



Swamp Romp, A Louisiana Dance Party for Children

Johnette Downing with Scott Billington

Liner Notes and Lyrics

1. Swamp Romp 2:02
2. Who Got the Baby in the King Cake? 2:07
3. Mudbug Boogie 3:45
4. It Wasn't Me (The Possum Song) 2:35
5. Poor Worry Anna 3:01
6. J'ai Vu le Loup, le Renard et la Belette 2:35
7. Mississippi River 2:18
8. Bamboula Rhythm 3:21
9. Gather Something Sweet 1:57
10. Your Best Pair of Shoes 2:44
11. How to Dress a Po' Boy 2:54
12. Crawfish Etouffée 1:46
13. Get Ready, Get Set, Let's Groove 3:07
14. Our Oxcarts 2:41
15. Stand Up, Jump Up 2:40
16. Star in My Sky 2:08

JOHNETTE DOWNING with SCOTT BILLINGTON

SWAMP ROMP JD-11

© 2019 © 2019 Johnette Downing • www.johnettedowning.com • (504) 861-2682

All Rights Reserved. Duplication is strictly prohibited without prior written consent from Johnette Downing, Wiggle Worm Records. P.O. Box 13367, New Orleans, LA 70185, USA.

Produced by Scott Billington and Johnette Downing
Recorded by Steve Reynolds, Jake Eckert, and Joel Savoy
Mixed by Steve Reynolds
Mastered by Paul Blakemore
Recorded at The Rhythm Shack, New Orleans, Louisiana;
Studio SavoyFaire, Eunice, Louisiana (David Livingston,
second engineer); and NOCCA Studio, New Orleans, Louisiana
Design and Illustration by Heather Stanley
Photograph of Johnette and Scott by Rick Olivier
Studio photographs and liner notes by Johnette Downing
and Scott Billington
Beth Blenz-Clucas, Sugar Mountain PR

For Beadle, the sweet Cajun prairie dog.

Johnette and Scott play Kamo'a ukuleles.

Johnette's songs are published by Wiggle Worm Records, ASCAP, administered by Concord Music Publishing.

Scott's songs are published by Black Skillet Music, BMI, administered by Concord Music Publishing.

Special thanks to Steve Reynolds for his friendship, talent, and generosity.

The complete lyrics and liner notes are available at www.johnnettedowning.com and www.johnnetteandscott.com.



Swamp Romp

A Louisiana Dance Party for Children

The past year marked several milestones for us: Johnette's thirtieth anniversary performing Louisiana roots music and books for children, Scott's forty-second year at Rounder Records, our fifth wedding anniversary and our first album together. When thinking about a concept for this recording, we naturally thought of a Louisiana dance party for children filled with songs that evoke the *joie de vivre*, or

zest for life, that we live everyday in Louisiana. This recording offers a *mélange* of many of the Louisiana roots music styles we love, from the Cajun, zydeco, and swamp pop of South Louisiana; to the rhythm & blues, gospel, jazz, brass band, and street music of New Orleans; to the rock'n'roll of North Louisiana; along with a small side trip to Mississippi. We asked our musician friends who represent the best in each genre to record with us. The result, we hope, is a record that will be enjoyed equally by children, parents, and educators, and maybe even music fans who simply enjoy a good Louisiana tune. From our food to our music to our diverse cultural heritage, we open our hearts, homes, and tables to friends, family, and visitors. So come on in and join the fun. *Allons danser! Bailemos!* Let's dance!

About Johnette and Scott

Johnette Downing developed a love of music at an early age. When she was a child in New Orleans, her tuba- and violin-playing father and her saxophone- and piano-playing mother took Johnette and her siblings to the French Quarter on the weekends. They would stand in the doorways of clubs listening to jazz and ragtime. Her passion for roots music and for sharing music with children, in the same way her parents shared it with her, led Johnette to become what the media have called the "Musical Ambassador to Children" and the "Pied Piper of Louisiana Music Traditions." Over her thirty-year career, Johnette has performed on five continents and has received twenty-four international awards for her twenty-three children's books and ten recordings. In 2017, Johnette received the Louisiana Writer Award, and a 59th Grammy® Awards Participation Certificate for co-writing and singing back-up vocals on the Grammy® Award-winning record *Porcupine Meat* by blues legend Bobby Rush, which was produced by Scott Billington.

