A SWEET VOICE CALLING 3:07
(Bill Monroe/BMG Rights Management US, LLC o/b/o Bill Monroe Music, BMI)

28. CHILDISH LOVE (PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED) 2:55
(Charlie Louvin-Ira Louvin/Sony/ATV Acuff Rose Music, BMI)

Brandywine Mountain Music Convention, Concordville, PA, July 1974. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

HAZEL DICKENS AND ALICE GERRARD: WOMEN PIONEERS IN BLUEGRASS

By Laurie Lewis, Berkeley, Califonia, 2022

The music that Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard made together has influenced generations of musicians, primarily women, and inspired them—or, I should say, us—to walk in their footsteps. The twisted threads that brought these two together is in itself a fascinating story, but it is long and winding, and I would be too long-winded were I to tell it all. But here are the facts.

In the 1950s and '60s, Baltimore, Maryland, was a hotbed of hillbilly, country, and bluegrass music, as the Industrial North drew people from the Southern Highlands with the promise of steady work and higher wages. They brought their music with them, and every night of the week you could hear it wafting from the taverns that grew up around the factories, and every weekend in the country music parks outside Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Bill Monroe, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, the Stanley Brothers, and all the Grand Ole Opry stars made the area a major part of their circuits. Drawn to, and adding their own spices to, this bubbling stew were two very different women: Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard. They were an unlikely duo. Hazel was the eighth of 11 children, born in 1925 in a coal-mining region of West Virginia, rich in traditional music and mountain culture. Her formal education stopped at seventh grade. Alice was the oldest of three children, born and raised on the West Coast nine years later, into a college-educated family of classical musicians. She first heard, and fell in love with, Appalachian folk music as a student at Antioch College in Ohio. Hazel was single, Alice was married with young children. Their individual and very different voices blended to create something bigger than themselves: a potent mix of high and low, mellow and bright, velvet and razor-edge, east and west.

Hazel had followed her siblings to Baltimore in search of work. There, she held a day job and played bass and sang with various bands in the area. Her world revolved around music, and on off-nights she would often join future bluegrass legends Jack Cooke and Del McCoury at one of the many bars. Alice and her folk musician-mathematician husband, Jeremy Foster, moved to nearby Washington, D.C., from Antioch College. While at Antioch, they produced the first bluegrass concert on a college campus, when they brought the Osborne Brothers there in 1960. Jeremy, through his childhood friend Mike Seeger, introduced the two women, and they found an immediate common ground in their love of traditional music and their interest in writing and singing their own songs. They successfully auditioned for Folkways Records, and began planning their first album in 1964. That year, Alice gave birth to her fourth child, and a few months later Jeremy died in a car crash, leaving Alice a single parent of four, just as production was getting started. She managed to push through her grief to enable the release in 1965 of their first album, *Who's That Knocking?* It may be hard to understand, judging by today's many popular women bluegrass artists, that this album was arguably the first in that genre to feature unrelated women collaborators, picking their own material and calling the shots. The backup band included Chubby Wise on fiddle, a former member of Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys and inarguably

Recording the second Folkways album at Mastertone Studio, New York City. Photo by John Cohen

the architect of bluegrass fiddle style; Lamar Grier on banjo, who would later become a member of Monroe's band; and a young David Grisman (David Grisman Quintet, Old & in the Way, and many more influential musical conglomerations) on mandolin. The music was pure bluegrass, showcasing Hazel's searing tenor and Alice's full-throated lead vocals.

Hazel and Alice tapped folklorist Neil V. Rosenberg, Alice's friend and former occasional banjo player for Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys, to write the liner notes for their second Folkways album. Neil also wrote notes for the subsequent CD reissue of their two recordings on Smithsonian Folkways in 1996 (*Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard: Pioneering Women of Bluegrass*, SFW 40065). His deep-dive liner notes are well worth reading for their perspective on the changing roles of women in bluegrass music.

