

# STEPHEN STILLS

## “Carry On”: Die große 4-CD-Retrospektive mit 25 unveröffentlichten Tracks Liner Notes

We would like to share with all of you this compendium of music from our friend and partner Stephen Stills. From the first recording of his that we could find (from the Voice of America radio station in Costa Rica in 1962) to a 2012 performance at the Beacon Theater in New York City, this set spans 50 years of music from a man whose range of musical expression is legendary, encompassing the blues, rock, folk and Latin music. Once again, we both experienced a newfound respect for Stephen and his extra-special gifts as a multi-instrumentalist, arranger, composer and singer, and when we put together this box set we realized just how much Stephen has contributed to the culture of not only his generation but to the many generations to come. We are honored to have been asked, and trusted, to bring you this collection, and in the end, all we say is... enjoy.

-Graham Nash and Joel Bernstein

Most of us have experienced a spark in time when we see a vision of the future. Blurry and ephemeral, it nevertheless sticks in our memory only to reveal true meaning much later in life. My spark with Stephen Arthur Stills occurred around 1960 in the living room of my parents' house in Tampa, Florida.

Stephen was the kid next door who played an old steel-stringed Stella guitar and picked with his fingers. He was way better than any of the teenage troubadours in our little group. He could even play Spanish music with all the intricate fingerpicking. I, on the other hand, had an f-hole hollow-body Harmony still tuned to the bar (open E) because I didn't know any chords.

We played folk songs by the Kingston Trio and Woody Guthrie, and I tried to mimic Jimmy Reed's drunken whine on "Baby What You Want Me to Do." We had a hi-fi in the living room that played all three record speeds: 45 rpm for my Nervous Norvus, Bill Haley and Chuck Berry records; 33 1/3 for my mother's Henry Mancini and Sophie Tucker LPs; and 78 rpm for the old scratchy transcriptions of blues legends like Lead Belly, Robert Johnson and slide-guitar legend Tampa Red.

Stephen and I became dedicated fans of the late-night blues shows of Big Hugh Baby and John R. on WLAC (Nashville). On weekend nights, the old tube radio in our black 1940 Packard sedan would blast out the sounds of Slim Harpo, Little Willie John, Muddy Waters and a "new" rhythm and blues group called James (Brown) and the Famous Flames. We would hang out at the drive-in and pick tunes in the big Packard's backseat, passing brown paper bags filled with Budweiser and half-pints of cheap bourbon.

The blues became "our thing," and as we spent more time together, Stephen soon learned all the licks. You can still hear the Delta blues storytelling influence in many of Stephen's later recordings like "Black Queen" and "Go Back Home."

What set Stephen apart from the rest of us was that he was true to the song. Where some of us would stop a song halfway through if we thought people were bored, Stephen would make sure to sing all the verses. With Stephen every song had a beginning, middle and end. He understood the value of performance and insisted on everyone playing together and doing the song right, especially the vocals.

The genesis of Stephen's vocal skill was perhaps the result of the tutelage of Donald Kreuzsch, the choir director at St. Leo Academy, a Benedictine monastery and school north of Tampa, near Dade City, Florida. St. Leo's monks took in "troubled" youths and straightened them out with a good dose of Catholic doctrine and the paddle, blackboard pointer, or any other handy weapon a man of the cloth could wield to drive home to the riotous adolescents the values of piety and obedience. We studied the classics, learned Latin and practiced table manners.

Stephen and I were both in the choir, and we sang the High Mass and often the evening Benediction, all in Latin. There was no instrumental accompaniment, everything was sung a cappella, and every note had to be perfect. Mr. Kreuzsch taught us harmony, articulation and breathing, and we filled the chapel with "Kyrie, Eleison," "Agnus Dei" and the other dirges and chants of the Holy Catholic Mass. It was great voice training, and Stephen made the most of it.

But what makes a 16-year-old guitar player into a prolific songwriter and consummate performer? What tempered the steel in his character to survive the cold streets of New York, the whisky-soaked barrooms of Bourbon Street and the fame-hungry hordes along the Sunset Strip? That is a much larger question and not one we can answer in these few words.

What we can easily discern from this 100-song musical anthology is the evolution of a musical style. Stephen took the floating melodies of Spanish music, the soaring ballads of folk, the symphonic structure of the classics and the driving deep feel of Chicago and Delta blues and blended them into a unique mix of writing and performance that few of his contemporaries can match.