Scott Billington's multifaceted career in the music business began when his mother traded a book of Green Stamps for a harmonica, which she gave the 11-year-old as a Christmas present. By the time he was 16, he was performing in New England coffeehouses and clubs. Pursuing his love of blues and roots music, Scott went to work for Rounder Records in the mid- 1970s. He has since produced over 100 albums of roots-oriented music for Rounder and other labels, which have won three Grammy® Awards and 12 Grammy® nominations. Other awards include the Sweet Soul Music Award (Italy), the Keepin' the Blues Alive Award (Memphis), the *Offbeat* Lifetime Achievement Award (New Orleans), and the Slim Harpo Award (Baton Rouge). In recognition of his work in Louisiana, Scott was appointed a Louisiana Colonel by Governor Edwin W. Edwards. His performances with Johnette as a family music duet again bring his harmonica skills to the fore.

Johnette and Scott met nearly twenty years ago at a New Orleans music conference, where they immediately recognized their mutual passion for Louisiana roots music. After a long friendship, they married in Italy in August 2013. Making family music as the duo "Johnette and Scott" came as naturally as breathing. Five years in the

making, this record of fifteen original songs and one adapted traditional song is an *homage* to the place, people, music, and culture they both hold dear. So, take off your shoes and roll up the rug! It's time to Swamp Romp! We hope you enjoy our Louisiana dance party for children.

Swamp Romp

(Johnette Downing and Scott Billington)

© 2017 Downing and Billington

Johnette Downing vocal, guitar and backing vocals

Scott Billington harmonica and backing vocals

C. R. Gruver Wurlitzer piano

James Singleton bass

Doug Belote drums

The song "Swamp Romp" was inspired by the South Louisiana Swamp Pop sound, a blend of Cajun dance hall music and New Orleans rhythm and blues. Louisiana roots music is most often made for dancing, and this style is no exception. In fact, a South Louisiana audience's mark of appreciation for a song is often not applause, but a full dance floor. The common expression "*laissez les bon temps rouler*" or "let the good times roll," is used in this song, as it is throughout the state, to kick off a party. Off we go!

It's a party in the black lagoon
Alligator and t' raccoon
Two-stepping in the afternoon
Swamp romp, swamp romp, swamp romp.
There's a bullfrog melody
With cicadas singing harmony
It's a buggy wuggy symphony
Swamp romp, swamp romp

Everybody let's roll

Let the good times roll

Grab your brother and your sister too
Show your partner what you can do
We'll be dancing the whole night through
Swamp romp, swamp romp. Swamp romp.
Move your body from side to side
Clap your hands and let your backbone slide
Stomp your feet when you hear that cry
Swamp romp, swamp romp.
Take it down, to the ground

Feel the beat, then STOMP IT, SWAMP IT, ROMP!

Who Got the Baby in the King Cake?

(Johnette Downing)

© 2016 Johnette Downing

Johnette Downing vocal, ukulele, and backing vocals

Jake Eckert guitar

Kevin Clark trumpet

Craig Klein trombone

Tim Laughlin clarinet

James Singleton bass

Doug Belote drums

The king cake is a cherished Carnival tradition that was probably brought to New Orleans by French immigrants as the *gateaux de roi*. This ring-shaped pastry is made from rich brioche dough, which is frosted with white icing, and sprinkled with gold, green, and purple sugar—the colors of Mardi Gras. A plastic baby or a bean is hidden inside the cake, and the person who finds it in his or her serving is obliged to give the next party. Johnette’s “Who Got the Baby in the King Cake?” features a classic New Orleans groove—a variant of the *bamboula* rhythm—and a horn front line comprised of three of the city’s best Dixieland musicians: trumpet player Kevin Clark (the leader of the Dukes of Dixieland), trombonist Craig Klein, and clarinetist Tim Laughlin. This is the sound that Johnette heard as a young girl, when her parents took her and her siblings to the French Quarter to hear jazz. The bouncy, upbeat sound of Dixieland jazz is sure to bring a smile to your face and a tap in your toes. The song is also the book *Who Got the Baby in the King Cake?*, published by River Road Press, in fall 2018.

Roll out the dough to make a king cake.
Spread a little filling in the king cake.
Braid it in a circle for a king cake.
Into the oven goes the king cake.
Then you take the cake out of the oven.
When it cools down you add a little icing.
Sprinkle colored sugar for a topping.
Hide a plastic baby in the king cake.

