

Mp3 The Vagrantz - The Roads Not Taken



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Modern folk; contemporary music with meaningful lyrics and reminiscent of late 60's, early 70's. 10 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: This CD contains an eclectic blend of musical styles, with thought provoking heartfelt lyrics. THE VAGRANTZ , (Doc Watts Mark McNutt) CD The Roads Not Taken was produced at Witchwood Productions a homegrown grassroots company based in Cosby, Tennessee and the never never land of the world wide web. Witchwood is the name of our property. Witch because we are pagan and the forest (wood) surrounding our house is a mystical and magical place. The joys of modern technology have finally enabled us to publish and share our lifelong artistic endeavors. Self-taught on web design, music recording/digital engineering CD production my wife, Peg Watts, is able to promote and publish the results of Mark s and my many years of songwriting while also adding her own special flair to the mix. We would like to thank Evan Hurley (a local musician and friend) for the use of his amplifier during the recording of 'Chemical Girl' 'Mother of Exiles' on The Vagrantz's CD The Roads Not Taken. MusicAlways Makes Me Feel This Way was written in 1987. Peggy and I had just moved from Colorado to the east coast together. We were staying at my parents house in Waldwick, New Jersey on a temporary basis while looking for jobs and our own place. I was looking forward to working with Mark directly, as we had spent the last couple of years sending our compositions back and forth to each other through the mail. Mark came right out of the starting gate with the very beautiful 'Music'. He has always had a love for a very broad range of musical influences and styles and its really evident here. I love this song! It was the middle of summer and 'Music" was our definitive summer song. I wanted to flirt with just a touch of commercialism in the lyrics and groom the imagery towards a more AM / FM radio sound.. A first and a last for me It was really Marks playing that influenced how the lyrics danced out. A mean case of summer meets the music head on and its good to be alive! 'Music' is a

message song, but only in the sense that music is a sort of message in and of itself. The Mavericks history starts back in 1990, when I was a fork-lift operator at Lycian Stage Lighting in Sugarloaf, New York. I was in charge of shipping and receiving by day and doing my artistic thing all the rest of the time. Of special note, both Peggy and Mark also worked at Lycian at this time. The work that I did was physical and repetitious which left my mind open to working out the lyrics to new song ideas. In the case of 'The Maverick', all I had at the time was the phrasing, "You held those reins right in your hands, I was fighting your commands, but girl you had me tamed right from the start". That was it. Between other songs and other projects, it always got regulated to the back burner and over time it got swallowed up by obscurity altogether. Fast forward to July of 2004. Mark was due to show up for recording sessions at Witchwood in Tennessee for 'The Roads Not Taken' CD. We both had a loose agenda of the songs that we were going to work on but I wanted to pull another rabbit out of the hat. I chose 'The Maverick'. The lyrics were written on my half-hour lunch breaks over the course of the next couple of days. Peggy was the songs inspiration, but it's also very autobiographical in nature covering the early part of our relationship with a lot of hidden meanings. It was a very different type of a song for me. Mark helped me flesh out the music and the changes, what worked, and what didn't work, until we slowly zeroed in on the finished version recorded July 2004. The lyrics to 'Chemical Girl' were written in 2002 while living at Witchwood in Tennessee. I had picked up one of Peggys magazines and was thumbing through it out of curiosity. The whole thing was nothing but an endless stream of advertisements for womans products. Start to finish! I think the actual guts of the magazine turned out to be something like ten or twelve pages! I couldn't believe it! For a lark, I started to make a list of just how many products were crammed between the covers when I thought to myself, "Theres a song in all of this somewhere." And there was... Mark worked out the music when he came down for a Witchwood recording session in July of 2004. We played with the words and the timing, the songs retro rock n' roll style and the unusual middle. It all fell into place pretty fast. The icing on the cake was Peggys production work, one stand-out being the clever way she threw the word 'whirl' into a sustained delayed echo. Priceless. Good song. Great teamwork. Dakota Moon is another song that Mark composed in the summer of 1974. I have always thought that this piece of music really showcased a very sensitive and mature transition in Marks writing style. Its very beautiful and its very dark, and its very exposed. So much so, that it really caught me off guard at the time. This was not the kind of song that Mark sat down and spun out. It was almost as if he lowered all of his defenses and

