

But this may merely be carping. Criticisms of what Jabbour and Fleischhauer did not do should not detract from what they did do--present a sympathetic portrait of a family of very fine folk performers.

Burl Hammons is a fiddler who plays in an early Southern style, as exemplified by his use of scordatura tunings, popular among older central West Virginia fiddlers. Several of his songs have also largely dropped out of tradition, e.g. "Fine Times at Our House." One of his songs, "Sugar Grove Blues" is his own composition, and another, "Jimmy Johnson," features Maggie on beating sticks. Both Burl and his brother Sherman play the banjo, Sherman in the characteristic Southern "frailing" style, and Burl in both frailing and picking styles.

Maggie Hammons Parker, the brothers' widowed sister, sings a capella in the style which has come to be associated with ballad singing--stately, ornamented, parlando rubato. Her voice shows the effects of age, but nonetheless her performance is stunning. Her song texts are full and detailed, and particularly interesting is "In Scotland Town," the first version of the "Hind Horn" ballad to be found in the United States outside of the Northeast coastal area. Maggie's comments on the song reflect the belief in the veracity of the story often found among traditional performers.

The stories the Hammonses tell reflect the same concern for fact. Many are personal reminiscences--the "expedition genre," according to Jabbour, is a favorite type of family narrative. Even the personal narratives rebound in supernatural motifs--with an attitude of skeptical fascination, Maggie tells of taking the hex off a calf, and Burl's account of awaking at age seven to the sound of a seven foot tall skeleton fiddling "Turkey in the Straw" is a gem, a brief but detailed memorate.

Maggie also tells a series of verse riddles which the collectors strive vainly to guess, and her description of how she learned them provides a model which Jabbour thinks characterizes folk tradition in the South generally. All the verbal performances, as well as the conversations and comments, are highly repetitive. Things are said several times by the same and different family members, giving the effect of firm conviction.

To sum up, The Hammons Family is a beautiful collection, a balance of scholarly observations and pure entertainment, and I recommend that anyone interested in Appalachian traditions get hold of a copy. I also hope that the Library of Congress will follow it up with similar recordings.

Steel Guitar Classics.

15 selections, instrumental, stereo, notes by Chris Strachwitz.

Old Timey LP-113. Old Timey Records, Box 9195, Berkeley, California, 94709, 1973. \$5.98.

Reviewed by Dennis Coelho.

The study of the popular culture of the post World War I period reveals a catalogue of the impact of the exotic on American life. Although the country ducked into political isolation, the popular arts responded to a growing sophistication in the post-war populace.

Successive fads in clothing, art, and cosmetics followed with the impetus of each foreign novelty. The opening and discovery of relatively undespoiled tombs in Egypt in the 20s had a widespread impact on furniture, women's fashions and cosmetic styles. Similarly, in the early twenties a fad for the things Hawaiian started on the West Coast and moved across the country leaving curious cultural hybrids and novel musical amalgams in its wake.

The ukelele, the flower print short-sleeve sport shirt (worn outside the trousers!), and the slide guitar, (probably even canned pineapple) remain like watermarks on edges of American popular culture and chart a path through the romance of the Mainland with things Hawaiian.

Steel Guitar Classics presents a chronology of musical forms developing out of the synthesis of Hawaiian forms and Mainland substance. The slide or steel guitar is a normally six-stringed guitar usually tuned to an "open" G major or some chord from the E major scale. The instrument is played in a horizontal position (the instruments usually setting on the musician's lap). The strings are approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " above the fingerboard and are fretted or stopped with a "steel" placed across the strings. "Steels" were made of various substances, wood, glass, hard rubber and even steel, which seems to give the clearest tone. Early players often used a flat bar (approximately 3" x $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 1") with a rounded edge. (Ergo, the term "steel guitar" comes from the playing method rather than from the metal resonator National and Dobro guitars which were later used almost exclusively because of their volume, tone and sustaining qualities.)

Following an initial burst of popularity on the West Coast, Hawaiian musicians toured the United States performing in tent shows, vaudeville, on radio and in the movies. Popular and traditional musicians thus exposed to the sliding, sustained tones of the instrument were quick to adapt it to western string, and both urban country blues. Popular entertainers such as Jimmie Rodgers blended an Hawaiian sound with a blues form and an Anglo-American performance aesthetic to sell an incredible number of records (which are still selling after almost 50 years.)

Black musicians (such as Son House, Bukka White to name just a very few) added the sliding sound to their own styles by the use of a slide made of glass or a metal tube fitted to a finger which allowed them to both finger and slide on the same instrument.

Steel Guitar Classics is a collection of the former styles played by some of the musicians responsible for the wide-spread popularity of the sound (the direct antecedent of today's lush pedal and knee lever produced Nashville sound). Included are Hawaiian tunes by Sol Hoopii & Kanui . . . Lula; and some remarkable performances by Jimmy Tarlton (later of Darby and Tarlton) of white country blues. The exuberant Cliff Carlisle and "the smooth Governor" Jimmie Davis add early smooth mainline C & W stylings. The recording is topped off by two cuts

by inimitable Clell Sumney with Roy Acuff's band played on an electrified instrument. Those who never saw "Cousin Jody" attempt to swallow his chin while dashing about his lap guitar, missed a moment in country music entertainment that is not likely to recur.

While the record seems to be more a fortuitous issue of sides that Old Timey had on hand rather than a purposeful attempt to chart the course of the steel guitar, it nonetheless succeeds in doing nearly just that.

Two years ago, shortly before he died Jesse Jones of Bloomington, Indiana, guitarist with the "Radio Rangers" told me about the impact of the slide guitar on his music. The "Rangers" were a country-and-popular band that played all over Indiana in the thirties and as their name implies had a successful radio following.

Mr. Jones talked about the band's excitement at hearing the slide, "steel" sound and of stopping at each music store in each town the band played in until they could buy an instrument that would give them the same sound. He talked with a remembered sadness of losing the instrument one rainy night in Northern Indiana when it bounced off the top of the car.

A well done and much needed record. Buy it.

Bessie Jackson & Walter Roland (1927-1935). Bessie Jackson, Walter Roland, Jolly Two (Walter Roland and Sonny Scott), and others.
14 selections, vocal and instrumental, reissues.
L-1017, Yazoo Records, Inc., 1973. \$5.98.

Reviewed by Patty Hall.

Bessie Jackson & Walter Roland (1927-1935) is a good combination of two excellent, but oft overlooked, blues artists from the Depression Era. Jackson, a vocalist, and Roland, a pianist, vocalist and guitarist, perform together on most of the cuts on this reissue album. Roland performs himself on six of the album's selections, and with Sonny Scott on two selections, calling themselves "The Jolly Two."

The album is a fine anthology of six and twelve bar blues and the selections are arranged on the record with a sensitivity for displaying the many faceted talents of each artist involved, as well as showing the vocal and instrumental development of each. For instance, Jackson's developing vocal style can be traced by the cuts, selected from different years (dated on the album cover) between 1927, when her voice was devoted to soft, and more country-style blues, to 1935, when she had adapted a much fuller, more dominant blues style.

Not only are there such cuts as "Jookit, Jookit," which show Roland as the fine, flowing blues pianist that he was, but there are other cuts, like "Penniless Blues," which demonstrate his vocal talents, and "T-Model Blues," in which he plays a simple sounding, yet rhythmically impeccable guitar. Special note should be