Let’s party. It’s Mardi Gras, way down in New Orleans.

Let’s party. It’s Mardi Gras. If you bring the rice, I’ll bring the beans.

Who got the baby in the king cake?
Did she find the baby in king cake?

Did he get the baby in the king cake?
You got the baby in the king cake!
What happens when you get the baby?
You have to give the next party.
Invite all your friends and your family
To eat king cake and be merry.

Mudbug Boogie

(Johnette Downing)

© 2001 Johnette Downing

Johnette Downing vocal, guitar, and backing vocals

Roddie Romero accordion

Joel Savoy fiddle

Lee Allen Zeno bass

Doug Belote drums

In many Louisiana dance halls, no musical set is complete without a line dance, and that's what this mudbug—or crawfish—leads children to do. Bassist Lee Allen Zeno (who played in Buckwheat Zydeco's band for many years) and drummer Doug Belote lock down a groove that will have everyone dancing, while Joel Savoy's fiddle and Roddie Romero's accordion add an inimitable dash of South Louisiana flavor. Come on decapods, let's boogie!

All right crawfish, get on the dance floor.

Well the mudbug is a little crawfish.

He lives in the swamp a life of bliss.

He makes his home out of mud and clay.

He likes to work, but he loves to play.

And do the mudbug boogie, yeah, yeah

Do the mudbug boogie, hey yeah

Do the mudbug boogie, shake your tail

Do the mudbug boogie, uh huh

Back it up crawfish, to the front crawfish

Back it up crawfish, snap, snap

Put your claws up high, put your claws down low

But your claws up high, snap, snap

Now the mudbug is a cute little thing.

He is a little crusty, but he never complains.

He likes to dance, don't you know.

He shakes his tail at the fais do do.

High five crawfish, low five crawfish

Decca-pod crawfish, clap, clap
To the right crawfish, to the left crawfish
Turn around crawfish, clap clap

It Wasn't Me (The Possum Song)

(Johnette Downing and Scott Billington)

Johnette Downing vocal, ukulele, and backing vocals

Scott Billington harmonica and backing vocals

James Singleton bass

Doug Belote drums

River Eckert, Joe Morris, Mason Morris,

and **Cassie Gunderman** children's voices

The mambo beat, brought to New Orleans from Cuba, can be found in jazz, rhythm and blues, and brass band music, and we have used it in this fun song about a possum who creates mischief around the house...or is it really him? A chorus of children is certainly not taking the blame for this sneaky possum.

Who left their dirty socks under the bed?
Was it you? It wasn't me.
Who left their toys on the living room rug?
Was it you? It wasn't me.

Well it must have been that possum, that sneaky little possum.

Everyone is surely misled.

If I don't catch that possum, that sneaky little possum,

They're gonna blame me instead.

Have you seen that possum? I'm looking for that possum.

Who ate the last piece of cake in the fridge?
Was it you? It wasn't me.
Who splashed the water on the bathroom floor?
Was it you? It wasn't me.

Poor Worry Anna

(Johnette Downing)

© 1980 Johnette Downing

Duet with Irma Thomas

Johnette Downing vocal, ukulele, and backing vocals

Irma Thomas vocal

Scott Billington ukulele and backing vocals

James Singleton bass
Doug Belote drums

Just like grown-ups, children may sometimes be sad or anxious, and this song is about one of them. When Irma Thomas, the Soul Queen of New Orleans, came to our Jazz Fest show, she asked if she could sing on our record. We knew that “Poor Worry Anna” would be perfect for her because it has a 1960s R&B ballad foundation, complete with doo-wop backing vocals. The vocal interplay between Irma and Johnette is magical.

Poor Worry Anna, she worries every day.
She worries when the sun is bright, worries when skies are gray.