Stephen is a song-crafter and dream-weaver; he understands a good song is as much about truth as it is about musicianship. Listen to almost any Stephen Stills song and you will find little contrivance and none of the pabulum proffered by some contemporary pop artists and studio-created stars.

Many things about the man are different from the young boy strumming that Stella in my parents' living room 50 years ago; but Stephen has three qualities that I believe have consorted to deliver us this gifted chronicler of life and love.

The first is a gift for observation. Stephen has the ability to distill those everyday, everyman experiences into the poetry of music like few others. He doesn't just pull a hook from some philosophical vignette, but he crafts a story combined with the musical accompaniment to deliver the idea in a way that grips the mind and forces us to hum the tune over and over.

The second is determination. Stephen is not a man to quit. When he is focused on a goal, he is hard to dissuade. See that in his constant pursuit of perfection, his determination to create a new sound by electrifying folk music and the strength to deliver us great music well into his sixth decade. His extraordinary life and this compendium of work is testament to his nerve and strong heart.

The third, and perhaps most essential, element is his deep but often unrevealed and misunderstood intellect. Stephen is a smart guy, able to converse on a host of topics at considerable depth. This stems in part from a good education and the intellectual curiosity of an artist. Stephen's turn in life could have just as easily been lived in the halls of academia as the backstage dressing rooms of New York and the Sunset Strip.

Revealed on this box set you will find music composed with the audience insight of a street musician, the discipline of a classical maestro and the brutal truth of the poet. As Stephen's Manassas collaborator Chris Hillman once told me, ". . . listen to "4+20." Here is a guy pouring out his heart about his family—it is all out there for everyone to see. That takes talent and a lot of guts."

As the Buffalo Springfield forged folk music into electric anthems of a generation with songs like "For What It's Worth" and "Rock N Roll Woman," Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young took that precise instrumentation and stellar songwriting to a new level of performance with "Find the Cost of Freedom."

With Crosby, Stills & Nash we heard again the tight harmonies and deft electric/acoustic blends on "You Don't Have to Cry" and "Helplessly Hoping." As the end of the 1960s saw the breakup of CSN, Stephen's music continued in the tradition of the sole balladeer with hits like "Love the One You're With" and "Change Partners." In all of these songs we can hear those roots of folk, blues and classical music that formed the base of Stephen's music.

Although the early 1970s was a time of musical experimentation, Stephen continued to deliver great performances. His sold-out Madison Square Garden performance in 1971 demonstrated not only his ability to hold 25,000 people in his musical grasp, as he sat under the spotlight with a single guitar, but also his consummate conducting skill to take the show to a new level by arranging the Memphis Horns' charts for a standing ovation finale rendition of "Carry On."

Arguably Stephen's most prolific songwriting and performance came with the creation of the Manassas band. With former Byrd and Burrrito Brother Chris Hillman, longtime drummer and collaborator Dallas Taylor, the solid driving bass of Calvin "Fuzzy Samuels," keyboardist supreme Paul Harris, talented percussionist Joe Lala and pedal-steel virtuoso Al Perkins, the first Manassas band record is roundly praised as Stephen's most musically diverse and creatively exciting release.

The two Manassas records feature solid Stills ballads like "Song Of Love" and "It Doesn't Matter" and edgy, deftly constructed compositions that combine a true county feel, like "Colorado," or the Latin-influenced "Rock N Roll Crazyes"/"Cuban Bluegrass." Most critics agree that the first Manassas record best showcases the diversity and depth of Stephen's talent as a singer, songwriter, arranger and recording artist.

As Stephen passed through the next two decades, he continued his solo career and his very productive collaboration with David Crosby, Graham Nash and Neil Young. On this anthology you will hear the great songs of the '80s, such as the swelling sea-tale of love lived and lost in "Southern Cross" and the story inspired by a Vietnam-era helicopter pilot-turned smuggler in "Treetop Flyer." You will also hear some of the rare material, like his cover of Bob Dylan's "Ballad of Hollis Brown" and the hauntingly reflective ode to his first love, Judy Collins, "Isn't It So."

Producers Graham Nash and Joel Bernstein have done an exceptional job of selecting and mixing this amazing compendium of material distilled from over 1,500 tapes in the Stills archives. It's a life's work of exceptional creativity, artistic consistency and emotional quality. Here you will find the crystal clear evidence of musical genius that sparked a vision in that living room a half-century ago. Enjoy.

