

Mp3 Scott Merrick And The Last Frontier Band - Scott Merrick's Songs For Alaska

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Four acoustic musicians in 1979, playing for sell-out crowds in Anchorage, Alaska, performed these songs by Scott Merrick (with two "traditional" exceptions) to foot-stomping, cheering, singing-along crowds. Good time music from a very Good Time. 14 MP3 Songs FOLK: Power-folk, FOLK: Folk Pop

Details: In the summer of 1978, the Dr. Schultz Band disbanded. Pounding out tightly arranged folk, rock, blues, and gospel tunes for sell-out crowds in concert halls, coffee-houses, whole-foods restaurants, and bars, "Dr. Schultz" were known for their ensemble presentation, their mastery of their musical instruments, their intricate harmonies, and their collectively off-beat sense of humor. A feller named Scott Merrick (that would be me, dear reader), who had been playing music in the Anchorage area since mid-1975 and who had become a friend of the band, proposed the formation of a new group. After several summit conferences/jams in Don's eclectic house on Winchester, at the edge of the Chugach Mountain Range and on the outskirts of Anchorage, the new trio began rehearsing under the watchful eye of their manager, John Speer. The three also advertised in the paper for a bass player. A lovely lady named Lynn Gudmundsen, who had been teaching high school math in Palmer, north of Anchorage, answered the ad. It was a match: Lynn's shy stage presence (no act!) and precision playing added a new dimension to the work of the original three. It soon became apparent that her violin work was far more valuable to the band's mix than any bass could be, so the band moved forward for the rest of its single-year career relying on the rhythmical power of its other instrumentation. The Last Frontier Band rehearsed full-time, 6 days a week, sometimes 12 hours a day, for a month and a half before they unveiled the group in Homer, Alaska, at the "Land's End" restaurant. After that, it was pretty much full-time work. There were weekly engagements at "The Bread Factory" a whole foods restaurant and showcase, and the "Showboat Lounge" opened up later in the year, affording much larger audiences the chance to dine and enjoy the band's tightly orchestrated, energetically delivered performances. The Last Frontier Band headlined the musical performances at that summer's Alaska State Fair, performing for a crowd of around 6,000 souls, their largest single audience. They toured the state, performing for sold-out crowds in venues as remote

as Bethel and Nome; and they raised money for the "Last Great Race on Earth," the Iditarod dog-sled race, as the official Iditarod band. It was at the Showboat Lounge that the final performance of the Last Frontier Band took place, on New Year's Eve, 1979. Personal relationships had become such that the band could no longer continue. Scott moved on down to northern California, playing music in Los Gatos then signing on with cruise ships in the Caribbean for a while, finally relocating to Nashville, Tennessee, his birthplace, to take up a career as a teacher. Don stayed in Anchorage for a while, playing music, then relocated to Los Angeles to pursue his original career as a pharmacist for a while, then headed back up to Fairbanks to play music again. Dana married Ed Ward and now creates and markets along with him fantastic recordings for children, each song personalized with a requested child's name. Her recordings can be sampled at lullabiesforbabies.com. Lynn formed the band "Soapstone" and produced a successful album in Anchorage, moved to Hawaii with the band, and now lives in Chicago, where she teaches university level math and plays her violin with gusto, still an active performer: It's Lynn who deserves the credit for preserving the soundboard tapes that were the foundation for this recording. This recording never would have been possible without the abundant talents of the man out front, Ed Ward, our talented and intrepid "sound guy." Always looking for ways to improve the band's sound, Ed made a habit of cassette-recording shows with a recorder directly connected to the soundboard, mostly for his own critical review. Thanks also to Lee Ann for her constant love and support, to Wayne Halper of Dreamworks Records for his thoughtful and experienced counsel, to Lynn Gudmundsen for treasuring the tapes for 25 years and sharing them with me, to Dana Ward for her consistent encouragement, to Don Schultz for his humor and skill, and to my children for inspiring me to leave something solid behind. I sincerely hope that you enjoy this little record of a band as much as their audiences did, 'way back when... Ladies and Gentlemen: The Last Frontier Band...

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