



bio

Robin began life across the Pacific in Sendai, Japan, and before her childhood career as an Army brat was over, she had called eleven very different places "home". Her father was a closet boogie-woogie piano player, and when Robin could finally reach the piano keys, he taught her to hold down bass lines while he soloed over top. She continued playing piano, from Clementi to Gershwin, claiming that's what kept her sane through the high school years, but insanity did creep in when she became obsessed with the sound of the banjo. One year she is saying that she hated anything Country, and then the next, she is driving the family station wagon around Virginia to any Bluegrass or Old-Time festival she can find...just to hear someone play that 5-string. She considers that, yes, she may have been abducted by Hillbilly aliens, but so what.

When she finally headed out on her own, her wandering soon took her back to Alaska ('home' #9). En route she found a sweet, old, Vega banjo, and when she landed in Fairbanks she fell in with a notorious Old-Time stringband, The Sidewinders. She would play banjo with them for six years, performing in bars and at festivals, and touring with Dr. Ogstad's Travelling Medicine Show. She left that band, put down the banjo and picked up a bass, playing a stand-up and singing for local Bluegrass band, Tanana Grass. She soon switched to electric bass and joined the much-loved "dawg grass" quintet, the Rhythm Romancers, whose all-instrumental album, **Romantics** is an Alaskan classic. She eventually played bass in countless "roots rock" bands, and during these years produced her first solo album of original songs, **State of Grace**, called "a pop gem" by reviewers.

She turned once more to the banjo and began using it as accompaniment for more modern songs and her own originals creating a refreshing sound and presentation. In 1995, she released the CD, **Down in My Heart**, a hauntingly beautiful collection of songs presented with only solo banjo and voice.

what others are saying

Down in My Heart: "The warm and clear voice of Robin Dale Ford accompanied by a single banjo makes an irresistible musical combination. From the playful "Vagabond Moon" to the plain beauty of the Appalachian song "Merry Golden Tree," Ford has crafted a magical recording."
(Dirty Linen #58 June/July '95).

Ain't that Skippin' and Flyin': "Based on the evidence of this CD, Robin Dale Ford is a substantial talent. Her singing voice is plaintive and lean, possessing a clarity that sacrifices nothing in expressiveness."
(David Royko-Bluegrass Unlimited July 2000).



what's new

This year finds Robin touring to promote her latest CD, **Ain't that Skippin' & Flyin'**, which has been introducing her to many new fans around this country and others. Mike Flynn, host of the popular Public Radio show, "Folk Sampler" has played a different song from the CD on five of his weekly shows since June, saying, "I have fallen in love with [her] music and it is a pleasure to play it on the air." One of the songs, "Where I'm Bound" is included on The Yukon Collection Vol. II from Caribou Records, and was used as the soundtrack for a video by the Yukon Tourism Board.

Robin and her banjo have had the pleasure of opening for such acts as Dar Williams, Iris Dement, Loudon Wainwright, Carrie Newcomer, Janis Ian, Don McClean, Kevin Welch, Bill Staines, The Doug Dillard Band, Libby Roderick, Tim O'Brien, Tracy Schwartz & Ginny Hawker.

Somewhere along this crazy musical path she met her life partner, Fairbanks home-boy, Pat Fitzgerald. They share an incredible passion for songwriting and together formed 10th Planet Records which is their record label and also the name of their recording studio located in a log cabin on their ten acres outside of Fairbanks. They have combined their solo acts for tours from Alaska to Arizona and across Canada, and when in Fairbanks they play their own hybrid of original music they like to call "stringband rock" with a band called DANG!.



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