-Michael O'Hara Garcia

### **In Stephen's Garden**

Most box sets are about nostalgia. We buy them to hear songs we haven't heard since we were teenagers, and to remind us of what it felt like to be alive then. But Stephen Stills' songs are different. After 45 years they are still played regularly on radio, television and in films. Why? Because of his unusual ability to reach across class, race, and time. Because of his ability to communicate directly with his listeners about things that are important to us—love, knowledge, social justice—and in ways that are important to us. With rock, blues, folk and country—sometimes all in the same song.

This box set then is more like a curated gallery exhibit, a retrospective of an artist's work so far. By seeing all the work together in one place we can appreciate Stills' stellar range and versatility, not to mention his productivity. Stills has released over 250 songs since 1966, and countless more were never released; a few of them are even here now for the first time.

*I don't know what I'm lookin' for but I know it can be found.*

To begin with, there is "Travelin'." Stills the balladeer is just 17 years old, weaving lines from well-known folk songs into a tune of his own. It's about searching and seeking, which will become prominent themes in his body of work. His Travis picking guitar style is all there, as if he was born with it. And it's already clear from his sweet voice, superb pitch and phrasing that he will be a major singer. But he hasn't found his own sound yet. At 17 he's channelling the ubiquitous folk music of the early '60s. He is enunciating carefully and making round folk-singer-like vowels, but if you listen carefully, you can hear a trace of a Southern accent, and now and then a bit of Pete Seeger. The guitar lives in an ambiguous time signature, lilting back and forth between 4/4 and 3/4 time with its sly triplets on the third beat of the measure.

Two years later on "High Flyin' Bird," he's playing with his raspy rock voice, still in the context of the folk song, complete with Hootenanny-style background vocals. Then two years after that, he's beginning to develop his *own* sound with "Sit Down I Think I Love You," sculpting the tight harmonies that will become his signature in the supergroup CSN (and sometimes Y). He's also begun demonstrating his lyricism as a lead guitarist. There's a bit of Beatles in the fuzz guitar solos on "Sit Down I Think I Love You" and "Everydays," and a bit of Buck Owens in "Go And Say Goodbye."

*There's something happening here.*

And then—bang!—there it is, in "For What It's Worth." All at once, Stills' *sound* is suddenly, completely, all there. "For What It's Worth" sounds like nothing and no one else. The song vividly captures the turmoil of the 1960s, and it does so in an astonishing two minutes and 40 seconds. It is as perfect a song and political statement as has ever been recorded, an ode to protestors everywhere and at any time, underscoring the danger of speaking out against oppression and the status quo. Neil Young's telegraphic, trembling lead guitar opens the song, sounding like the struggling heartbeat of a college student soon to be silenced by National Guard bullets. The decade saw so much violence perpetrated against students who were simply "singing songs and carrying signs." Few people born between 1940 and 1964 can fail to know what he means when Stills sings the line "paranoia strikes deep," and Young's springy, reverb-soaked guitar sounds like actual chills making their way up your spine.

Anyone else, any lesser musician, would have mined that sound for years of copycat hits. Instead, Stills went on to explore new material that unmistakably bears his imprint, each different in its own way.

The warm electric major seven chords of "Pretty Girl Why" presage the soft rock of the '70s in a sound that influenced (and was stolen by) everyone from America and James Taylor to Chicago. The guitar break is cleverly syncopated, a three-note pattern played in 4/4 time giving the impression of time stopping when you least expect it, buttressing the lyrics of unrequited love. Stills, exercising his jazz chops, delivers a guitar solo that could be right off of a Lenny Breau record. Rod Argent would two years later steal this vibe and the "hah" echo sound for "Time Of The Season" with The Zombies.

We get to hear Stills the craftsman, tinkering with the design until he gets it right. One glimpse into this is the alternate mix of "Carry On" included here. The album version (from *Déjà Vu*) was a big hit. In this identical performance, but different mix, you'll hear a lead guitar part in the right speaker that wasn't in the album mix (it enters at 0:07). The part is perfectly fine, melodious, in tune, a standard "thirds" harmony à la the Everly Brothers. So why didn't it make the final cut? My guess is that Stills found the part just a little too delicate for the heavy, bass-driven groove of this song.

Joni Mitchell wrote "Woodstock," but it's no accident that the Stills' arrangement for CSNY is the more well known. The low pass filter on the bass and organ gives the song a gospel underpinning, and the frenetic lead guitar and the R&B drum part bind the early African roots of rock to the psychedelic rock so famously captured at the song's namesake festival.