Hazel and Alice worked together for over a decade, recording three more albums under their own names, and one as members of the Strange Creek Singers with Mike Seeger, Lamar Grier, and Tracy Schwarz. They toured the South twice a year with the Southern Folk Cultural Revival Project, alongside such artists as Roscoe Holcomb, Ola Belle Reed, Dock Boggs, and Elizabeth Cotten. They both supported and challenged each other to create a body of work that spoke to their own experiences and observations, and that offered a distinctive perspective on bluegrass music. Claire Lynch, three-time winner of the International Bluegrass Music Association's (IBMA) Female Vocalist of the Year honors, said,

> **Hazel and Alice were the first "voices" I heard in bluegrass music that sang on women's behalf. I know that Bill Monroe famously recorded "True Life Blues," but it was Hazel & Alice who brought the song to life for me.**

When the duo went their separate ways in 1976, they continued to contribute to the music community in important and very different styles. Hazel's strong sense of social justice was kindled firsthand when as a child she saw the stiff toll paid by coal miners to enrich the coffers of the mine owners. She wrote blistering songs and sang in support of striking miners throughout Appalachia. She had a long recording career, and many of her original songs have become staples in the bluegrass songbook.

Alice has long been interested in and involved with the documentation of folk music traditions and culture, and among other things had taken part in the first planning meetings in 1966 for what would become the bluegrass world's first print publication, *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine. Seeing the importance of print media in nurturing community, Alice founded in 1987 *The Old-Time Herald*, a magazine dedicated to all aspects of old-time music and dance;

she served as editor until 2003. She also worked on documentary films, foremost among them *Sprout Wings and Fly*, the delightful Les Blank-directed celebration of Appalachian fiddler Tommy Jarrell. And she continued, and continues, to write, perform, and record deeply personal music with strong traditional roots.

Teresa Trull, longtime powerhouse vocalist and star of the women's music genre, grew up with the music of Hazel and Alice. She recalled,

> They were huge in my North Carolina community. I've always felt that bluegrass was the closest to gospel, hence r&b. I really felt that the singers could be interchangeable. I could hear Aretha doing "Hello Stranger" or "Don't Put Her Down, You Helped Put Her There." My love was gospel, but I was quite poor and I got a job at 16 with a rock band that was very sexist. I think Hazel and Alice taught me to speak out not only to people but even more so in music.

When I started researching these notes, I was surprised to find that the influence of these two pioneers has not waned in the least with younger musicians. In fact, they seem more popular than ever. Huge numbers of under-40 (many under 30!) bluegrass, old-time, and country singers, and songwriters of all stripes point to the duo, or to Hazel or Alice separately, as a main reason they do what they do. In the words of young guitar-slinging singer/songwriter Molly Tuttle,

> Hazel and Alice inspired me to find my own voice. They write and sing songs from the heart with a perspective that is unique within the bluegrass genre. I first heard Hazel and Alice when I was 12 years old, and their music changed my life.

Rising bluegrass banjo star Gina Furtado noted:

> As I've gotten older, I've really appreciated their lyrics. "Mama's Gonna Stay" helped me hang on when it felt impossible to get through the days when my kids were babies. It helped it feel acceptable to struggle as a mother. And of course, they always look like such badasses in their pictures.
>
> There have been many times when I've been confronted with challenges unique to being a woman in bluegrass, which I know they would have experienced too, and the fact that they forged ahead anyway, and that I know how much that has helped my generation of women, has sometimes been the reason I have chosen to forge ahead myself.

Melody Walker, whose band Front Country stretched the boundaries of acoustic string band music, reminisced:

Sunday morning gospel singing at Bill Monroe's annual bluegrass festival. Left to right: Kenny Baker, Rual Yarborough, Jim Rooney, Alice Gerrard, Hazel Dickens, Tex Logan, Bill Monroe, Skip Payne (partly hidden), James Monroe. Bean Blossom, Indiana, June 1970. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer

My first experience with hearing Hazel was her wild, fearless voice echoing through Golden Gate Park at Hardly Strictly. I didn't grow up on Hazel and Alice records, and knew her only as this powerful mountain witch, hollering with what seemed to me to be an almost punk rock sense of abandon. I was awestruck by that freedom in her vocal delivery.

The resurgence of interest among young artists may in part be a reaction to the glitzy, profoundly commercial aspects of popular culture today. Stumbling upon the music of Hazel and Alice is like finding a clear, cool, unpolluted mountain brook riffling through the Las Vegas Strip on a 120-degree day. Who wouldn't want to stop and dip their feet, at least?

