

SNW 2006 The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down vocal by: Ralf Bender

Release Date: Vinyl, MP3 and CD – 2007 / 07

Singing Call MS-69

Hanhurst's Best Seller listing
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ORIGINAL MUSIC DETAILS: WRITER: J Robbie Robertson
PUBLISHERS: WB Music Corp OBO Canaan Music

Original artists: The Band / Joan Baez

This is a song written by Robbie Robertson and first recorded by The Band in 1969 but is best remembered for Joan Baez's top-10 version from 1971. This song about the American Civil War was written by Robertson who is a half-Mohawk Indian, half-Jewish Canadian. The lyrics tell of Virgil Caine watching as the Union Army General George Stoneman destroys the railroad where he makes a living, and then witnessing the fall of Richmond, Virginia.

Ralf Bender, from Germany, chose this song to record as a Square Dance as his "Special Guest Caller" spot on Snow. After a lot of discussion he asked that we should feature the Blues Harmonica on the track and that we should give it a "Country Rock" feel. This advice we followed and I believe that what we achieved really does justice to the original track. Whilst it tells a sad song about the consequences of the American Civil War, it still has a terrific dance feel!

Additional Lyrics:

Virgil Caine is the name and I served on the Danville train
'Til Stoneman's cavalry came and tore up the tracks again
In the winter of '65, we were hungry, just barely alive
By May the tenth, Richmond had fell, it's a time I remember oh so well

Back with my wife in Tennessee, when one day she called to me
"Virgil, quick, come see, there goes Robert E. Lee!"
Now I don't mind choppin' wood, and I don't care if the money's no good
Ya take what ya need and ya leave the rest
But they should never have taken the very best

Like my father before me, I will work the land
And like my brother before me, who took a rebel stand

He was just eighteen, proud and brave
But a Yankee laid him in his grave
I swear by the mud below my feet
You can't raise a Caine back up when he's in defeat

The night they drove old Dixie down and all the bells were ringing
The night they drove old Dixie down and the people were singin', they went
Na-na-na na-na-na, na-na-na na-na-na, na-na-na-na

Where, When and Who produced the music:

This was part of the eleventh group of releases on Sting and Snow that were recorded in Nashville, during November 2006. A total of fourteen songs were recorded during this session, which was the sixth to be arranged and produced by Paul Bristow. On this occasion, Paul had his family with him to provide moral AND technical support! Also in attendance at this session was Snow Recording Artist: Wil Stans.

Recorded in November 2006, the music still features the top musicians in Nashville: Gregg Galbraith – as band leader playing all lead Guitars, Terry MacMillan on Harmonica and percussion, Doug Jernigan on Steel and Dobro, Jerry Kroon on Drums, Roger Morris on Piano and Keyboards, Fiddle by Rob Hojacos, Larry Paxton on Bass Guitar, Rhythm Guitar was played by Bruce Watkins and Mark Catstevens, with Bruce also on Banjo. We also had George Tidwell on Trumpet and Kevin McManus (studio owner) as the engineer.

Acknowledgement to Royal Records:

We are indebted to Jerry Story and Tony Oxendine who introduced us to the studio in Nashville and invited us to use the top-of-the-line professional session musicians that they had assembled, to play for Royal Records.