Poor Worry Anna. Poor Worry Anna.
Don't worrrrrrrrry Anna. Don't worrrrrrrrry Anna

She worries when it's cold out. She worries when it's hot.
She worries should she worry and worries should she not.
Worry, worry, worry, worry, is all she ever does.
Poor Worry Anna, she worries just because
Be happy my darling, you're so young my darling
Be happy Anna
I'm here with you darling. No tears should be falling.
Be happy Anna

J'ai Vu Le Loup, Le Renard Et La Belette
I Saw the Wolf, the Fox and the Weasel
(Traditional, adapted and arranged by Johnette Downing)
© 2017 Johnette Downing

Duet with Joel Savoy
Johnette Downing vocal and ukulele
Joel Savoy vocal and fiddle
Scott Billington harmonica
Roddie Romero accordion and guitar

This jaunty traditional French tune has been played for decades by Cajun musicians, and it remains popular today. There are many versions, but here Johnette has adapted the original text to make it a bi-lingual, child-friendly dance song, with clapping, stomping, jumping, and singing encouraged. You can feel the push and pull of the classic Cajun sound as she teams up with two esteemed musicians: fiddler Joel Savoy and accordionist Roddie Romero. Around the time of the American

Revolution, French Canadian exiles began to settle along the bayous and in the flat prairie land of South Louisiana. They created their own new music style, blending French ballads and fiddle music; the bluesy vocal inflections of Creoles; and the loud, propulsive sound of the accordion, which was brought to the area by Germans in the late 1800s. In true Louisiana fashion, we have thrown a ukulele and a harmonica into the mix to add a dash of sonic spice.

**J'ai vu le loup, le renard et la belette
J'ai vu le loup et renard danser
J'ai vu le loup, le renard et la belette
J'ai vu le loup et renard danser**

**I saw the wolf, the fox and the weasel
I saw the wolf and the fox dancing
I saw the wolf, the fox and the weasel
I saw the wolf and the fox dancing**

Je les ai vue taper leurs mains
I saw them clap their hands
Je les ai vue taper leurs pieds
I saw them stomp their feet
Je les ai vus ensemble chanter
I saw them all singing
Je les ai vus ensemble sauter
I saw them all jumping

MISSISSIPPI River

(Johnette Downing)

© 2001 Johnette Downing

Johnette Downing vocal, guitar, and backing vocals
Scott Billington harmonica, backing vocals, and cane fife
Keith Frazier bass drum
Derrick Tabb snare drum

Originally a spoken spelling chant that was used for generations to teach children a challenging Native American word and State name, this song is written in the North Mississippi fife and drum band style, a unique blues subgenre that is thriving today in the hands of fife player Shardé Thomas and others. It is one of the most Afro-centric forms of American music, with its pentatonic scale and syncopated military drumming. Johnette learned the chant from her mother, but here Johnette expands the lyrics and adds music to teach children about the great river. Scott opens the song with a cane fife solo to set the mood. Our friends Derrick Tabb and Keith

Frazier of the ReBirth Brass Band keep us in the groove as children enjoy making the shapes of the “crooked” and “hump back” letters into a funky dance.

M, I, crooked letter, crooked letter, I
Crooked letter, crooked letter, I
Humpback, humpback, I, river
Mississippi River, Mississippi River
Mississippi River, Mississippi River
Muddy River, Old Man River, down the Mississippi River
Down the River, mighty River, down the Mississippi River

Bamboula Rhythm

(Johnette Downing and Scott Billington)

© 2014 Johnette Downing and Scott Billington

Johnette Downing vocal, guitar, and backing vocals
Scott Billington harmonica, percussion, and backing vocal
Kevin Harris tenor sax
Roger Lewis baritone sax
Kirk Joseph sousaphone
Doug Belote drums
River Eckert, Joe Morris, Mason Morris,
and **Cassie Gunderman** children’s voices

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, free and enslaved Africans gathered on Sunday afternoons in Congo Square in New Orleans to socialize, speak their native languages, sell their wares, and play music. They brought instruments such as drums, bells, bones, and gourds as they sang and danced the *calinda* and the *congo*. The underlying rhythm called the *bamboula* inspired generations of musicians, and serves as the beat heard in many New Orleans jazz, second line, rhythm and blues, Mardi Gras Indian, parade and brass band songs today. Here, we pay tribute to that rhythm (“bam–bam–bam–boula”). Joining us are Roger Lewis, Kevin Harris, and Kirk Joseph of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, who were the progenitors of the modern New Orleans brass band sound.

