

## Mp3 Bob Frank - A Little Gest Of Robin Hood



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"Bob Frank has earned his place in the 700 year old tradition of troubadors who have rhymed of Robin Hood. Somewhere, those who sang, those who wrote down and those who lived the events he sings about, are smiling." - Seth Feldman, CBC Radio 8 MP3 Songs SPOKEN WORD: Poetry, SPOKEN WORD: With Music Details: "One of the nation's greatest songwriters." Ron Wynn, Nashville City Paper.

"An engrossing acoustic adaptation of the 456-stanza 15th century narrative poem."

nashvillescenewebsite, October 25, 2002. Bob's CD, A Little Gest of Robin Hood, is one of the most unusual CD's on the market. In fact, I will go so far as to say, it is unique. There is nothing else out there like it. What it is, is Bob Frank performing his version of the oldest and longest Robin Hood ballad in existence. This thing was originally written in the 1400's or earlier, first printed in the early 1500's, and considered just an old dead artifact for 600 years. Then Bob Frank got a hold of it. He translated it from Middle English into modern English, put his own tune to it (there wasn't any music for it that anybody knew of), memorized all 456 verses of it, and recorded it on digital equipment right there in the upstairs bedroom of his home, on Robin Hood Drive. If you want to hear a 21st century rendition of a 15th century song, one with all the old medieval flavor still intact, this is the CD you've been searching for. With all the colorful characters, the action-packed story, the vivid language, and the strong moral thread that weaves it all together, this thing is prettier than a painting, better than a book and more fun than a movie. It's told in a bold narrative voice amidst the age-old setting of an acoustic guitar. If you want to spend an hour and twenty minutes shoulder to shoulder with Robin Hood and his strong young men, you don't need to wait any longer. Your ticket to the greenwood is right here. By the way, college professors in England, Canada, and the U.S. are using this CD in their classes on Medieval Literature and History. This is the father of all outlaw ballads. This is the one all the other ones came from. Remember "Jesse James"? This

is the original "Jesse James." If you care anything about outlaw songs, you will love this CD. We guarantee it. Remember Waylon Jennings? This is the song he was always looking for. Praise from Professionals and Fans Alike On Bob's CD of the Gest: 'Dear Bob -- I have indeed listened to it and loved it -- I really had expected to be disappointed just a little, because your own live performance was so good, but so much was conveyed that I was completely delighted. What's more, one of my Renaissance colleagues was so interested when she heard me plugging it that when I lent her one, she returned the next day with ten dollars, wanting to keep it -- apparently her son had loved it!' Chris Chism Assistant Professor of English, Rutgers University 'Hi Bob, the CD arrived today, and the package looks great! Thanks' I am teaching Robin Hood next semester, and I plan to play the CD in class. I will also order a copy for our audio-visual center.' Thomas Ohlgren Professor of Medieval Studies, Purdue University Editor of Medieval Outlaws and co-editor of Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales 'I got your CD, Bob! And I wanted to extend a very big greenwood thank you for your great courtesy. Not just for sending me the CD, but for actually recording it in the first place. I think you've done the legend a great service' I'm really in awe of the witty modernization of some lines ' very, very impressive. And your delivery is just perfect! Dramatic, witty, warm, thoroughly human -- it really demonstrates that the Gest was meant to entertain people, not sit in some dusty book on a dusty shelf. So, once again -- thanks!' Allen Wright Webmaster of 'Robin Hood ' Bold Outlaw of Barnsdale and Sherwood' Toronto, Ottawa, Canada If you want to learn the story behind how and why Bob resurrected this ballad from the old musty pages of a library book, here it all is, in his own words: A Translation That's Not Really a Translation of a Song Nobody Can Sing I first came across the Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode back in 1973, in James P. Child's The English and Scottish Popular Ballads. I was trying to write a story about Robin Hood, and I figured I would check out some of the original sources. This old ballad, originally printed by Wynkyn de Worde in the 1500's, was one of the earliest ones, so I started with it. Only problem was, it was written in late Middle English. I had this weird idea that I could just look at these old words, and their meanings would make themselves clear to me. I started in on it, and before I'd gone through the first verse, I was thumbing around in the glossary looking for definitions. But my efforts paid off. As I got deeper and deeper into this obscure beauty, I became entranced by it. This stuff was pure gold. I kept asking myself, who wrote this thing? Where did it come from? Why isn't it in everybody's school book? Why hasn't anybody ever put this thing into modern English? Could it be that nobody knows it exists? I just figured, well, maybe nobody thinks it's good

