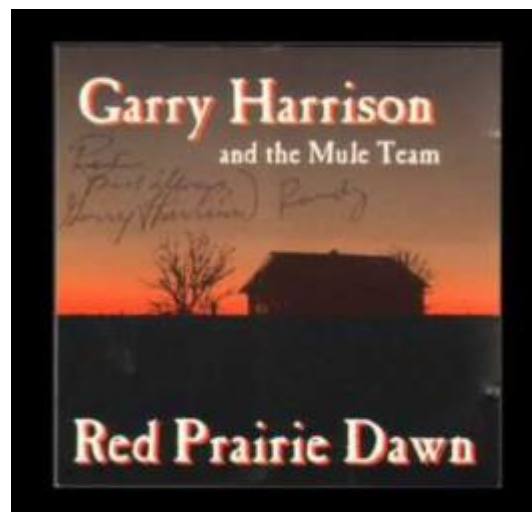


TUNE OF THE WEEK – 2/18/17

RED PRAIRIE DAWN

Garry Harrison's meticulous compilation of traditional music called Dear Old Illinois and his band – the Indian Creek Delta Boys – is all that I'd heard of about him. However, I recently discovered Mr. Harrison also composed on the fiddle. As soon as Hangout member Don Huber shared his video playing Red Prairie Dawn at a festival, the tune entranced me and I sought Garry's own CD with the same title with the Mule Team band. Right after learning it, I was surprised to hear Adam Hurt released it on his new CD, Artifacts. The tune's widespread popularity has been on the rise and so I thank Don for this TOTW.



I haven't been to Illinois or the Great Prairie at all. But one can imagine the vast land, the rolling hills, the grassland, the farms, and the historic events that occurred there. Some BHO members live in Illinois and probably knew or saw Garry Harrison.

Here are some facts about him: Born in 1954, he began fiddling at age 16 and his father taught him traditional fiddle music after witnessing his keen interest. The well-known band the Indian Creek Delta Boys, with whom Garry fiddled, were instrumental in spreading old-time music in the 70's through 90's.

Garry spent several decades learning, collecting, playing, and composing traditional fiddle music in Illinois, especially the southern part of the state where it hadn't yet been documented. His more recent band, the Mule Team, won at Clifftop in the traditional band contest in 2008. He also made instruments and collected fretless zithers, which he donated to the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

Garry's sudden death was a shock to those who knew him. In 2012 he died in his sleep. His legacy has already begun....

Here are some versions of Red Prairie Dawn to watch. When Garry plays the original I hear it as a hoedown. The other versions range from an upbeat bluegrass-style tune to one that's enchanting and mystical. I hope Don Huber posts his video, too.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xF90s_DeHPQ original recording of tune by Garry Harrison and The New Mules

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwVvGI680Bk> Foghorn Stringband, high energy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrhnwCPAk3U> dobro and band, a "mystical" sound

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlYgaJxPuE> fiddle and mandolin, a pretty duet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VudmJhTqr4A> clawhammer banjo and mandolin, newgrass?

<https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/adamhurt5> Adam Hurt, track 5 on Artifacts CD, elegant clawhammer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hk0gq1YcqMY> Garry Harrison playing an instrument called "The Peanut" (just so you see a unique side of his interests)

Here's Ken Torke's tab in open G tuning (you might consider passing him a five once in a while for a sarsaparilla – he provides so many of our TOTW tabs!):

<http://www.taterjoes.com/banjo/RedPrairieDawn.pdf>

I was inspired to make a little slide-show video with images of a red prairie sunrise accompanied by my cello banjo arrangement. I tried four different tunings, but like the one in double C the best. Though the original is in the key of A, on cello banjo it comes out in A since it's tuned down to eAEAB. The video ends with an arrangement in open A tuning played on my small-scale Doc's Banjo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJSba0c3jpc>.

[MP3 link to my site](#) and [Tabs on my site](#)

Thanks for reading and listening. Hope you enjoy this week's old-time Tune of the Week and consider writing one yourself, no matter how simply you present it to us. It's really all good.