When you walk down the street, you can feel it in your feet
It’s the bam bam bamboula rhythm
When you go place to place with a smile on your face
It’s the bam bam bamboula rhythm

Bam bam bam. Bam bam bam

Bam bam bamboula rhythm

When you're feeling divine marching in a second line
It's the bam bam bamboula rhythm
When you hear Big Chief say tee nah nah ney
It's the bam bam bamboula rhythm
When you sway and sashay Mardi Gras Day
It's the bam bam bamboula rhythm
Well you know you are there when you're in Congo Square
It's the bam bam bamboula rhythm
It's the heartbeat of the city
(Get up off of your seat. Get on down with that beat)
It's the drumbeat of the city
(Get up off of your seat. Get on down with that beat)

Gather Something Sweet

(Johnette Downing)

© 2015 Johnette Downing

Johnette Downing vocal and ukulele

James Singleton bass

Doug Belote drums

Like swaying palm trees, this song has a Caribbean feel. With cultural and musical influences from Cuba, Haiti, and other island nations, New Orleans is often described as the northern coast of the Caribbean. New Orleans still maintains its Caribbean undercurrents, heard in traditional jazz and in R&B artists such as Professor Longhair, even if its presence is waning. Like the Caribbean, New Orleans abounds with subtropical plants. The black river soil is fertile ground for flower and vegetable gardens. Plantains and banana trees grow wild, so much so that there is plenty to share with family, friends, and neighbors. After making ten records with her rhythmic-style guitar playing, Johnette steps out for her first ukulele solo while James Singleton and Doug Belote offer a sweet rhythmic foundation.

Let's gather bananas. Let's gather something sweet.
Let's gather bananas for the baby to eat
Let's gather watermelons. Let's gather something sweet.
Let's gather watermelons for the children to eat.

Planting, sowing, our garden growing

Seasons changing, under palm trees swaying.

Let's gather strawberries. Let's gather something sweet.
Let's gather strawberries for your mama to eat.
Let's gather satsumas. Let's gather something sweet.
Let's gather satsumas for your papa to eat.

Your Best Pair of Shoes

(Scott Billington and Johnette Downing)

© 2015 Billington and Downing

Johnette Downing vocal, guitar, and backing vocals

Scott Billington backing vocals

Jake Eckert guitar

Roger Lewis baritone sax

Kevin Harris tenor sax

C. R. Gruver piano

James Singleton bass

Doug Belote drums

In the early 1960s, between the era of classic Fats Domino-style rhythm and blues, and the emergence of Allen Toussaint's hit-making reign, a quirky R&B style took shape in Cosimo Matassa's New Orleans studio on Governor Nichols Street, exemplified by artists such as Shirley & Lee and Huey Smith & the Clowns. We salute this sound with a song that emphasizes the importance of wearing the proper shoes, and positive attitude, for each occasion! C. R. Gruver's rolling piano lets you know you're in New Orleans, while the Dirty Dozen Brass Band's Roger Lewis and Kevin Harris recall the sound of saxophonists Lee Allen and Scott's old friend Alvin "Red" Tyler, who played on hundreds of New Orleans records.

Put on your best pair of shoes

Put on your best attitude

There's nothing you can't do

If you wear the right shoes

The sun is shinning - put on your flip-flops
No time for whining - put on your flip-flops
Just keep on smiling - put on your flip-flops
Put on your flip-flops - flip-flops
If it's raining - put on your rubber boots
There's no complaining - put on your rubber boots
Just keep on smiling - put on your rubber boots
Put on your rubber boots - rubber boots
Ahhhh, kick it, kick it, kick it.

The band is playing – put on your dancing shoes
There's no delaying – put on your dancing shoes
You're really styling, put on your dancing shoes
Put on your dancing shoes, dancing shoes
It's time to party– put on your shiny shoes
Now don't be tardy – put on your shiny shoes
You're really styling – put on your shiny shoes
Put on your shiny shoes – shiny shoes

How to Dress a Po' Boy

(Johnette Downing)

© 2010 *Johnette Downing*

Johnette Downing vocal, guitar, and backing vocals

Scott Billington harmonica

Matt Perrine sousaphone

“Washboard Chaz” Leary washboard

With outstanding contributions by sousaphone player Matt Perrine and washboard player Chaz Leary, this performance has a loose ragtime feel, much like the street music one might find in the French Quarter. The po' boy sandwich was invented in New Orleans by restaurant owners and former streetcar operators Benny and Clovis Martin, with the help of baker John Gendusa. When the Streetcar Union went on strike in 1929, the Martin brothers vowed to help their friends on the picket line by feeding them large sandwiches made from loaves of French bread, free of charge. During the strike, each time a picketer entered their restaurant, the Martin brothers would call out, “Here comes another poor boy.” The name, and its contraction, stuck. Today, when ordering a po' boy, customers are asked if they want their sandwiches “dressed,” which means with lettuce, tomato, pickles, and mayonnaise, and maybe a dash of hot sauce. The sequence of ingredients, illustrated in Johnette's picture book by the same title published by Pelican Publishing Company, encourages children to read, sing, and clap along.

