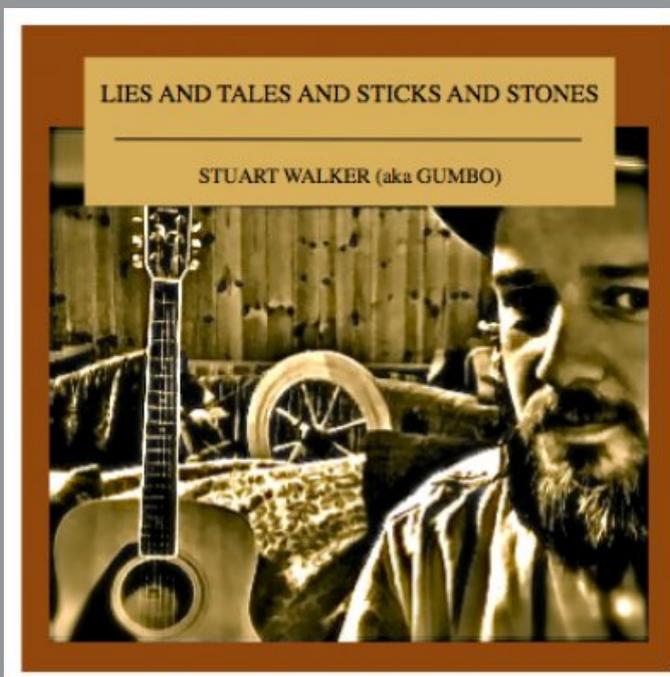


## Stuart Walker (aka Gumbo)

### BAND STORY

" This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License . GUMBO was born in New Orleans in the year 1900, on July the Fourth, to nationwide celebration. Together with his young buddy Louis Dan, he roamed the outhouses and fields around their Jane Alley home, regularly getting into trouble, being beaten and nursing their bruises. Many of the bruises were inflicted by Louis' mother ("I'm Ma Armstrong and ma arm is STRONG!") This is where he first started to develop his early "Hollering" vocal style, trying to expel the pain inflicted by his elders and betters, and led to Louis Dan naming their first band "The Hot Two" when they were seven. They first realised they had a new sound going when the cattle they would practice for began to sing back and Gumbo got an edumacation in "The Mood" as Louis called that special time when so many cows were harmonising together that "nobody can complain about our singing". For a long time Louis Dan was the only person to appreciate Gumbo's musical abilities, so it was a tough blow for Gumbo when his family moved to Hawaii when he was thirteen. He wasn't to see Louis again for another thirty years, when he was released from jail in 1943. Gumbo never got to Hawaii (still hasn't) as he was kidnapped by Pirates during the crossing, and made to forget music for a while - but that's another story ... During the Great Depression Gumbo wandered the byways of America, looking for food, work and a good time. He once wrote a song with Woody Guthrie, to help pass a night in a boxcar headed east, called "The Great Depression (what's so 'great' about it?)" Unfortunately the lyrics



### STATS

Visits	Plays
90,509	133,228
Streams	Downloads
66,185	67,043

### Featured Songs

- 
**The Seven Seas Are Calling (Pirate day Song)**
Childrens Songs
- 
**RPM This Ain't The Road**
Acoustic

about it?) Unfortunately the lyrics have been forgotten (burned, Woody said) though Gumbo still hums the melody sometimes when he's melancholy. Everywhere he went he wrote songs until one night he got drunk with AP Carter, and woke up with a stinking hangover and heard one of his songs on the Radio. AP never spoke to him again, and Gumbo didn't write another song for ten years. In 1938 Gumbo was arrested following the death of up 'n coming blues celebrity Robert "Lead the way" Johnson. Johnson and Gumbo had been travelling together for a couple of weeks when they got into an argument over who would pass out first drinking Moonshine, and they were so heated that they parked themselves up in a dance house and played, challenging anyone who came near to buy 'em a drink so they could finish the bet. Well the Party lasted three days and nights, and rumour has it that Robert was so drunk he made a pass at the Owners wife after playing three Blind Willie McTell songs in a row. This tipped the already nervous roadhouse owner to panic as he was almost out of booze and a raging party was underway. He poisoned Johnson and then called the cops, fingering the delerious Gumbo for the deed. It was during his five years spent in Angola Prison that Gumbo met Huddie Ledbetter and John Lomax on one of their regular music collecting field trips, and Leadbelly convinced him to write a song about the Governor, which, they hoped, would emulate Leadbelly's early release from the same prison six years earlier, but, unfortunately, only resulted in solitary confinement (and an extended sentence). When Gumbo was finally released from Angola Prison he went to New York, because, he said, "I don't care if I do die do die do die do", which is where he bumped into his old friend Louis Dan, who was in town to record "Zat you, Santa Claus?" Gumbo was so depleted that he was knocked to the ground and lost under the crowd

ground and lost under the crowd.

Although he hadn't recognised his old friend, Louis reported nightmares all through the recording session.

Gumbo, when the crowds parted, then spent many happy hours walking around New York, visiting theatres and bars (asking for work), visiting more theatres, restaurants, and eventually landing a waiters job in a small juke joint on the East side. It was here that he met Jack Kerouac, who was about to embark on active service in the Navy, and was holed up at a dark table trying to remember why. The band was playing some of that new fangled jazz music - not the old stuff that he'd grown up with, but the dark and complex modes favoured by the hip new jazz cats.