just let the song come through him, as opposed to, from him... Or maybe it was just the Northern Lights, which he had never seen before, putting together a love song over a series of nights on a cross-country trip through the Dakotas. Years later, in 1984, I added another dimension to the song by working out a spacey background backing vocal when it was rerecorded at the Most Production Studio in Boulder, Colorado. . It was an after-thought, and a happy accident for me The production engineer at playback thought that the song was too stripped down, too simple, next to the other songs that had been recorded. Mark had already laid down all his guitar and vocal work and returned to New Jersey. I felt like we were tampering with the songs integrity and had to be coaxed into doing the additional vocals. It all worked out okay, and Mark actually liked the end result. Over the years, Mark has also made his fair share of changes in the song. Peggy has always liked the Most Production version of the song and digitally cleaned and spiffed it up for inclusion on 'The Roads Not Taken' CD in 2004. Mark was living in New Jersey and I was living in Colorado in late October of 1985 when we both began work on an instrumental piece that would eventually turn into the song 'Blood Of The Rose'. Since we were living several states away from each other we had to send all of our work back and forth on cassette tape through the mail. It was very time consuming, which was also the reason that we worked on multiple songs at any given point in time, but that wasn't all that unusual for us. This was a very different song right from the outset. Mark was giving me Spanish influences with crisp dark overtones. I had wonderful images in my head long before I began to write the lyrics and when I did start writing, it was on multiple levels. One was the storyline and the other was all the metaphors that started to creep in on top of that. The fidelity of the romance within the song was really our bittersweet love affair with life. The 'blood of the rose' was the soul taking time to stop and smell the flowers. Its easy to get tangled up in the thorny vines, but as long as we believe in ourselves and each other, we've already won. Musically, I have always thought that this was by far, some of Marks best work, and between us, we see-sawed back and forth surprising each other with every new frill. At one point, there was even an incredibly long instrumental part in the middle It was truly a labor of love. In retrospect, I think that we both wanted each other to see that we had grown in our craft over the years, and secretly, I believe that we needed to see that too. It is important to note this is one of the very first songs that started out our long relationship of working together, 'The Reality', was also a large production number. It was like coming round full circle. In November of 2004, Mark and I recorded a very short and concise version of 'Blood Of The Rose' at Witchwood that ended up on the 'The

Roads Not Taken' CD... The Haunting , is another song written shortly after Peggy and I arrived in Waldwick, New Jersey from Colorado in the spring of 1987. I may have brought some of it's beginnings with me, writing in my head on the long drive out, but it was finished up in a day or two. I wrote it for my little sister Pamela who was killed in a hit a run accident on Route 17 in New Jersey several years earlier. Not only did Mark help me work out the music but also another very close musical friend of ours Steve "White Pants" Jordan. Both of them knew Pam, my sister. I don't think Steve was overly enthusiastic about the subject matter, but he was very helpful, I don't blame him for his reticence as it was a very personal and heartfelt song to work out all the way around. Mark's melody is wonderful. It is not depressing, instead it is light and airy with a great counter-balance to the words. I was impressed how it walked a narrow line between an uplifting and sad state, its simplicity maintaining a soft tension to the story. Mark's harmonies are surreal. It's dangerous for an artist to train themselves not to feel even as an escape from personal hurt. When you get to the point where you choke down your feelings you eventually take yourself to a place where you can no longer feel. You become numb to the pain. When someone who works in the arts can't feel- then they work from craft, not emotion. They stop being artists and simply become technicians. I only became aware of 'Visionary Man' a couple of months before it was put on the 'The Roads Not Taken' CD. Peggy was working up pretty much all of the above information on Marks own solo web page and creating CD demo copies for Mark to hand out at his live solo outings. I got to hear it and read the lyrics at the same time. I love this song! I really enjoyed hearing Mark flex his muscles on the lyrics. Its wonderfully political with a great sense of dark humor. In fact, the scope of his imagery is so fine tuned and broad at the same time that you can infer multiple things on multiple levels. Just who, or what exactly, is the visionary man? Big business? Big Government? Some religious dude? I won't pretend myself to know the answer, but after having listened to the song repeatedly with a smile upon my face I've come away with an inkling that in all probability,.....its really Mark. Mother Of Exiles has had two distinct lives. In its first outing it was called 'Blackberry Winter', and the music and the lyrics were written by Mark back in the late summer, or early fall of 1974, when we both lived in a communal house on Midland Avenue in Paramus, New Jersey. Musically, the song is exactly the same in both of its incarnations. The lyrics that Mark had were very much like an abstract painting as I recall, with a pallet full of images and word play. It was a wonderful song that got played often when we performed live or for close friends. Now, around 1989, I started work on a new song called 'Mother Of Exiles', which is another name given in