A po' boy is a sandwich as everybody knows.
Dressed with all the fixings and this is how it goes.
First you start with bread, long French bread.
Then you add the mayonnaise, Blue Plate mayonnaise.

***Come on now, we are learning how to dress a po' boy.
Girl or boy, let's all enjoy a Louisiana po' boy.***

Lay down a bed of lettuce, leafy green lettuce.

Follow with tomato, Creole tomato.
Perk it up with pickles, sliced dill pickles.
Spice it up with hot sauce, Louisiana hot sauce.
Then you top it off with meat, any kind of meat--
Shrimp, catfish, soft shell crab, roast beef debris,
Italian meatball, crawfish, sausage, or alligator.
Then you put it all together, yeah you right.
Now your po' boy is dressed so take a bite.
Ooooooooooweeeeeeee.

***Come on now, we learned how to dress a po' boy.
Girl or boy, let's all enjoy a Louisiana po' boy.***

Crawfish Etouffée

(Johnette Downing)

© 1994 Johnette Downing

Johnette Downing vocal, clapping, stomping, and backing vocals

Scott Billington backing vocals, clapping, and stomping

Roddie Romero, Joel Savoy, Wilson Savoy, and Lee Allen Zeno backing vocals

This *a cappella* song is performed in the Southwest Louisiana Creole style called *juré*, meaning, "to testify." This style evolved when people may have had no instruments to play, relying only on their polyrhythmic clapping and foot stomping to provide the music for their songs, with everyone participating in the call-and-response chorus. Some people believe that the roots of zydeco music can be found in *juré*. Here we are testifying about etouffée, a thick roux-based seafood stew served over rice that is one of Louisiana's culinary treats. We urge all listeners to sing and clap along.

Crawfish, crawfish hot. Crawfish, crawfish hot.
Crawfish, crawfish etouffée
Mama's in the kitchen cooking all day.
Daddy's in the kitchen cooking too.
Making that crawfish just for you.
Cook tomatoes nice and red.
Add crawfish tail not head.
Add some onion and cayenne.
Gonna be delicious, man oh man.
Add some garlic and some spice.
When it's all ready, pour it over rice.
Mix them all together in a pot.
Eoueeee! Crawfish hot!

Get Ready Get Set, Let's Groove

(Johnette Downing)

© 2015 *Johnette Downing*

Johnette Downing vocal, guitar, and backing vocals

Scott Billington harmonica and backing vocal

Wilson Savoy piano

Jake Eckert guitar

James Singleton bass

Doug Belote drums

Early rock and roll music is often associated with Memphis, at least until you look a little further downstream on the Mississippi River. Pianist Jerry Lee Lewis, from Ferriday, Louisiana, is one of the original rock and roll wild men, and this song might be looked upon as a tribute to him, with its raucous piano playing from Wilson Savoy. Johnette wrote and developed this song in performance, as she began incorporating the many and often completely goofy dances from the 1960s and 1970s, finding grown-ups as enthusiastic in participating as the children in her audience!

Get ready (get ready), get set (get set), let's groove

Get ready (get ready), get set (get set), let's groove

Clap your hands (clap, clap), stomp your feet (stomp, stomp), let's move

Well, I'm going to show you a thing or two
And we're going to see what you can do
Dancing around makes you jump and shout
And I'm gonna show you what it's all about
So get ready (get ready), get set (get set), let's groove.
Do the Twist like this, let's groove
Do the Twist like this, let's groove
Clap your hands, stomp your feet, let's move
Do the Pony, macaroni
Do the Swim, slim Jim
Do the Sprinkler with Henry Winkler

Our Oxcarts

(Johnette Downing and Scott Billington)