Hazel passed away in 2011, but Alice continues as a vibrant performing artist, songwriter, teacher, and curator of Southern highlands music and culture. Hazel's and Alice's influence, together and separately, on countless musicians—of all genres and genders—is incalculable. They were unwitting trailblazers, making a path forward for the artistically selfish reasons of wanting to create and recreate sounds that inspired and excited them. Before Hazel and Alice enriched the bluegrass repertoire with their thought-provoking material, songs from a woman's perspective were few and far-between.

Their collaboration produced not only a wonderful repertoire of original and traditional material, but also shining examples—for all of us—of how to live an artist's life.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

By Peter K. Siegel, New York City, 2022

I produced and recorded all the tracks on this CD after hearing Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard sing at a party in Washington, D.C. I fell in love with their music and knew immediately that I wanted to record them.

Almost all the tracks were initially released by Folkways Records on two vinyl LPs. When those albums first came out, I was disappointed with the quality of the sound. I had recorded the first album in mono but it was released in "fake" stereo, apparently because of a distribution deal that Folkways had with a major label at that time. I recorded the second album in "real" stereo, but it was my first venture into stereo, and the voices and instruments were not as well-balanced as they should have been.

Despite the audio problems, I always loved the music. So I was beyond happy when Smithsonian Folkways recently asked if I would remaster all the tracks for this CD. Because the two albums were originally recorded in mono and two-track stereo respectively, they could not be remixed in the same way that multiple-track recordings could have been remixed. But with the benefit of new technology and an additional half-century of experience, I was able to rebalance the voices and instruments and improve the sound.

I think the new masters better capture the essence of Hazel and Alice's music, and sound more like the traditional bluegrass style that these performances represent. I was also able to include an additional song, "Childish Love," that could not be used previously because of technical problems that were insurmountable in the 1960s.

In addition to this CD, Smithsonian Folkways is simultaneously re-releasing the two vinyl LPs in their original sequences and packaging, using these new and better "mixes."

REMEMBERING THESE RECORDINGS

By Alice Gerrard, 2022

I've been looking through the "Remembering" notes that I wrote in 1996 for the CD release of these two Folkways recordings. A lot of time has passed and there have been changes. Sadly, Hazel died in 2011, Pete Kuykendall in 2017, and Lamar Grier in 2019—always to be missed. I'll keep a lot of those notes as they were in 1996, especially the voices that spoke.

Hazel Dickens and I had few, if any, women models for the particular sound of bluegrass that we were trying to "get" back in the mid-to-late '50s. We admired Molly O'Day and Wilma Lee Cooper, and loved their music, but we were trying for more of a Stanley Brothers, Bill Monroe duet sound. And playing and singing bluegrass was definitely a man's world.

It was different at the ubiquitous music parties around D.C. and Baltimore back in those times, where an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement prevailed. The folk music scene and the burgeoning old-time and bluegrass scene converged at these parties, where middle-class, college-educated folks from all over, and working-class country people straight up from southwestern Virginia or Carolina met and got to know one another and played music. "We'd decide to have music," Hazel recalled about the parties at Alyse Taubman and Willie Foshag's home on Eager Street in Baltimore, "and I'd get on the phone and start calling people. They were always big parties. Sometimes we used all three floors; old-time on one floor, bluegrass on another, and folk music on another. I remember fixing it up and putting candles and cushions on the floor." Alyse was a social worker that Hazel met through Mike, who took a special interest in her, and became one of her closest friends.

"I remember those days," Lamar Grier recalled. "We'd play all night long [but] we had to break when the Osborne Brothers came on WWVA. The parties were the treasures. We [played] about every weekend, and I looked forward to that weekend—getting together to play music with you all."

The music was our passion—it was all we wanted to do. We hardly went to movies, and had no TV. We were learning all the time, sometimes traveling for hundreds of miles to see our favorite bluegrass entertainers. And if we weren't doing that, we were making music ourselves at parties.

