



Shake the Blues

The songs, artistry, and luthiercraft of
John Knutson

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*John Knutson guitars, mandolin, vocals, raked harmonica
Featuring: David Grisman mandolins and banjolin
Bill Fouty acoustic bass*

1. Lovesick Serenade—2:15 "Ragtime vibe circa 1910."
2. Lowdown Money Blues—4:43 "Pickin' for a livin' is a tough life."
3. Shake The Blues—3:24 "'40's style jump and jive."
4. Way Further Down That Road—3:48 "A big nod to Bobby 'Blue' Bland."
5. Sugar And Spice—4:09 "Sultry cha-cha for Susan."
6. My Dog Jake—4:24 "No grammar was harmed during the making of this song."
7. Or So It Seems—2:51 ©1974 "Captures the wonder of my youth at 18 years old."
8. Mando Boogie Stomp—2:26 "Eight-to-the-bar retro boogie woogie."
9. Let's Compromise—3:23 "A little blues therapy anyone?"
10. Talkin' Lovesick Serenade—2:31 "A mean-spirited look at heartache."
11. SlowPoke Shuffle—4:04 "Just a filthy little fable 'bout the tortoise and the hare."
12. Some Things You Can't Change—4:05 "White man's blues."
13. Borrowed Appalachian Blues—4:01 ©2011 "Dreamy 4/20 space jam."

Artist Notes

Herein is a collection of thirteen of John's original compositions spanning the last forty-five years, and played primarily on six of his Knutson Luthiery handcrafted guitars and mandolins. Besides playing his stringed instruments, John is also singing and playing harmonica on a rack.

In listening to this CD please keep in mind that this is essentially a live studio recording of an acoustic trio (with some added background vocals). This music was recorded in two six-hour sessions, unrehearsed, unplugged, and raw. Three guys, on a journey through the soundscape of acoustic blues, jazz, and Americana.

Instruments played in these recording sessions:

John Knutson

Vocals and racked harmonicas (Lee Oskar harps)

2001 Knutson Luthiery Nightlife archtop guitar

1979 Knutson Luthiery Songbird flattop guitar

2013 Knutson Luthiery wooden tricone resophonic guitar

2012 Knutson Luthiery Songbird archtop mandolin

2002 Knutson Luthiery Messenger upright electric bass

1920's Gibson trapdoor banjo

David Grisman

1922 Gibson Lloyd Loar F-5 mandolin aka "Crusher"

2013 Knutson Luthiery Songbird archtop mandolin

1927 Vega Style K 4-string "Tango Banjo" banjolin

Bill Fouty

1920 Pfretschner German acoustic bass

All words and music written by John Allen Knutson ©1974 to 2014



KNUTSON LUTHIERY



John Allen "Jack" Knutson, was born in Fort Knox Kentucky in 1951, and raised in Virginia. Being just old enough to remember the birth of rock'n roll in the late fifties, and just young enough to have caught the tail end of the big band era in the late sixties, he was witness to two overlapping worlds of American music, culture, and mythos. On account of that, he spent most of his adolescent years driftin' from genre to genre.

Had it not been for the timely 1969 Woodstock Music and Arts Festival and his love of music and guitars, John might never have realized his true passions, nor managed to fuse them into any reasonable means of support or livelihood. As it were, he founded Knutson Luthiery in 1981 and has been a full time guitar builder and part time professional musician ever since, writing songs and playing his own hand-crafted instruments in live performances and recordings. In pursuit of his craft he has single-handedly built over 350 of his custom designed instruments for discerning players around the world, and continues to produce fine instruments out of his Forestville, California shop.

John defines his experience of seeing the Duke Ellington and Count Basie Orchestras, Big Joe Turner, B.B. King, and innumerable other blues, folk, and jazz roots players in the late sixties as his most important musical reference point, and he has lived on a steady diet of tritones ever since. This notwithstanding, he freely admits he's not living in the past, and can readily appreciate pretty much anyone who can carry a tune and honestly manifest inspiration or spirit into their music and an audience, which is what this is really all about anyway.





David Grisman followed roots music from New Jersey to the Southeast, playing with The Even Dozen Jug Band, Red Allen and the Kentuckians and others. A disciple of folklorist Ralph Rinzler, David contributed to the vibrant Greenwich Village folk scene and later moved to the Bay Area, recording American Beauty with the Grateful Dead and forming Old & in the Way with Jerry Garcia. Grisman attracted brilliant musicians, and the 1976 formation of the David Grisman Quintet revolutionized acoustic string music. He has played with many of his heroes, from Stephane Grappelli and Svend Asmussen to Jethro Burns, Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs, and his friendship with Jerry Garcia produced a cherished legacy of recordings. Today he tours regularly with his Sextet, Bluegrass Experience Band and FolkJazz Trio. David's fifty years of playing, composing, and producing attest to his indomitable creative spirit.