© 2014 *Johnette Downing and Scott Billington*

Johnette Downing vocal, *timple*, and backing vocals

Scott Billington harmonica and backing vocals

Matt Perrine bass

Doug Belote drums and percussion

This song celebrates the rich cultural contributions of the Spanish Canary Islanders (*Isleños*) who established four communities in New Spain (Louisiana) between 1778 and 1783. The *Isleño* farmers had a talent for training the oxen they relied upon to plough their land. According to legend, the oxen were so well trained that they could make the journey to the New Orleans market while their drivers slept in their wagons, leaving them well-rested for the singing and dancing that followed the successful delivery and sale of their vegetables. Johnette is a descendent of *Isleño* settlers, and here she plays the *timple*, a traditional five-stringed instrument that she brought back from her ancestral island of Tenerife. Johnette and Scott are joined by acoustic bassist Matt Perrine and drummer Doug Belote on this rollicking wagon ride sung in Spanish and English.

We till and we plow and we weed and we water
Our fields full of produce, our bounty to sell
We gather our harvest of corn, beans and melons
And load up our ox carts to journey to town

***Our oxen are smart. They always know the way.
Happy in our ox carts, we rock and sway.
Bailamos. Cantamos. Our working (market) day is done.
Bailamos. Cantamos. It's time to have some fun.***

In darkness we travel, our oxen to guide us.
Our friends and our children are along for the ride.
We unload our ox carts in stalls at in the market.
Our breakfast awaits us. Our mission is done.

Stand Up, Jump Up

(Johnette Downing)

© 2014 Johnette Downing

Johnette Downing vocal, ukulele, and backing vocals

**The McCrary Sisters (Alfreda, Ann, Deborah,
and Regina)** backing vocals

Jake Eckert guitar

C. R. Gruver Hammond B3 organ

James Singleton bass

Doug Belote drums

River Eckert, Joe Morris, Mason Morris,

and **Cassie Gunderman** children's voices
The McCrary Sisters were recorded by
Rachael Moore at Sound Emporium, Nashville

At the church on the next corner from our house, we often hear one of the happiest sounds in the city—New Orleans gospel music. With its soaring voices, and full-band backing that often includes the city's best musicians, gospel music makes us think about music that is made purely as part of community life, for the joy, inspiration, and diversion that it immediately brings. The same could be said about New Orleans brass band and Mardi Gras Indian music, and even the Cajun and zydeco music of South Louisiana, which is made by and for the people in the community. The daughter of a Baptist Minister father and a church choir soprano singing mother, Johnette honors her parents with a gospel tune like the ones she heard in her father's church as a child.

All around the world every where you go
There's a little thing all the children know
A little bit of love makes the world shine
A little bit of love works every time.
Music in the air, music in the street
Feel it in your hands, feel it in your feet

Stand up, jump up, every body be happy
Stand up, jump up, every body say, "YEAH!"

All around the street, all around the town
Listen to the world make a joyful sound
A little bit of joy makes the world shine
A little bit of joy works every time.
I have a dream. You have a dream.
We have a dream that we all come together.

Star in My Sky

(Johnette Downing)
© 2013 Johnette Downing

Johnette Downing guitar and ukulele
James Singleton bass

Our good friend Jon Hornyak gave us two tenor Kamo'a ukuleles. After opening the box and holding hers for the first time, Johnette wrote the song, "Star in my Sky." The song is about being in the moment and noticing the complex simplicity in life.

In keeping with the theme of the lyrics, the music features the minimalism of an upright bass and ukulele duet. Children may wish upon a star with the familiar “star light, star bright” chant that Johnette sets to music at the end of the song.

Like a wave in the ocean
Like a breath on the breeze
We’re living in this moment
Just my little honey baby and me
Like a grain of soft sand
Like a leaf on a tree
We’re soaking up the sunlight
Just my little honey baby and me

***All day, all night
Dance and sing until the pale moonlight
All day, all night
You’re the star in my sky***

Like a flicker of a firefly
Like a twinkle of glee
We’re basking in the moonbeam
Just my little honey baby and me
Starlight, star bright, first star I see tonight
I wish I may, I wish I might have this wish I wish tonight.

JD-11 © 2019 © 2019 Johnette Downing • www.johnnettedowning.com
• (504) 861-2682 All Rights Reserved. Duplication is strictly prohibited without prior written consent from Johnette Downing, Wiggle Worm Records • P.O. Box 13367 • New Orleans, LA 70185, USA