Almost every Sunday, we went to a bluegrass show. Alyse and Hazel would make huge picnic lunches, and we'd pile in cars and head up Route 1 north of Baltimore to Sunset Park or New River Ranch (sometimes both on the same day). We'd share our picnic with Ralph and Carter Stanley or Bill Monroe during the dinner breaks. In those days,

a band would start playing about 1 p.m., alternating shows with another until maybe 9 o'clock. You could take your time listening, and the musicians could take their time. There was none of this "do your top six numbers and split—15 minutes each." A few people were taping the shows—Jeremy Foster, Mike Seeger, Ralph Rinzler...so that we could listen over and over again and work on our songs and instrumental breaks. We were particularly wild about the Stanley Brothers—their harmonies, the old feel of their music, the soul—and of course, Bill Monroe. I think, for both Hazel and me, those were the most important sounds. But that was not all we listened to. I was listening to recordings of old-time music as well, and we heard the same lonesomeness, soul, hair-raising chill bumps, or whatever you want to call it, in Clarence Ashley's "Coo Coo Bird," and Richard "Rabbit" Brown's "James Alley Blues," Dorothy Melton from Alabama singing "The Day Is Past and Gone," Aretha Franklin singing that same song, or Dock Boggs's "Country Blues." And the Carter Family, Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn, George Jones—they were all connected. And they all helped us define what we wanted to do. When it came time to record, we chose the material, we arranged it, and we sang it the way we wanted to sing it.

Hazel was from the coal mining regions of West Virginia, from a large family that had many struggles, not the least of which was poverty. Growing up, she was surrounded by old-time and country music. Her father, H.N. Dickens, sang old Primitive Baptist unaccompanied hymns and played old-time banjo, a number of her brothers played music, and they listened to the radio—WSM, and WWVA. Music was part of her life and remained so after she moved to Baltimore, following most of the rest of her family to find work in the factories. At the time, Mike Seeger was working as a conscientious objector in a TB sanitarium near Baltimore, and met Hazel's brother, also a musician, who was a patient there. Mike was introduced to the rest of the family including Hazel, and they started playing a little together.

I grew up on the West Coast—Washington, California—in a middle-class family. My parents were spare-time classical musicians. My father was a singer and choir director (as well as having a day job). My mother played the piano and sang and had a great ear (her job was raising a family while dealing with the ravages of rheumatoid arthritis). Music was all around. Friends who dropped by were usually musical friends, and there would be homemade music. I can remember sitting on the stairs after I was supposed to be in bed, listening to them singing and playing and having fun. My father died when my brother and I were fairly young, and my mother remarried, and we moved to Oakland. I resisted my mother's efforts to get me to learn the piano, but somewhere inside of me there was a yen for music.

When I went to Antioch College in the early '50s, I met people who sat cross-legged in circles, singing and strumming guitars—not reading music, just playing it—I felt like I'd come home. While there, my natural interest in folk songs was guided and deepened by a copy of Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music*. I found a 78 rpm recording of Texas Gladden's searing, mournful ballad "One Morning in May" in the Antioch College Library, which was followed by Jeremy Foster (also at Antioch) introducing me to bluegrass in the form of Bill Monroe, Flatt & Scruggs, and the Stanley Brothers. We reveled in the hard-edged sound, the-close-to-the-bone feelings, and the way old-time and bluegrass music put us in touch with a missing piece of our lives.

When Jeremy and I moved to Washington, D.C., for our Antioch co-op jobs, he introduced me to Hazel, who was working in a factory, and to Mike Seeger around 1955 or 1956. Hazel's job was probably something she thought she'd do forever or until she got married. I also came of age at a time when women were taught to believe they'd get married, have kids, and have a husband who would take care of them forever. I was singing a little, teaching myself guitar and banjo. I'll never forget how Jeremy described Hazel to me before he took me to meet her: "There is this little girl with an incredible big voice that you've got to meet."

Jeremy and I married and we had four children. We moved around some, but we always returned to the Baltimore/Washington area for weekends of music, park shows, parties, and get-togethers with our friends in this relatively small world of diverse people brought together by music. Kids, coffee, cigarettes, music, all kind of mixed up together. Hazel and I were now doing more singing together, and these parties were a supportive environment for us. Lamar Grier was always there playing banjo, and Tom Gray was often on bass. People drifted in and out. I asked my old friend Jim Steele, who hosted many a music party in the day, why he thought the Baltimore/Washington area was such a hotbed of interest in bluegrass music. "It was all the people from Southwest Virginia moving up for jobs, and they brought their music with them. Everybody from Southwest Virginia could play, sing, dance, or do something. There were so many people with talent who had just done it from kids." Pete Kuykendall noted that there was "a mixing of cultures" and that "the whole hillbilly image was breaking down big time. There were the migrants from the South like Pop Stoneman, Carl Nelson, Lucky Sailor, Smiley Hobbs. Then there were the local suburban high-school students like John Duffy, Dick Spottswood, Bill Harrell, Roy Self, and others—suburban hillbillies who were getting turned on to bluegrass music." Also according to Pete, local DJs—Don Owens