Bill Fouty was born in Burbank California in 1950. In his early years, he studied the double bass with the legendary Nat Gangursky, and performed with various small chamber groups and orchestras throughout Los Angeles County. Also, while in Southern California, he graduated from the Dick Grove School of Music where he studied theory and composition as well as improvisation and ensemble playing. Since relocating to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1978, Bill has worked with jazz duo, trio and larger group formats with many fine bay area musicians, including The Susan Comstock Swingtet, guitarist Carl Vast, Susan Sutton Trio, and pianist Terry Henry.



Lovesick Serenade ©2011

"Instrumental ragtime with c. 1910 vibe. This is where jazz and shuffle blues came from—the dotted eighth note, America's unique musical gift to the world."

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2012 wooden tricorne resophonic guitar

David Grisman—1927 Vega Style K 4-string "Tango Banjo" banjolin

Bill Fouty—Pfrschner 1920 acoustic bass



Lowdown Money Blues ©2014

"Pickin' for a livin' is a tough life for most musicians."

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2001 Nightlife archtop guitar
David Grisman—Gibson 1922 Lloyd Loar F-5 mandolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass

I get tired of living from day to day,
I wake up every morning it's the same old thing,
The mailman came, but he brought bad news,
He left me singin' these lowdown money blues.

You know, the harder you work, the poorer you get
spinnin' your wheels and sinking deeper in debt.
I thought by now I'd have payed those dues,
but I'm still singin' these lowdown money blues.

I gotta borrow from Peter just to pay back Paul,
I'm lucky when I got any money at all.
You really wouldn't want to be in my shoes,
I'm still singin' these lowdown money blues.

Love of money, it's understood,
Is the root of all evil in the whole round world.
You'd take it with you if you could,
'cause if you ain't got no money, it just ain't no damn good.

Now, some of my friends, they do just fine,
but nine to five you know they're doin' time.
It really doesn't matter which game you choose,
We're all singin' these lowdown money blues.

One of these days before I'm gone,
I'll be singin' me a different tune.
Just want to unwind 'fore the day is through,
Without singin' these lowdown money blues,
Without singin' these lowdown money blues,
Without singin' these lowdown you know what blues.



Shake The Blues ©2013

"My 1940's style jump 'n' jive toon."

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2001 Nightlife archtop guitar
David Grisman—Gibson 1922 Lloyd Loar F-5 mandolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass

Shake the blues, forget your troubles, come on down let's have some fun.
Jump the blues, get down and dirty, dancin' all night long.

Shake the blues, now dig that rhythm, kick your troubles to the curb,
Ditch the blues and don't look back, don't let life get absurd.

When you feel that rhythm creepin' deep inside your bones,
Give it all you got until the groovin' gets you gone.

Shake the blues, now don't you worry, turn your troubles inside out.
Stomp the blues, get on your feet, don't let life pass you by.

Shake the blues, it's a captivatn' rhythm, soon you're gonna feel just fine.
Jump the blues, now let's get dizzy, dancin' all night long.

Shake the blues, come on get happy, let your cares just drift away.
Ditch the blues, now let's get with it, don't be a square from Delaware.

When you feel that rhythm creepin' deep inside your bones,
Justify your jive or just leave well enough alone.

Shake the blues, and get rambunctious, jump for joy, it's a real good thing,
Stomp the blues, and hit that jive now everybody swing.



Way Further Down That Road ©2013

"A big nod to Bobby 'Blue' Bland."

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2001 Nightlife archtop guitar

David Grisman—2013 Knutson Luthiery Songbird mandolin

Bill Fouty—Pfretschnr 1920 acoustic bass

Further down that road, just around the bend.
I'm gonna hit that jackpot, at the rainbows end.
Well you know, my luck it's gonna happen like that.

Further down that road, all over town.
It don't make no difference where, I lay my money down.
Yeah good times, you know it's gonna happen like that.

My daddy always told me, son you've gotta play to win.
My momma always told me, boy you just might lose again.

Further down that road, clean out of sight.
It don't make no difference now, if I'm wrong or right.
Yeah my life, you know it's gonna happen like that.

