

Musically speaking, the road has been diverse. I remember taking up the accordion when I was six and as a child being exposed to classical, jazz and the American Songbook; a result of the influence of my father, accordionist, Larry Malmberg.

When I was ten years old, I heard a gentleman named Jimmie Rodgers sing a song called, “Kisses Sweeter than Wine” and I realized how powerful lyrics could be with music. Well, I said to myself: “That’s cool; I’ve got to learn how to do that.” So, I did. I borrowed a four-string guitar from a friend and armed with a couple of chords he had scribbled out on a piece of paper I learned my first ‘folk song.’ It was a lament by Merle Travis called ‘Dark as a Dungeon.’ I performed it in front of my 8th grade choir class and got an “A” from my teacher, Mrs. Westby. From that humble start, I began singing and playing wherever I could. There were a lot of musical influences in those days, but eventually I found myself in Spain studying classical guitar. Those studies were pinnacle in my life.

Through the years, I have tried to create a legacy of my musical meanderings. Surprisingly, there are 15 albums out there now ranging from folk to gospel to pop to classical representing over one hundred original compositions. Funny how things can accrue...

Through it all, I have never forgotten the day I heard that song by Jimmie Rodgers. It was the day I began my education in the folk music of America. It is curious to me that humans sing. It has always been that way. But we don’t just sing, we always *sing* about *something*. So, I began exploring and discovering groups like the Kingston Trio, Peter, Paul and Mary, The Chad Mitchell Trio, Ian and Sylvia and then went deeper into the music discovering Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Jean Ritchie, Hudy Leadbetter, (Leadbelly), Blind Willie Johnson and of course Dylan, to name a few. But, even deeper than that, was the realization that this lyrical music is rich with story representing just about every historical event of this great nation of ours. Like I said, we always *sing* about *something*.

So, today’s concert will be a potpourri of our musical roots as a people. Obviously, we can’t cover it all, but we can pass a few musical gems your way. Hopefully, the process will help us to remember. To remember that it is our rich heritage that makes us who we are.

Many thanks to the songwriters who have contributed to American Journey, including but not limited to John Stewart, Bob Dylan, Willie Johnson, Paul Simon, Ian Tyson, Billy Ed Wheeler and the wealth of traditional music that has been anonymously passed down from generation to generation.

I hope you enjoy these songs as much as I have enjoyed researching and putting this program together. The selections will be announced from the stage.

David Malmberg