on WARL, WEAM, and WGAY, and in Baltimore Ray Davis on WBMD "exposed the music to a very diverse audience...and it caught our ears."

Sometime in 1964, Peter Siegel and David Grisman heard Hazel and me singing at a party in D.C. and suggested we record. Sure, if we could do the songs the way we wanted to do them. They agreed, and planning and practicing began. Lamar would play banjo, David the mandolin. I would play guitar and Hazel would play bass. All we needed was a fiddler. Hazel said that getting Chubby Wise was Jeremy's idea. "I can just see Jeremy," she said, "that twinkle in his eye, thinking wouldn't that be a coup if we could get Chubby Wise. He liked that kind of thing." Tom Morgan, who knew him a bit and had his phone number, made a call. "I picked up the phone and called him in D.C. [where he was living at the time]. "I have some friends who are trying to cut an album, would you be kind enough to help them out?' I like to have dropped my teeth when he said, 'Yeah, I'll do it.'"

Memories around this time are shadowy, probably because in September 1964, during the planning of the recording, Jeremy was killed in an automobile accident. Peter recalls wondering whether we would actually go through with the recording. But we did. Somehow, I and our four young children got through a really bad time with a lot of support from all our friends. We went ahead with the recording, although I can't remember exactly when. From what we can piece together, it was probably in early 1965. I had just moved into a house in Northwest D.C. Hazel remembered that I didn't have curtains or anything up on the walls yet.

The chronology of the second Folkways LP, *Won't You Come and Sing For Me*, is somewhat muddy, because though we recorded it not long after the first one, it sat in the can for eight years before it was issued. Hazel and I continued practicing and occasionally performing. I made a lot of practice tapes in my living room—kids yelling, running around, wanting attention in the background—and Hazel and me just plugging on. It was finally released in 1973. By this time, we were starting to write more songs, developing more as a duo, and we were beginning to tour with Anne Romaine's Southern Grassroots Revival Project, which changed our lives yet again. But that is another story.

I'm looking back almost 70 years, and a lot of memories have grown hazy, but I remember with great clarity the morning that our radio alarm suddenly jolted Jeremy and me awake: "Ruby, Ruby, honey are you mad at your man," high, clear, cutting voice followed by a bluesy, greased-lightning banjo break. It was Bobby and Sonny Osborne and it was this new, fantastic sound. What a wake up!

REMEMBERING THESE RECORDINGS

By Hazel Dickens, February 1996

Cufflink conviviality: Helping to outfit Bill Monroe with a newly gifted pair of links. Bean Blossom, Indiana, June 1970. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer

Before we made this album, Alice and I had only played at the Galax Fiddler's Convention in 1962, and played around at parties. We were passionate and possessive about the songs and the music. When we decided to make these recordings we wanted to make them our way. Generally when you see "produced by so-and-so" the producers bring a lot of songs to the session. But we laid down the law pretty strict. We brought everything.

I think this is one of the all-time historic records. To my knowledge, it was the first time that two women sat down and picked out a bunch of songs and had guts enough to stand behind what they picked out and say, "We're not changing anything; you have to do it or else."

Everyone assured us that Moses Asch would let us do that. When we sent him the tape he didn't say "no" to anything, except "Don't spend a lot of my money." He didn't give us a lot to spend. After we cut the record, Ralph Rinzler and Mike Seeger got us to Newport [the Newport Folk Festival]. Moe [Moses] Asch sat in the front row, came to see his newest artists before the release. The record come out in 1965. I expected to be rich. We had already planned to buy cars for Alice's husband and my boyfriend. I thought that we would be able to travel or get a house, but it just was not true. People really don't realize how little payback there is in a recording.