reference to the statue of liberty. This was my very first overtly political song where I tried taking a few swings at several social issues. I had been listening to the radio for a while around this time wondering "Where have all the protest songs gone to?" I was raised during the fifties and sixties on the social consciousness of the folk music movement which was part of my embedded awareness. It seemed to have died away. One day when I was kicking back and relaxing I played an old cassette tape of music that we had recorded along with a good friend of ours, Steve Jordan, called 'The Attic Jam Tape' and basically 'rediscovered' Mark's 'Blackberry Winter'. I had the lyrics to 'Mother Of Exiles' in front of me and couldn't believe how well the two different parts fit together! At the time I just had the song as a poem with no music in mind. I asked Mark if he minded doing a reworking of his song pushed off into another direction, and like a prince, he agreed to see where we could take it. Both of us are very open about that sort of thing anyway. In July of 2004 we both spent a considerable amount of time doing quite a few recording sessions until we captured this version that was put on 'The Roads Not Taken' CD. Peggy gave the song a distinct sound that set it apart on its own while paying homage to the original. Peggy's Song: It would be an understatement to say that quite a few songs were written in the apartment Peggy and I had on Locust Street in Warwick, New York. We loved this town! Despite life's usual ups and downs this was one of the happiest times of our lives! We did everything together! We still do. At this particular place and time I wrote the lyrics based on my very own personal muse, my wife, Peg. Mark wrote the music and we worked out the harmonies and the middle bridge. The version of Peggy's Song appearing on 'The Roads Not Taken' CD comes from one of our recording sessions in the fall of 1987 working in the kitchen or on the back porch. We had slow versions and fast versions. In 2004 Peggy took her favorite version and added reverb, flanger and phase-shifter as production engineer. Hey, it's HER song. I guess I don't have to add that it is a love song written about the undying love I have for my soul mate. Thank you Peg, and Mark for making it so special. A friend on my space said .I love how Peggy's Song sounds like it came out of a cave in Alaska

The Roads Not Taken : In the winter of 1987 Peggy and I were living in an apartment on Locust Street in Warwick, New York, when Mark came over and first played us this song. And what a beautiful song it was! Dreamy and calming with a style that walked the line between folk and country without really falling into either camp. The music was ethereal I recall Mark making the casual declaration that he was going to keep this tune pretty much for himself as a more of a solo effort. Again, not unusual for us. I had an instrumental version of this song down on tape that I played on a somewhat regular basis,

because I enjoyed it so much. But one day, while playing it for the umpteenth time, all sorts of lyrics started flooding in. Over the course of a few weeks I wrote them all down. I'm a little fuzzy on what lyrics Mark had written out but I think that's because he was still working everything out on his end when I started to bug him to listen to what I was coming up with. I really made a nuisance of myself. In my defense, it's all Mark's fault. The music elicited very introspective emotions and even brought about a change and a maturity to the way that I would write in the future. Mark's music has always had that effect on me which is why I enjoy working with him so much. In the long run, Mark must have heard something worthwhile, because he allowed me to bring my lyrics in. Or maybe, I just wore him down over time. I may never know. 'The Roads Not Taken' was, in retrospect, to me, evaluating our lives right up to the moment of that song itself. The version that appears on the CD comes from a recording session that took place in the living room of another apartment that Peggy and I had on Oakland Avenue, in the same town of Warwick, in late fall of 1991. For the record, this is one of the very first songs that Peggy did production work on when we crystallized the idea of putting out our very first CD of music. The song was remixed here at Witchwood Productions in 2004, where Peg added phase shifter and depth to a very long and straight forward take of guitar and vocal. It sounds completely different from the basic recording that Mark and I put down. Something that appealed to the creativity in all of us. Just another road we chose to take..

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