

SIR 401 Kentucky Turkey Buzzard

vocal by: Robert Björk

Release Date: (vinyl) 1986 / 07 (MP3) – 2002 / 01

Singing Call MS-64

Original artist: Burl Ives

Hanhurst's Best Seller listing
(July 1986) – unplaced

Original Music Details: Writer: Merle Kilgore, Tillman Franks
Publishers: Filmtrax Copyright Holdings Inc. O/B/O EMI Al Gallico Music

In the early 1940's writer McKinley Cantor introduced Burl Ives to the great author Carl Sandburg. "It's a satisfaction," McKinley said, "to bring together the most noted living ballad singer born in the 19th century, yourself, and the mightiest ballad singer born in the 20th century, Burl Ives. Carl Sandburg pushed a lock of white hair out of his face and looked up at McKinley. "Burl Ives," he said, "is the mightiest ballad singer born in any century!"

The music for this tune was recorded in Sweden and featured our resident studio band and a few extra session players. We wanted to "re-create" the sound of the original, which I feel we achieved. The subject matter of this tune is a little "weird", it covers the thoughts and intrigue of a Buzzard watching a group of "people" who are not at all interested in a Prayer Meeting (under canvas) until it starts to rain... Definitely a tune with a story – lots of fun for the more humorous caller!

Additional Lyrics:

Kentucky Turkey Buzzard on a camp meeting tip, sunning himself in the air
Looked down at the ground and gave himself a scratch, said "nothings going on down there"
The seats are empty and the organ don't play, the people's gone swimmin' at the sea
The preacher's got an old camp meeting going but there ain't nobody here but me

The Preacher Paid no mind to the empty seats, he preached like a thousand was there
The buzzard told the Devil "do you hear what I hear? I believe that's a lot of hot air".
Kentucky turkey buzzard said "I know the folks well, they're havin' too much fun at the sea...
Keep on talking to the empty seats 'cause there ain't nobody here but me

The preacher looked up and he preached so loud that there was a mighty thunder in the sky
(The preacher looked up, and he preached so loud that it caused a mighty thunder in the sky)
The rain started falling and the people started running to the only place that was dry
The organ started playin' and then they started singin', there was nobody left at the sea.
Kentucky Turkey Buzzard took to the sky said too much is going on for me

My thanks to Lisa, who contacted me by e-mail. She has provided the additional (and alternative) lyrics that are shown above, in blue text!

Where, When and Who produced the music:

In 1986, Bengt "Bula" Ericsson, from Katrineholm in Sweden, joined the Sting team. Ingvar Pettersson and Stefan Sidholm asked Bula to assist them with the production of the second batch of tunes and he remained an essential part of the Sting and Snow production-process for many years; this was one of the four tunes recorded, as part of the second batch.

Stefan and Ingvar, together with Robert Björk, were very fortunate to locate a studio in Kumla, Sweden – by the name of the Music Mill - who were prepared to take on the task of helping us to produce music for Square Dancing.

Using the players of a first rate Swedish Country band, called "Country Roads", we set about creating new Square Dance music. All the players were of the highest standard, amongst these were Thomas Haglund, (on Fiddle and Mandolin); Thomas has often been referred to as the finest Fiddle Player – outside the U.S.

Over the years Sting and Snow spent quite a lot of time in the studio. This particular tune was recorded towards the end of our association with the Music Mill.