We have had women come up to us all through the years and talk about the first records we made and what an impact it had on their lives. I just think it was an eye-opener for a lot of people to hear two women singing together, doing what the men did in bluegrass. We sang all the parts of bluegrass—one woman (Alice) singing the lower part and the other woman (Hazel) singing the high tenor. Generally when a woman sang, a man would sing under her—or they sang with their husband or brothers. So in that way, this recording was a real groundbreaker. We also didn't try to spice it up, or pretty it up with one of those Nashville songs or a Kitty Wells song. We did it straight-up bluegrass.

Another significant thing about our two Folkways records, *Who's That Knocking?* and *Won't You Come and Sing For Me*, is that they got around to places like Japan. One time I was in Nashville, and we went to the Station Inn. They had a night where a whole lot of Nashville people who were involved in the bluegrass community would come down and jam. If you were a guest from out of town, they would invite you up [to play]. So when they saw me come in, the host asked me, "would you like to get up and do a song?" I got up there and started singing. All of a sudden a whole table full of people jumped up and started screaming. It was a group of Japanese. So I got some of the women up to do a song with me. They knew all the words of the songs from these two Folkways Records.

THE SONGS

Notes by Hazel Dickens (HD), Neil Rosenberg (NR), Alice Gerrard (AG)

1. I JUST GOT WISE

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

"I Just Got Wise" was written by the late Carter Stanley and recorded by the Stanley Brothers (Carter and Ralph) in 1955 (Mercury 45-70453). Alice sings the lead voice, and I join in on the chorus. (HD)

2. WALKIN' IN MY SLEEP

Hazel Dickens, lead voice (verses), tenor voice (choruses), string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice (choruses), guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

I've always loved singing this old song. I've known it so long I can't remember where I got it. Most old-time bands play it but don't sing the lyrics. I never got a lot out of a song without lyrics. My relationship was always with the words and the story. (HD)

3. THE ONE I LOVE IS GONE

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle; Mike Seeger, guitar

"The One I Love Is Gone" was written by Bill Monroe in 1955; he has never performed or published it. In the 1960s, while visiting with Hazel and Alice, he sang it for them. They liked the song, so Bill gave it to them; they published it under Bill's name. They added a tenor part to the piece, and the result is the epitome of the bluegrass sound—a combination of blues and mountain vocal styles which has come to be known as "the high, lonesome sound." Certainly, this performance will take its place among the classics of bluegrass music. (NR)

4. WEARY LONESOME BLUES

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

We learned "Weary Lonesome Blues" mostly from the Louvin Brothers version. It was written by Alton and Rabon Delmore, the Delmore Brothers, and their version is also widely known and we would have listened to that as well. For some reason it was not included on the first CD reissue of the two Folkways LPs but is heard here. (AG)

5. LONG BLACK VEIL

Hazel Dickens, voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

I learned this song from a country radio station in Baltimore, Maryland. I liked it right away and began singing it in bars and coffee houses around town. By the time we recorded it, I felt comfortable enough to make the song mine and to project some of the emotion and feeling into the singing that I felt the song deserved. (HD)

6. COWBOY JIM

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

"Cowboy Jim" may have come from an idea of my father's or it could have been an old song that he sang in earlier years. Occasionally when I visited, he would get his hymn book out and we'd sing a few songs. One day he surprised me by singing a few lines to an old cowboy song. Unfortunately, he could not remember enough to get a feel for what it was supposed to sound like. He handed me the few lines he'd written down and said, "Here, you take it and make a song out of it and give it a real lonesome sound." After it was recorded, I gave him the record and he seemed pleased that I'd not only written the song but recorded it too. (HD)

7. MEMORIES OF MOTHER AND DAD

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

Every country songwriter worth his salt has written a song about mother; Bill Monroe characteristically transcended the genre with this "true" song, the chorus of which quotes from his parents' headstones. His recording of the song, made in 1952, was issued on Decca Records (45-28878 and DL 4780). (NR)

8. SUGAR TREE STOMP

Billy Baker, fiddle; Hazel Dickens, string bass; Alice Gerrard, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin

"Sugar Tree Stomp," written and recorded by the late Arthur Smith during the 1930s, is fiddled here by Billy Baker. Smith had tremendous influence on contemporary bluegrass fiddling; Billy preserves all the features of Smith's performance and adds a few new twists of his own. (NR)