## The Singer's Voices

From about 1600 to 1900, the dominant force in Western music was pitch in its various forms: melody, counter-melody and harmony. At the same time, the dominant force in African music was rhythm, sometimes to the exclusion of melody. Beginning in the late 1800s, timbre became increasingly important; that is, the *sounds* of the instruments and instrument mixtures began to take center stage. This became most prominent with the premier of Ravel's "Bolero" in 1928, a piece in which the main theme is repeated with different instrumental timbres as a way to build tension and release in the composition—timbre had become a form-bearing medium. Rock music is the combination and culmination of these three musical traditions coming together: pitch, rhythm, and timbre define the form in unique ways. By the early 1960s, timbre had emerged as *the* defining feature of popular music. When we hear a record by Gene Vincent or Link Wray, by Led Zeppelin or The White Stripes, one of the first things we notice is the overall *sound* of the record, its timbre. This has been corroborated by neuroscientific research showing that even infants respond to timbre before they respond to pitch or rhythm. And when there is a vocalist, the timbre that our ears are drawn to is the sound of the singer's voice. Some voices sound instantly familiar or friendly, some sound powerful and intense, some sound like leaders or teachers, inciting us to action through politically motivated songs and anthems. It is the rare singer who can tap into all of these, but Stephen Stills is one of them.

This is part of Stills' unique genius as a singer, to have so many voices full of emotional nuances there at the ready for performance. A single line can take you through a whirl of emotions. Listen to the first line of "To A Flame": "Drawn to a flame, she is far away." A nice line on a page, but in his voice they reveal a world of yearning, churning, burning, and turning towards and away from love. The little curlicue downward dip on the word "flame" tells us of the doubts and despair, the gorgeous vibrato on "away" trails off ever so slightly to reinforce the feelings of distance. Is his voice straining? Is he in pain? All the elements fit together—poetry, timbre, and pitch—in such a resounding emotional *performance*. The very best singers—Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra—do this all the time, and yet it is rarely talked about.

In "Thoroughfare Gap," when Stills sings the word "iron" his voice takes on a steely metallic quality, and when he sings about the strain of the ride, his voice itself becomes strained. And when he sings about a valley, his pitch rises as if surveying the surrounding terrain. Sinatra used to make meticulous notes on lyric sheets to diagram out a performance—where to take a breath, which syllables to emphasize, what images to call to mind. Other singers, like Paul McCartney, just do this intuitively at the microphone. It's the performance that counts, not the means to it, and Stills stands among the very best for being able to deliver a story in a compelling, nuanced and *musical* way.

And what a palette of vocal tones to draw on! There is the Stephen Stills sultry soul of "My Angel" and "Love Story"; the smoky and Lennon-esque sound of "For What It's Worth" and "Lowdown"; the famous Stephen Stills raspy growl of "Questions," "Black Queen," "Go Back Home," and "I Don't Get It." There's also the crystal clear and hat-in-the-hands humble sound of "Travelin'," which he brings back for "4+20," and the sweet part of "Bluebird." On "Four Days Gone" it is so intimate, it's almost uncomfortable, as if we're eavesdropping on a very private moment of music making and self-discovery when he thinks no one is listening; here it has some of the confessional quality of the first John Lennon solo record (although it was recorded two and a half years earlier than Lennon's). This haunting intimacy is palpable right up to the long-held, unresolved chord at the end (and if you listen closely, you'll hear Stills' boot-steps as he walks into the control room to hear the playback).

In "Crossroads," the spirit of Robert Johnson consumes his voice and he sings with the genuine misery of Mississippi poverty, the overpowering humidity, dripping with the desperation of a man with nothing left to lose but his own life. There's a point in the song where the guitar playing speeds up—speeds up like the cars that are passing him by as he tries to flag a ride—and just when you think the guitar playing can't get any faster or more intricate, it does. A moment later, when even we listeners are trying to catch our breath at the guitar lines racing by like a Cadillac on the highway, Stills seamlessly segues into the Chuck Berry tune "You Can't Catch Me," a song about—you guessed it—a Cadillac Coupe de Ville. The wry wit is just another emotional cue in Stills' masterful artistry.

After spending years listening to a song, and experiencing that song in a wide variety of different locations—with different people, under different emotional states—it begins to feel personal. Add to that the many different phases of life we've been through with a song—schoolchild, college student, young adult, middle-aged adult, perhaps married, divorced—and the song follows us through all these changes. This is even more so with Stephen's songs, which often grapple with relationships and life changes, exemplified most clearly in "See The Changes," included here with a previously unreleased lead guitar part! (You'll hear it in the left speaker.)

