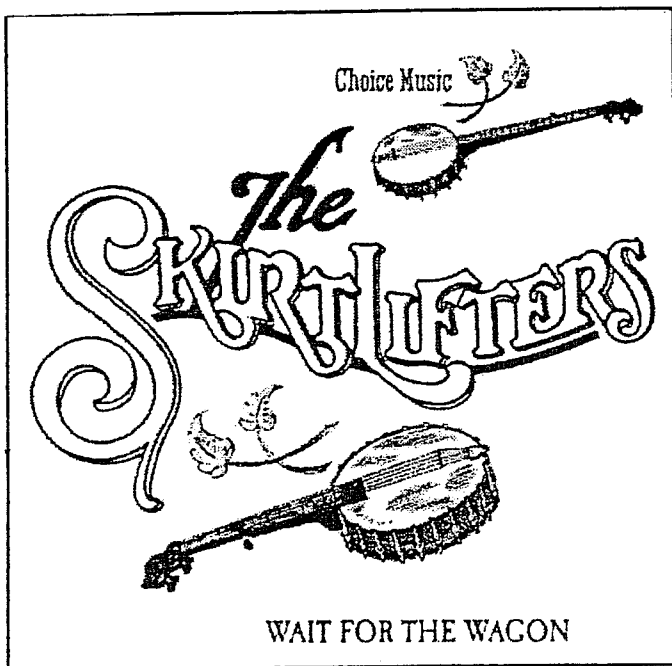


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Clarke Buehling and the Skirtlifters *Wait For The Wagon*

As one listens to a recording (especially a banjo recording), it usually becomes apparent what the recording artist's "agenda" or motivation for making the recording was. Sometimes recordings are produced to fulfill the sales demands of an artist's following of fans. Sometimes the artist has something to say, musically speaking. Often, a banjoist attempts to update or recreate some of the

great banjo accomplishments of the past. Sadly, some recordings are produced simply to satisfy the ego of the banjoist or to "prove" to everyone else that he or she can play the banjo. And, rarely, a recording comes along where the recording artist captures and conveys the joy and spirit of the music he or she is performing without revealing any hidden motive for its production. *Wait For The Wagon* by classic and minstrel banjoist Clarke Buehling and the "Skirtlifters" is one such recording.

Clarke Buehling and the Skirtlifters admittedly long for the past...specifically the mid to late 1800s. *Wait For The Wagon* selections include folk dances, marches, rags and novelty tunes all performed on vintage instruments played in traditional styles with appropriate instrumentation. Each track of this recording authentically captures what a listener might have heard at a local dance or musical performance over a century ago. The liner notes remind us that, at that time, music was not instantly accessible (as it is today). In those pre recording, radio and television days, a musical performance was a local event (often requiring much effort on the part of the listener to attend).

The instrumentation chosen by Buehling varies with each selection. From his classic and fretless minstrel banjos to the accompanying nylon string guitar, mandolin, violin, trumpet, cello, piano and bones, each track conjures up a musical setting and genuine feeling very rarely heard in today's environment. Too often, a nostalgic effort is marred by the artist's conscious or unconscious decision to allow the vintage music to be altered by the more modern musical elements and advances that had taken place since it (the vintage music) was first written and popularized. In the case of *Wait For The Wagon*, that common fault is never present. One would have to speculate that, had CD technology existed in the 1800's, the result of a recording session at a local musical performance might have resulted in something very similar to *Wait For The Wagon*.

Clarke Buehling seems to be one of those rare individuals who finds a sincere and great joy in living and performing in the manner of the past. Bravo! (*Ordering information can be found in an advertisement elsewhere in this magazine*)