9. MOMMY PLEASE STAY HOME WITH ME

Hazel Dickens, string bass; Alice Gerrard, voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

"Mommy Please Stay Home With Me" was the first recording made by Eddy Arnold ("The Tennessee Plowboy") under his own name, and was the first of many hits that made him the bestselling country singer of the late 1940s and early '50s. It was recorded in December 1944 (Victor 20-1871; Bluebird 33-0502). Arnold, Graydon Hall, and the well-known gospel singer and songwriter Wallace Fowler receive credit for the song, which is firmly in the tradition of older country music. Alice learned this song from Hazel, and has never heard the Arnold record—a good example of the way in which phonograph recordings function like old printed broadsides, placing popular poetry into oral circulation. (NR)

Lamar Grier. Mastertone Studio,
New York City. Photo by John Cohen

10. GABRIEL'S CALL

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

When we were gathering material for the *Who's That Knocking?* album, Alice mentioned that she and her husband Jeremy and their friend Marge had written a chorus to a hymn but they didn't have any verses. They sang it for me and I was really impressed. They asked me to write some verses. Since it wasn't my original idea, I didn't know what to write. When you need water, go to the well—so I turned to the fire-and-brimstone preaching I'd heard growing up. I added a few verses, but for me the chorus has always been the centerpiece of the song. (HD)

11. COAL MINER'S BLUES

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

"Coal Miner's Blues" is a Carter Family song and one of the first songs we worked on as a duet. We always played it at parties. It was a song that we had always loved and knew we had to record. (HD)

12. DIFFICULT RUN

Lamar Grier, banjo; Hazel Dickens, string bass; Alice Gerrard, guitar; David Grisman, mandolin

This is an original banjo tune written and performed here by Lamar Grier. There were not many banjo tunes written during this period, so we were pleased and surprised when Lamar came up with such a great tune as his contribution to the album. (HD)

13. WHO'S THAT KNOCKING?

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

"Who's That Knocking?" came from an old Carter Family recording. We liked it because of the drama in the story. Here are two young people trying to have a relationship with all the odds against them. I could relate to that—my parents were old-fashioned and I never had any freedom until I left home to go to work. (HD)

14. A TINY BROKEN HEART

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

"A Tiny Broken Heart" was written by Charlie and Ira Louvin with E. Hill, and recorded by the Louvin brothers (Capitol T-769). Like a number of other songs on the album, this is narrated in a style that combines frankness of detail with a sentimental viewpoint—an approach influenced by 19th-century broadside balladry and the urban popular music of the late 19th century. This is still a popular mode of expression in country music today. (NR)

15. CAN'T YOU HEAR ME CALLING?

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

We couldn't have done this album without doing a Bill Monroe song. We both loved his music and especially his songwriting. My brothers and I always had to sing my father's favorite Monroe songs whenever we got together at home. (HD)

16. DARLING NELLIE ACROSS THE SEA

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

I believe we got this song from the Carter Family. We made it a faster, bluegrass style, which made it a real challenge to sing because it has so many words. (HD)

17. WON'T YOU COME AND SING FOR ME?

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; David Grisman, baritone voice, mandolin; Fred Weisz, bass voice; Billy Baker, fiddle

"Won't You Come and Sing for Me?" was composed by Hazel and is sung here by a quartet consisting of Hazel, tenor; Alice, lead; Dave Grisman, baritone; and Fred Weisz, bass. The instrumental backup follows traditional bluegrass form for religious quartets—no banjo, fiddle used only in the background, and all the breaks taken by Dave Grisman's mandolin, played here in a style similar to that of Jesse McReynolds. (NR)

Billy Baker and David Grisman. Mastertone Studio, New York City. Photo by John Cohen

18. LEE HIGHWAY BLUES

Chubby Wise, fiddle; Hazel Dickens, string bass; Alice Gerrard, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo

This song has been around for a long time. When Chubby Wise was asked to pick out a fiddle tune to do on *Who's That Knocking?* this was his choice. (HD)

19. A DISTANT LAND TO ROAM

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice. guitar; Mike Seeger, lead guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

