

SKIP GORMAN

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Biography

Skip Gorman was introduced to traditional music early in his life at the age of eight, when he received his first guitar and a Jimmie Rodgers record. While growing up he was lucky to have the opportunity to see musicians like the legendary Texas fiddler, Eck Robertson, Bill Monroe and Maybelle Carter at the historic Newport Folk Festival. An encounter with Monroe at age fourteen was a pivotal moment in the young musician's life, and aside from being a masterful cowboy singer and fine fiddler, Gorman is one of the premier mandolinists in the style of Bill Monroe.

While he pursued a degree in Latin American Studies and Spanish at Brown University, Gorman played in various old-time music and bluegrass bands, including a stint with bluegrass legend, Frank Wakefield. After graduating, Gorman traveled to Ireland, where he explored the Celtic roots of American music and to this day, Skip remains an accomplished Celtic-as well as Western-style fiddler. In 1973, he headed to graduate school in Utah, where he began collecting rare recordings by early cowboy singers like Carl T. Sprague, Jules Verne Allen and Powder River Jack Lee. While in Utah, he performed the music of Western pioneers with the Deseret String Band and in 1977 went on to record his first album of old-time cowboy songs and fiddle tunes, *Powder River*. This seminal recording on Folk Legacy Records along with his *Trail to Mexico* (1983) was among the very first attempts by a folk revivalist musician to reintroduce the older traditions of the music of the American cowboy.

Skip returned East and taught high school Spanish and history for twelve years. During these years, he performed with Rick Starkey, of Martin Guitars in a bluegrass duo, Rabbit in a Log and released a solo instrumental recording, *Old Style Mandolin*, for Marimac. One of the tunes from this album, *Cowboy Waltz*, was featured in Ken Burns' acclaimed *Baseball* PBS documentary behind the slow motion pitching of the great Walter Johnson.

In 1995, Gorman's Rounder debut, *A Greener Prairie*, was released to universal acclaim. It was named one of the top ten folk recordings of the year by the Boston Globe, which called it "one of the most masterful and flat-out gorgeous cowboy albums to lope down the trail in years." Gorman's 1996 release, *Lonesome Prairie Love*, was a finalist for the prestigious NAIRD Traditional Folk Recording of the Year award.

In 1999, Gorman released his eagerly awaited third Rounder album, *A Cowboy's Wild Song to His Herd*, which has the honor of being selected by Amazon.com as one of the Top Ten Folk CDs of 1999 . - Shay Quillen, Rounder Records