After trading stories for sixteen hours straight, Jack staggered off to find a typewriter and a hep lawyer. He was discharged from the Navy ten days later. Gumbo headed south (after a good meal). South to Memphis.

Where he got the first job he applied for, in a Fruit Distribution Company, which, he felt with a certain satisfaction, was exactly right. He spent several years working and making the payments on a small house on the outskirts of town, drinking in Beale St, and soaking up the music. "It was a weird time", he later recalled, "like there was so much happening and yet it was one day after another, hypnotic, days ticking past, tough times, great times, driving the fruit around ..." This all changed one day in 1951 when he gave a lift to Chester Burnett, a Mississippi blues player hitchin in to Memphis to try his luck at The Memphis Recording Service. Chester had learned to play from Charley Patton, so he and Gumbo got on well exchanging stories of the old days. Chester sang a song in which he crooned a long moaning refrain. "Man that's some weird Yodel, you got there, Chester", said Gumbo. "You sound like some damn Wolf howlin". All of a sudden Gumbo was back in the pack, barking mad and howlin for the love of it all

mad and howlin for the love of it all. The quiet was over. He got a job at KWEM booking artists and heckled during gigs at night stirring up the audience, and driving the bands around in his truck, and generally having a high time of it. At that time there was a young guy playing guitar at KWEM called Paul Burlison, and he played with Smokey Joe Baugh, on the slot before Chester Burnett (Howlin Wolf). Paul and Smokey ended up being drafted in to play as Wolf's radio band. The funny thing was that later Paul made a wound up playing with the Burnette Brothers (Johnny and Dorsey) as The Rock'n'Roll Trio and toured all over. I guess he had a thing about Burnette's. So things were pretty wild for a while there and Elvis and all, and Memphis got to be real big in the music business. All kinds of folks coming in to record. Carl Perkins got to be pretty famous til he ran into the back of Gumbo's Fruit truck on the Interstate up to New York. Put him out for a while. Gumbo was shook up pretty bad in that one, had amnesia for the rest of his life. Asked about it later he said, "I didn't feel a thing". He wasn't the same after that though, and even though he still played and partied, you could tell he'd get religion soon enough ... but there's another story... Gumbo died of Beatlemania in 1964 and was reincarnated in an obscure corner of NW Europe a few days later. He's been trying to make sense of those few days ever since.

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#### LATEST NEWS

### Maclidol Overhaul

Maclidol is currently undergoing an overhaul.

It should actually be easier to use. In the meantime here is a list of

**my songs by playcount**

and a **list of 20 recent songs**

You can also use the player to browse, or the song tab which gives you a selection of songs that each open their own player. This is awkward if you use the main player in the top right and the song tab at the same time - you might have two players going at the same time!

I'm sure you'll figure it out. Mail me if you meet any interesting anomalies, and i'll pass them on to the tech team.

## What was New in 2007?

What has happened since last years RPM Challenge?

The first thing I did was to record a slower version of a track that got left off the RPM album (Time Will Tell) for being too harsh and fast. I actually didn't want the sentiments on a CD that would be played in the house for my family to listen to. It is a vision of the way people might have viewed the sight of their home when they were forced to emigrate, relating particularly to the Irish 'Famine' times.

The song was "The Last Tree Standing" and James Bouchard grabbed it with both hands and produced this beautiful version: The Last Tree Standing . I love the way Jim gets into the lyrics and gives a different yet thoroughly sensitive reading of the tune.

The next song I am really proud of, though it hasn't seen the light of day yet. I'm waiting for a certain sassy city gal to come wandering past and settle in to a bit of singing one afternoon (or two). It's called Chillin'.

Then there is a song that took perhaps equally long to see the daylight. Everybody's Body is an Ocean (Yeah!) was a puzzle over how a collaboration with slumbering might work out. Written as a quick Clash reggae rocker, the lyrics explore the Yin and Yang of our two styles. slumbering contributed the beautifully oceanic backing vocals and B&Massa (aka SteveJayFromTassy) added a great bass part, and then it sat on the shelf until I realised that I really didn't need to add much more to it. A bit of polish and it was already good to go. One of my favourite tracks, and an interesting insight into the process of collaboration.

Also around this time Gilbert Neilson tried an interesting experiment and took the lyrics to "First To Know" and wrote his own melody, without listening to the original version. He did a cracking version, and it's interesting for me to hear how the rhythm of the words works its way into his song, too. His version is called I Just Called . I added a guitar part and some harmony vocals. Gilbert's voice is something else. I'd love to see him playing live some day.

There were a few new songs over the summer, and some covers that are posted at my iComp page then it was time for International Talk Like A Pirate Day (September 19th) and I wrote and recorded Give up Yer Gold (or we'll send you below) that day.

A few days later I saw the Old Crow Medicine Show in Galway and that has set me off on a new splurge of tunes known collectively as The Campfire Inferno which kept me busy up until Christmas.

Now it's February again and the 2008 RPM Challenge is underway. Expect new tunes on an almost daily basis. (Eeeek!!)

For additional information please contact us  
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