"A Distant Land to Roam" was recorded by the original Carter Family in 1929 (Victor V 40255); it is sung here in a duet by Hazel and Alice, with Mike Seeger playing the Maybelle Carter-style lead guitar. Dave Grisman and Billy Baker echo the antiphonal chorus of the song with a mandolin-fiddle duel break. (NR)

20. GONNA LAY DOWN MY OLD GUITAR

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

"Gonna Lay Down My Old Guitar" is a Delmore Brothers song. We always loved singing this old song. It was bluesy and lonesome and had a good feel to it. I love singing the harmony to bluesy songs. (HD)

21. TAKE ME BACK TO TULSA

Hazel Dickens, lead voice (verses), tenor voice (choruses), string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice (choruses), guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

This is an old western swing tune that we put a bluegrass spin on. It was fun to sing. My version comes from the legendary Bob Wills. (HD)

22. THEY'RE AT REST TOGETHER (TB BLUES)

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

I probably learned this song from an old Callahan Brothers record. I remember liking their singing as I was growing up. I used to sing it with one of my brothers. Alice and I worked it out to suit our style and changed the yodel somewhat. (HD)

23. JOHN HENRY

Lamar Grier, banjo; Hazel Dickens, string bass; Alice Gerrard, guitar; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

"John Henry" is one of the most recorded of all American folksongs, and a complete discography would no doubt fill several pages in small print. Of the many bluegrass recordings of this song, the most significant are those by Bill Monroe (1953: Decca 45-31540, Vocalion VL 3702), the Lilly Brothers (1956: Event 45-E-4272, County 729), the Osborne Brothers (1962: MGM E-4090), and Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs (ca. 1961: Columbia CL 1564). For references to the extensive folklore scholarship on this song, see G. Malcolm Laws' *Native American Balladry*. This lively performance features Lamar Grier's banjo. (NR)

24. JUST ANOTHER BROKEN HEART

Hazel Dickens, string bass; Alice Gerrard, voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

This is a Carter Family song. We were always big fans of their music. Some people have said that Alice sounds a little like Sarah Carter. Alice chose this as her solo performance for this album. (HD)

Alice Gerrard, Peter Siegel, Hazel Dickens, Mike Seeger at Mastertone Studio, New York City. Photo by John Cohen

25. TRAIN ON THE ISLAND

Hazel Dickens, voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, clawhammer banjo; Lamar Grier, bluegrass banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle; Fred Weisz, guitar

"Train on the Island" is a popular fiddle and banjo tune from the Galax region of Virginia. Hazel and Alice learned it from an old hillbilly recording by J.P. Nestor (banjo), which featured the fiddling of Norman Edmonds of Hillsville, Virginia. Released ca. 1928 (Victor 21070A), the recording can be heard on that fountain of folksong revival repertoire, *Anthology of American Folk Music,* vol. 3: *Songs,* Folkways FA 2953, Smithsonian Folkways SFW40090. A more recent performance of the song, from the same area, by Glen Smith (fiddle), Fields Ward (guitar), and Wade Ward (banjo) appears on *Bluegrass From the Blue Ridge,* Folkways FS 3832. Alice and Hazel's performance combines old-time and bluegrass banjo—Alice's frailed banjo contrasting neatly with Lamar Grier's bluegrass style banjo. Fred Weisz, an alumnus of the famous New York Ramblers, plays guitar. Hazel is the singer. (NR)

26. LOVER'S RETURN

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

"Lover's Return" is another beautiful Carter Family song and has always been one of my favorites. We changed the melody a bit and added a chorus. (HD)

27. I HEAR A SWEET VOICE CALLING

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Chubby Wise, fiddle

We got this song from Bill Monroe. We've always felt that it's one of his most sensitive and beautiful songs. This style and subject matter depict a side he rarely shows to the public. As we visited that hallowed place throughout this song, we were ever aware and we walked softly. We were very fortunate to have had the great fiddler Chubby Wise, who played on the original cut. (HD)

28. CHILDISH LOVE

Hazel Dickens, tenor voice, string bass; Alice Gerrard, lead voice, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; David Grisman, mandolin; Billy Baker, fiddle

The Louvin Brothers, Charlie and Ira Louvin, were favorites of ours and we learned "Childish Love" (written by them) from their recording. (AG)

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