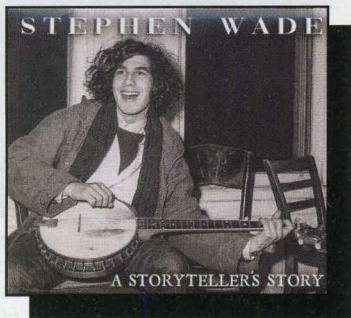


# HIGHLIGHT

**STEPHEN WADE**  
**A STORYTELLER'S STORY:**  
**SOURCES OF BANJO DANCING**



Patuxent Music CD-333

Four decades ago, *Banjo Dancing*—a one-person show conceived, created, and performed by musician and writer Stephen Wade—premiered in a small theater in Chicago. The original show was subtitled *The 48th Annual Squitters Mountain Song, Dance, Folklore Convention & Banjo Contest And How I Lost*, which gives you a delightful sense of its mix of music, jokes, and storytelling. With this modest but almost monumental landmark, Wade had helped revive the venerable tradition of banjo players being all-around entertainers. Folk music fans and theater critics alike were enthralled. Its reception in Washington, D.C., says it all. Wade was invited to perform at The White House and then began a three-week booking at a D.C. venue. The run extended into ten years (yes, ten years).

To celebrate *Banjo Dancing's* 40th anniversary, Wade has released *A Storyteller's Story: Sources Of Banjo Dancing* which will surely

appeal to fans of American roots music and the folklorists who trace its roots. It's a true treasure trove, right from "Banjo Serenade," the masterfully written and truly captivating stage-setter. Among its many other gems: an authentic fiddle & banjo rendition of "Leather Britches" featuring New Lost City Ramblers founding member Tom Paley; Wade appearing with country music pioneer Doc Hopkins on a *Voice Of America* overseas radio broadcast; and banjo legend Hobart Smith talking about music and then performing "Cumberland Gap."

The stylistic range here is impressive. The listener is treated to old-time music, stone-lonesome blues, and even strutting jug band sounds. And, of course, there are great dollops of Wade's priceless humor and storytelling on the recitation "The Far-Famed Fairy Tale Of Fenella" and the final track "Chicago," in which Wade streams affectionate one-liners that praise of his beloved city.

Making this collection even more valuable is its impeccably-researched booklet. Its 42 pages contain the history and context of each selection, plus further introductions to the marvelous folks who created or preserved all this powerful and timeless music. Throughout, the eclectic virtuosity and unending joy of Stephen Wade's playing and voice ties it all together, never failing to entertain while enlightening. You can practically see his joyful and unpretentious grin. Special praise must go to Wade and his production contributors for assembling tracks that were sometimes recorded decades and hundreds of miles apart, yet blended here into a smoothly flowing and virtually seamless whole. Highly recommended. (Patuxent Music, P.O. Box 572, Rockville, MD 20808, [www.pxrec.com](http://www.pxrec.com).)JRS

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