



jeff black  
folklore

## **FOLKLORE LINER NOTES**

by Jeff Black

I've been thinking about this record, this kind of record, for a long, long, time. I've been working over time to see it clearer. As a listener and a writer, I move toward the songs that are born from a picture first. The torn old photo where my Grandma and her camera captured a moment around 1930 of two brothers and their dog on the sunny side of their house in the winter, has followed me around for 40-some years. The old print reveals more in its composition than I might ever write in a lifetime.

My Grandma Lotos played piano in church, my Great Grandad played guitar, as did my Uncle Lyle, who is standing on the left next to my Dad in the cover photo. My Dad played some guitar and the tenor banjo. There is a humble legacy here that started way back in the country, through the rites of dances and church socials, passed down through stories. I was told my Dad and his brother spent a good amount of time performing at barn dances around the country up in north Missouri when they were young. Coming up through the Great Depression, playing music for them was probably more out of hunger and necessity than the need for self expression or nurturing the luxury of emotion. I think it's the picture of my Dad looking into the camera, into the future, that inspires me, and the fade of my uncle into the unknown that keeps me searching.

I've been thinking about the kind of music that we dance to out of need, where vanity is absent. The kinds of songs that are sung out of need too, where the ego stands down. Where true pop culture begins before it is destroyed with the notions of fame and riches. When people dance for themselves, with each other in sync, in rounds, where they emulate the universe...I believe this is a primal need. With no fear of failure and no audience to read, people play music through instinct. It is our work. It is a valid and valuable life's work, whether anybody ever hears it or not.

I wrote and recorded thirty plus songs for this album and the 13 that actually made it to the final release are the pictures I kept returning to. Not all of the songs are derived from my line of history. Some are for a fighting friend and a forgotten child. Others recount a ride on a city bus and a short study on never settling. The narratives don't have near as much to do with me or the pictures I attempt to paint, as they do with the pictures people conjure up in their mind when they let them in. I did my best to explore both sides, the dark and the light lines that are drawn through all of us.

When you start looking at 10 fingers, half a dozen or so strings, countless frequencies and the endless possibilities of story and song, the dogged thoughts and dark hopes are ultimately edged out. Nothing gets in but creation - and that's where I hoped to start, where this album begins. I feel fortunate to just to have been in the vicinity when they came through.

For more information on Jeff Black and *Folklore* please visit [www.JeffBlack.com](http://www.JeffBlack.com).