If we're fans, we've invested hundreds or thousand of hours thinking about songs like this, and reflecting on what they mean to us. A good song tells us about ourselves, reminds us of ourselves, is part of a decades-long dialog between us and our loved ones. Not to mention all the friends and others we've shared the music with—the road trips with the stereo blasting, the concerts. Those songs become part of our shared relationship memory. And the voice that delivers them becomes our friend and companion on life's journey. As Stills sings on his version of Traffic's "Dear Mr. Fantasy," "all of us see our changes through you."

## The Guitarist's Fingers

There's a guitar line that runs through "Wooden Ships" that is one of my favorite things to listen to in the world. It's played with a wonderfully distinctive tone that I had never heard anywhere before or since. At the beginning of the

song it dances coyly between Stills' and Crosby's vocal sparring, only to emerge for a solo that gives voice to the wide range of human emotional experiences expressed by the lyrics: yearning, fear, comfort, camaraderie, competition, joy, despair, salvation. That guitar sound is unmistakably Stills' touch, his tone, yet unique to this song. I had never heard this tone before or since. Until now.

Listening to the previously unreleased version of "The Lee Shore," I heard that tone again, and realized I had stumbled into Stills' garden, the flowerbed of his ideas. Throughout this box set there are clues to the sources of Stills' overwhelming creativity—the process, the tinkering and the exploration that have made him one of the most respected and admired songwriters of the last 50 years. He ended up not using that particular tone on the version of "The Lee Shore" that we all know from *4-Way Street*, but here he was playing around with it. With some tonal modifications, it's the sound that bridges the two musical parts of Crosby's song "Déjà Vu." The backwards guitar that featured so prominently in "Pre-Road Downs"? Stills was playing around with it a year before, heard here on his demo of "Forty-Nine Reasons."

And there are more insights, more secrets revealed to the careful listener. For decades now, I've been trying to figure out what that strange instrument is that opens up the CSN hit "Marrakesh Express." Musicians and producers who know a lot more than I do have variously speculated that it was some kind of Algerian bagpipe or an obscure Moroccan double-reed instrument. On hearing "Who Ran Away?," an unreleased song from 1968, it's now clear: The sound that opens "Marrakesh Express" was a special effects electric guitar sound that Stills invented, and had been playing around with for several months preceding the recording of "Marrakesh Express." (Who knows how he did that back in 1968? Guitarists who want to emulate it now might try a Fairchild compressor cranked up to the maximum and an Eventide 949 harmonizer set to a wide symmetric pitch shift with feedback. But that will only get you part of the way there; Stephen Stills' fingers are the rest of the sound.)

Here I'm prattling on and on about tone, but tone matters. If composing is painting with sound, then the sounds of the various instruments become like the oil colors on a painter's palette. For a composer who writes for guitar, part of the challenge and the fun is finding tonal colors that fit the song, but also sound utterly new and fresh. Stills has never stopped innovating. Just when you thought you'd heard every guitar sound possible, he comes up with a new one for "Treetop Flyer," a tone that takes wing by simulating what a guitar might sound like inside the hollow shell of a low-flying fiberglass airplane. Or the overdriven guitar tone, rich in odd integer harmonics, that he uses in the solo for "Special Care" (and that was shamelessly copied by Steely Dan for "Midnight Cruiser" and by The Guess Who for "American Woman"). He's also one of the finest practitioners of the humble wah-wah pedal (along with Hendrix), evident here on "Go Back Home," "Marianne," "Jet Set," "My Angel," "Only Waiting For You," and many others. And what about those fingers? With his left hand, he presses the strings down more deliberately and with more strength of force than anyone else I've ever seen. When Travis-picking with his right, he doesn't use a thumb pick or long thumbnail, but uses the callous of his thumb to get the clear, ringing bass tone, as in "Haven't We Lost Enough," "Hollis Brown," and "Treetop Flyer."

His solos are marked by a strong narrative momentum, fluidity, facility, occasional excursions to ancient Greek modes, and a gift for writing balanced and satisfying melodies—his are guitar solos you can easily sing. "I learned by watching Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck, studying them up close, their use of the whammy bar, the volume knob—that influenced my style greatly," he explains. Stills is also an unusually *rhythmic* lead guitar player; imagine what Gene Krupa would do if he traded in his sticks for a Gretsch White Falcon.