enough. Or, maybe nobody has taken the time to read it and find out just how good it really is. I didn't know the answer to any of these questions. All I knew was, I was infatuated with this old poem. I wanted to be able to read it whenever I felt like it. I wanted to be able to read it to my children. And I didn't want to have to look up every other word when I did it. I'm a songwriter. That's what I do. I've been writing songs all my life. Hell, I write 'em in my sleep. Back in the day, I memorized every folk song that came down the pike. I could sing them all for you. And this one, this Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode, looked like the granddaddy of them all. All I had to do was re-spell it. But I soon found out, this wouldn't work because some of the words have changed beyond recognition. In order to keep the rhythm and rhyme of the old ballad stanza, I was forced to come up with some new words here and there. In some places, some new lines. And in other places, a whole new verse. But this was right down my alley. This was a challenge that tasted like candy. And because nobody had ever put it into modern English before me, at least not to my knowledge, I felt like I could do whatever I wanted with it and nobody would know the difference. It was almost like I was creating a whole new song from scratch. But I didn't really want to turn it into anything other than what it already was. The language was so pure, so simple, so strong. It was perfect, just the way it stood. I just wanted to fix it so anybody who walked in right off the street would be able to read it. Then it sat in a desk drawer for thirty years. I didn't know what to do with it. Who would publish it? Could I perform it somewhere? Where? How? Would I speak it? Sing it? It was too long to put a tune to. I just let it lie there. Every few years or so, I would take it out, dust it off, and read it out loud to my kids and my wife. Or just silently to myself. The beauty of it never wore off. Surely, the world should hear this thing. Maybe somebody would like it. But how to go about it? I didn't have a clue. Then, late in 2001, I saw Tom Ohlgren's book, *Medieval Outlaws*, and there it was, my favorite poem in the English language, translated into prose. Hey, I thought. Maybe there's an audience for this thing after all. I quickly had my version of it printed up and sent it to Tom, found his phone number and called him up. He was the picture of helpfulness. Straightened me out on several places in the text where I had read it wrong, turned me on to this Robin Hood group, a bunch of scholars, artists, writers, actors, etc., who were having a conference in a few months up in Canada, and helped get me on the program there, so I could actually do a performance of the Gest for these folks. Of course, this meant I would have to memorize it, or part of it, enough to give a performance, and come up with some sort of something or other to play on the guitar as I spoke the words. As it turned out, I went up there and played the first two fits for them. They loved it.

They wanted to hear the whole thing. Little did they know, I didn't have the whole thing. I was making it up as I went along. But I told them I would come home and make a CD of it, and they could buy that and listen to the whole thing. They said, go ahead. So I did. I came home and memorized the whole Gest, all 456 verses of it, while I was throwing together some chords to play on the guitar that would complement the lyrics, and at the same time, trying to learn how to use this digital recording gear and get the whole thing down on a CD, or a CD-R, whatever. I recorded right here at home. It only took about three months 'real time,' but I think it probably took about ten years off the end of my life. We'll see... (Just think. If I die when I'm eighty-nine, you'll know I would've lived to be ninety-nine, if I hadn't stopped to do this Little Gest.) Nobody knows who actually wrote this thing. Who made it up. It probably never was written until one of those printers got a hold of it in the 1500's. Up until then, it was just sung. Or spoken. Or performed. Nobody knows about that part either. Nobody knows who did it, or for whom, or how, or where or when or why. There's no existing music for it. The way I do it is just the way it came out, while I was sitting out there under a buckeye tree in the back yard, looking down at the creek. I've had a couple of authorities on the subject tell me that the way I'm doing it here is probably the way it was done back in the 1400's, the way it must have been done, the way all those old minstrels did it, the way Homer did it. Earlier, I said this was the oldest Robin Hood song in the book. Well, it's also the longest Robin Hood song in the book. According to how we classify music today, I guess you could call it a talking blues. If so, it's the longest talking blues in the world. But whatever you call it, at last, it's just a song. And the beauty of it is, you don't have to be able to carry a tune to sing it.

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