Further down that road, just one more town...
Gonna catch that dream, I been a chasin' down.
Yeah I know this time it's gonna happen like that.
Yeah this time, I know it's gonna happen like that.



Sugar and Spice ©2014

"Sultry cha-cha for Susan."

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2001 Nightlife archtop guitar

David Grisman—Knutson Luthiery 2013 Songbird mandolin

Bill Fouty—Pfretschnr 1920 acoustic bass

I love the way you cha-cha-cha,
Play with love, set the world on fire,
It's so easy can't you see,
Lovin' you is easy when you love me.

One step forward cha-cha-cha,
You move so easily across the floor.
Step back baby, can't you see,
Lovin' you is easy as 1-2-3.

When you hold me close to you, and we touch that special way,
I can feel the world inside of you.
And I taste your skin so sweet, hold me baby, love me baby,
And you whisper in my ear, you cast your spell on me.

Sugar and spice and everything nice,
That's what little girls are made of.
Nails and snails and puppy dog tails,
That's what makes this crazy world go 'round.

I love the way you cha-cha-cha,
Play with me set your world on fire.
It's so easy can't you see,
Lovin' you is easy when you love me.



My Dog Jake ©2014

"Dogs will be dogs! Absolutely no grammar was harmed in the making of this song. Totally 100% politically correct and vulgarity-free Webster's dictionary-approved language. John appears to have singlehandedly reclaimed the "B" word from misogynist gangsta rappers and restored it to its rightful place in the English language, because a culture that denigrates its women and others is not really a civil society, is it? And furthermore, religion and culture are no excuse for oppression and abuse, period. Humanity, awaken to your higher wisdom!"

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2012 wooden tricone resophonic guitar
David Grisman—Gibson 1922 Lloyd Loar F-5 mandolin
John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2002 Messenger upright electric bass

My dog Jake, he's a ramblin' Jack,
Drinks muddy water by the railroad track.
Three legs white and the other's black,
My dog has the blues.

Every time that train rolls by,
Jake would lift his leg up high.
Passengers would all decry,
My dog has the blues.

He's got a hell hound on his trail,
The bitches all love it when he wags his tail.
He was lost but now he's found,
Just like any other hound.

My dog Jake he's a ramblin' Jack,
Drinks muddy water by the railroad track.
He's no fool as a matter of fact,
My dog has the blues,
My dog has the blues,
My dog has the blues...



Or So It Seems ©1974

"Recording this song recaptures the wonder of my youth from 1969."

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 1997 acoustic flattop guitar
David Grisman—Gibson 1922 Lloyd Loar F-5 mandolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass

I never knew what life was like, just around the bend.
One more year behind me and I'm on the road again.
I see clearly everything, I was meant to see,
The sunset painted on the clouds floating in the breeze.

I was lost but now I'm found,
This old world keeps spinnin' round,
And the time keeps marchin' on,
I got lost, now you know I'm...

The moon shines softly down on me, chills me to the bone.
Starlit patterns in the sky, tell me I'm alone.
Emptiness surrounds me like the shadows in my dreams,
It's all in how you look at things, or so to me it seems.

I was lost, but now I'm found,
What goes 'round, comes around,
Like a ship, that's run aground,
I got lost, but now you know I'm...

Mando Boogie Stomp ©2014

"Retro eight-to-the-bar boogie woogie instrumental!"

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2012 Songbird archtop mandolin
David Grisman—1927 Vega Style K 4-string "Tango Banjo" banjolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass



Let's Compromise ©2014

"A little blues therapy anyone?"

*John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2001 Nightlife acoustic archtop guitar
David Grisman—Knutson Luthiery 2013 Songbird mandolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass*

You like your lovin' early in the morning, I like my lovin' late at night,
You scratch my back I'll scratch yours, let's compromise.
You want one thing I want another, we just can't see eye to eye,
You know how one hand washes the other, let's compromise.

Talk is cheap, but walkin's cheaper, everything is jive, Let's just turn the lights down low and make some compromise.
You go left and I turn right, we always end up in a fight, Let's keep movin' straight ahead, let's compromise.

It's hard to leave the past behind, and send your baggage down the line,
you know how one thing leads to another, let's compromise. Oh yeah, let's compromise.

Oh, let's compromise every which way, honey,
I believe you've got me in a compromising position baby,
You compromise me, I'll compromise you, yeah, that's what I'm talkin' about,
Now, we're talkin', now we're talkin', that's the way I like it, now we're makin' sense.

