

## Aggravatin' Beauty

### Track Notes

1. **Lulu Walls.** One of our favorite songs from the original Carter Family, the lyrics of this tune also inspire our CD's name. (Banjo: gDG<sup>+</sup>BD; Fiddle: standard)

2. **Elzic's Farewell.** The legendary fiddler, French Carpenter, played a raucous 2-part version of this modal tune and described it as "an old bagpipe tune" played as a farewell melody for an ancestor leaving to fight the Civil War. This tune was actually composed by Harvey G Elswick in Kanawha County, West Virginia, in April 1889. Harvey played this tune at his mother's request on her deathbed; the last thing she heard was her son bowing this haunting melody. (Banjo: aEAD<sup>+</sup>E; Fiddle: standard)

3. **Fall On My Knees.** A Round Peak tune from banjoist Fred Cockerham, this is a belt-out-the-harmonies staple to be sure. (Banjo: aDAD<sup>+</sup>E; Fiddle: ADae)

4. **Echoes of the Ozarks.** The earliest source we know for this tune is Fiddlin' Sam Long, who after winning a local contest recorded 4 tracks for Gennett Phonograph Records. We first heard this tune performed by Brad Leftwich and Dan Gellert on their seminal album *A Moment In Time*. The two versions are clearly related and we're grateful to Brad's highly-swung interpretation. (Banjo: aDAD<sup>+</sup>E; Fiddle: standard)

5. **Viola Lee Blues.** Our source is Cannon's Jug Stompers, from Memphis, Tennessee, in 1928. To be "Nashville bound" is to be heading to the state prison, not to fame in the Country Music industry. Cliff plays a

1936 National Steel Mandolin on this one. (Banjo: gDG<sup>+</sup>BD; Fiddle: standard)

6. **Roscoe's Gone.** Modal old-time tunes in D are hard to find so we were delighted when fiddler Ray Leach introduced us to this gem written by Hank Bradley. As the title suggests, he wrote this tune to commemorate Roscoe Holcomb's passing. (Banjo: aDAD<sup>+</sup>E; Fiddle: ADae)

7. **Down In The River.** We find Foghorn in any of its varieties — full band, trio, duo — such an inspiration. Respecting the purity of their approach, we have not strayed far from their version of this song but have added fiddle and vocal harmonies. (Banjo: gDG<sup>+</sup>BD; Fiddle: ADae)

8. **Falls of Richmond.** Our repertoire owes much to Allegheny Echoes, a fine annual West Virginia old time workshop committed to passing the music along. This tune is always a great favorite there and was where we first discovered it. It also appears in *The Edden Hammons Collection Volume 1*. Edden often played his A modal tunes with a "raised bass" on the fiddle, providing distinctive resonances and enabling certain flourishes. (Banjo: aEAD<sup>+</sup>E; Fiddle: ADae)

9. **Georgia Railroad.** Fennig's All-Star String Band recorded this old hoe-down tune in 1975 and remarked: "The words were probably just the collective inventions of many fiddlers over the years as they entertained themselves during a long dance set." We love the way this hoe-down sounds, especially when accompanied by some hard cider. (Banjo: aEAC<sup>+</sup>#E; Fiddle: AEae)

10. **Old Tennessee River.** This gem was written in his later years by the father of Bluegrass, Bill Monroe and fiddler Jimmy

Campbell. We pay homage to them while integrating traditional clawhammer banjo into our interpretation. (Banjo: eBEG#B; Fiddle: standard)

11. **Glory at the Meeting House.** In Old-Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes, Jeff Titon describes this tune as “an unusual local tune from the Kentucky River basin” and goes on to say that “many old-time fiddling enthusiasts believe this recording represents one of the peak achievements in this regional style of fiddling.” Our source is Luther Strong, who told Alan Lomax, “I won \$500 on this tune.” Hey, we’d happily accept a five-hunskiel! (Fiddle: EDae / Banjo: gDGBD)

12. **Meriwether.** We first discovered this rare and appealing tune on a field recording of Kentucky fiddler Clyde Davenport. Bruce Greene learned this tune from W.L. “Jake” Phelps in 1973. Davenport doesn’t recall his source but likely learned it from Greene. (Banjo: gDGBD; Fiddle: standard)

13. **Little Black Train.** Another from the Carter Family, a bottomless well of wonderful songs. (Banjo: aEAC#E; Fiddle: AEae)

14. **28th of January.** Played by many, our initial inspiration was the Fuzzy Mountain String Band. Then we heard the Bing Brothers’ version, which they play with such an addictive lilt. The Portland Collection Volume 1 credits Franklin George as the source, who has commented that in his 40 years of trying, he’s yet to learn the significance of the title. Alan Jabbour thinks this tune is related to “a minor version of the ‘Millers Reel’ tune, which is called ‘The 22nd of February’ in Knauff’s 1839 publication. Hence the title, which confuses the 22nd of February

(Washington’s Birthday) and the 8th of January (Jackson’s victory).” No wonder Frank George was mystified. (Banjo: aEADE; Fiddle: AEae)

15. **Fiddler’s Blues.** Fiddling Arthur Smith recorded this catchy number in 1936 in Charlotte, North Carolina, accompanied by guitar and tenor guitar. With the clawhammer banjo, we bring the Grand Old Opry just a wee bit closer to its Appalachian roots. (Banjo: aDADE; Fiddle: standard)

16. **Cumberland Gap.** This unusual version came to us from Sherman Hammons via the Bing Brothers, as modified by Ron Mullinex. Larry sings this one and assembled the lyrics from several sources. Don’t miss the last verse! (Banjo: f#BEAD; Fiddle: standard)

## Credits

Modal Tease is Cliff Latimer (mandolin, vocals), Belinda Thom (fiddle, vocals, harmonica), Jim Hamilton (clawhammer banjo) & Lawrence Ullman (bass, vocals). Aggravatin’ Beauty features the following special guests on guitar: Laura Osborn (Tracks 1-4,7,8,12,14) & Dodi Kennerly (Tracks 5,6,9-11,13,15,16 ).

Many thanks to our beloved spouses, families and friends ... none of this would have been possible without you! We’re deeply indebted to the old-timers who created a tradition that brings us so much joy. We’re also grateful for the thriving old-time community in Los Angeles, which carefully nurtures this tradition in our own backyard.

Recorded & Mastered by Matt Lynch at Mysterious Mammal Recording, LA, 2011.