

cal styles, and solid original material. In 2003 and 2004 the group was honored with Emerging Artist of the Year nominations by the IBMA, and this release shows why. **Blake Williams's** original banjo instrumental, *Hot Pursuit* (dedicated to Barney of the Andy Griffith Show, because, as Blake writes, "He really know how to lead a one-car parade!"), is a nifty tune worth checking out, and displays Blake's clean, crisp playing—as does his break on their polka-tinged version of *Washington County*. For more info go to www.WilliamsAndClarkExpedition.com

Clarke Buehling and the Skirtlifters have released "A Ragtime Episode," consisting of 18 pieces from around the turn of the 20th century. As Clarke writes, "Finger-style banjo, called guitar-style at the time, was all the rage among 5-string players from the 1880's up through the advent of jazz and the demise of ragtime... allowing for more complex harmonies and syncopation." This recording showcases Buehling's finger-style banjo mastery in the context of various period-authentic string band configurations. Includes the rollicking *Fire Bell Galop*, the ragtime march *Creole Belles*, the syncopated rag *Bowery Buck*, Scott Joplin's *The Entertainer* and *Maple Leaf Rag*, and the lovely *Georgia Grind*, originally a piano solo arranged by Clarke. The playing is impeccable, and infectiously cheery. CDs are \$15, and available from their website at www.theskirtlifters.com

Ellen and **John Wright** have released "I Shook Hands with Eleanor Roosevelt," consisting of 12 mostly familiar songs performed in a simple folky style. Some of the renditions of these songs (*Little Liza Jane*, *Buffalo Gals*, *Oh Susanna*) remind me of my great uncles' singing, during the family musicals we used to have. John is a past columnist for BNL, and the author of "Traveling the High Way Home: Ralph Stanley and the World of Traditional Bluegrass"; Ellen is working on an as-told-to biography of **Roni Stoneman**, the 20-year star of Hee-Haw. John's banjo picking style is Seegeresque, perfect in this setting. For info, go to <http://EllenAndJohnWright.iuma.com>

The Bear Family have released "Bill Monroe: Far Across the Bluewater" (BCD 16624 EK), a 4-CD and DVD of never-before-issued live recordings of Monroe cut

in 1975 and 1989 on his visits to Germany. The 1975 trip included Kenny Baker, Ralph Lewis on guitar and vocals and **Bob Black** on banjo.

Old-Time Recordings: The Bear Family have released "Uncle Dave Macon: Keep My Skillet Good and Greasy, (BCD 15978 JM)" a 9-CD and one DVD boxed set containing everything Uncle Dave recorded in his commercial career, along with unreleased tests, home recordings, radio recordings, and the 1940 film *Grand Ole Opry* on the DVD. There is a 176-page

hardback book with essays by Charles Wolfe, discography by Ralph Rinzler, Norm Cohen and Tony Russell, lots of photos, lyrics of the songs, memorabilia, pics of 78s and their sleeves. Available online at www.bear-family.de.

—Donald Nitchie

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