Talkin' Lovesick Serenade ©2014

"A mean-spirited look at heartache."

*John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2012 wooden tricone resophonic guitar
David Grisman—Gibson 1922 Lloyd Loar F-5 mandolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass*

I rolled the dice with you,
But you left me feelin' sad and blue,
Everything I did was wrong,
You me left me singin' this lonesome song,
If you don't love me, I'll be on my way.

Our river of love, became a trickle.
I felt like I was kissin' a sour pickle.
Our relationship wasn't worth a wooden nickel.
How'd your heart become so fickle,
If you don't love me, I'll be on my way.

You know we had a heap of fun,
But I'm no longer your number one.
Honey you left me in an awful mess,
But there's just one thing I'd like to stress,
If you don't love me, I'll be on my righteous way.

So I'm headed up Main Street, then down Vine,
I'm lookin' for another valentine.
I'll go around the block a time or two,
Maybe then I can forget about you,
If you don't love me, I'll be on my way.

SlowPoke Shuffle ©2013

"Just a filthy little fable 'bout the tortoise and the hare."

*John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 2001 Nightlife archtop guitar
David Grisman—Knutson Luthiery 2013 Songbird mandolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass*

They call me slow poke, 'cause I always takes my time,
They call me slow poke, 'cause I always takes my time,
But I win the prize when I cross that finish line.

You all know the story 'bout the tortoise and the hare,
Well there's a moral to this story that I'd like to share,
It's easy come, and easy go, 'cause the last man that's
standing is the one that's slow.
They call me slow poke, 'cause I always takes my time,
But I win the prize most each and every time.

Now that rabbit left the tortoise in a cloud of dust,
But the turtle wasn't worried ' cause he knew his stuff,
Slow and steady that's the way you win,
'Cause the rabbit had got overconfident.
They call me slow poke, 'cause I always takes my time,
But I win the prize when I cross your finish line.

Now the rabbit slowed down just to catch his breath
He must of thought he's runnin' an easy bet.
But soon he fell into a deep deep sleep,
And that's when the turtle began his midnight creep.
They call me slow poke, 'cause I always takes my time,
But I win the prize most each and every time.

The rabbit woke up it was the crack of dawn,
He looked around but the turtle was gone,
That's when he began to swear and curse,
Because the tortoise he got to the finish line first,
They call me slow poke, 'cause I always takes my time,
But I win the prize when we cross that finish line,
I win the prize most each and every time.
I hear you sigh when I cross your finish line.



Some Things You Can't Change ©2013

"White man's blues."

John Knutson—Dawg's Gibson 1920's "Trapdoor" banjo
David Grisman—Knutson Luthiery 2013 Songbird archtop mandolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass

I was born down in Kentucky,
And that's where I got my name.
My family moved back to Virginia,
That's where we all were raised.

My father was a good man,
And my mother she was strong,
They always worked an honest living,
And they taught us right from wrong.

Well there is no rhyme or reason,
To the ways of love and fate.
Every heart has got its season,
That's just one thing you can't change.

The sun has got its glory,
And the moon has got its glow,
Every life must have a reason,
That only God can know.
Only God can know.

The ways of fame and fortune,
Shift like sand upon our graves,
You can pay your dues a lifetime,
But there's one debt you can't change.

As you search this world of trouble,
And you try and find your place.
If your heart is full of loving,
That will be your saving grace.
That will be your saving grace.
That will be your saving grace...



Borrowed Appalachian Blues ©2014

"Dreamy 4/20 space jam."

John Knutson—Knutson Luthiery 1979 flattop guitar
David Grisman—Knutson Luthiery 2013 Songbird mandolin
Bill Fouty—Pfretschner 1920 acoustic bass

Produced and recorded by Jeff Martin
Executive Producer John Knutson

Recorded at Studio E, Sebastopol CA USA
Mixed by Jeff Martin and John Knutson at Studio E
Mastered by Jeff Martin at Studio E

Photography by Jonathan Ayers Photography and Production
Additional photography Jeanette Robsahm and John Youngblood

Layout and design by Leha Carpenter

I'd like to give special thanks to:
My dear mother Betty Jo @ 93 years
Susan Comstock for her love and inspiration
Dawg and Fouty for their soulful playing
Former President Jimmy Carter for his latest book:
A Call To Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power
And to all my friends and relations

More Information related to this CD

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10% of the net profits from this CD donated to www.greenpeace.org

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