Three of Stills' stylistic signatures bind together a creative use of time and pitch. For one, he has a wicked vibrato that he usually delays until the second half of a held note; the note sustains perfectly in pitch and then begins its trembling and wavering, like the sounds of distress do in the human voice when we're overcome by emotion. Then there are the whole tone hammer-ons, starting two semitones below the note he'll end up on, forming a kind of appoggiatura. This delays the listener's neural gratification while adding tension to the melodic line as we wait for it to resolve.

He also favors the unison bends of his old pal Jimi Hendrix, although Stills employs them more economically. Like the whole tone hammer on, the unison bend starts out as a dissonance and brings us into a kind of eerie, otherworldly consonance—like a note smashing into itself in a particle collider, whizzing around the inside of a helical titanium chamber. (A "unison bend" is the same note played twice, in unison, by bending one string to the pitch of another.)

### **The Composer's Cranium**

One of the marks of great artists is the ease with which they recontextualize their core ideas. Van Gogh painted more than half a dozen still-life sunflowers, a favorite subject of his, and each is beautiful and unique. Classical composers often quote and requote their prior works. Part of this may be a conscious attempt to leave signposts for listeners, sonic breadcrumbs, a way of saying, "Yes, this music may be new and unfamiliar, but it is part of a chain of melodies that includes this one that you've heard before." Part of it may be that artists tend to gravitate toward particular ideas that they find pleasing, and delight in reworking them to different purposes. Stills, perhaps more than any other modern composer, invokes this classical idea of self-reference with a sense of fun and infectious enthusiasm.

The most well-known case is the Buffalo Springfield song "Questions" as it becomes embedded in the Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young song "Carry On." In the Springfield version, Stills is yearning for his current lover to communicate more with him: "Where are we going love/what are you feeling?" By the CSNY version, she has walked out, and he

is left with the same questions he had before. The symmetry of the songwriter's inner dialog in both cases is haunting. Stills' riffs haunt as well. Although the vocal line doesn't reappear, the memorable ascending bass line from "Carry On" is brought back in "The Treasure" (at 3:20).

There are other recapitulated themes. In the bridge of "Rock N Roll Woman" (at 1:25), the line "she don't have to try" ends on an extended downward spiral holding the word "try." This is echoed 18 months later on the line "you don't have to cry" from the song of the same name. Then several years later in "Love Story," we're reminded of the same theme with the cascading vocal harmony (at 2:11) on the line "you can lose the war . . ." His solo demo of "Know You Got To Run" becomes embodied in CSNY's electric rocker "Everybody I Love You," then reemerges in a bluesy banjo version of "Know You've Got To Run" on the album *Stephen Stills 2*. "Find The Cost of Freedom" becomes woven into "Daylight Again."

One of the musical ideas he keeps coming back to is holding the melody note while the harmony changes below it. We hear it on "Go And Say Goodbye," "Helplessly Hoping," and "Thoroughfare Gap." It takes a tremendous amount of confidence for a writer to start a melody by staying on the same four or five notes, but when the note changes finally come, the payoff is enormously powerful.

Five of his best known songs are "For What It's Worth," "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," "Love The One You're With," "Southern Cross," and "Treetop Flyer." All are staples of FM radio, and have been for decades. That Stephen Stills' best-known songs couldn't be any more different from one another speaks to the sheer force of his creative drive and his repulsion to the formulaic. "For What It's Worth" is built on an R&B riff that would be perfectly at home on a Temptations record. The first time I heard the "Suite," aptly named for its three distinct musical sections, it sounded like it came from outer space—a completely distinct, unique sound that had no terrestrial antecedents. It's only when you hear the original demo of this song (from *Just Roll Tape*), or hear Stephen perform it solo, that you can tell he's listened to Robert Johnson, John Fahey, and Chuck Berry, combining them here in his own open E tuning on the guitar (the tuning, from low to high, is *EEEEBE*), and a shuffle rhythm not unlike "Little Queenie" (and those whole tone hammer-ons come in for the middle section). "Treetop Flyer" is a talking blues inspired by the guitar stylings of Doc Watson. "Love The One You're With" starts with a kind of inside-out Bo Diddly lick and combines it with a Caribbean rhythm track featuring congas and steel drums.

From the jazz of "Cherokee" to the light pop of "Marianne," from the Bakersfield sound of "Go And Say Goodbye" to the Southern rock of "Jet Set," it's stunning to imagine all these tunes came from the pen of one man. Yet he invokes these different musical styles honestly. Lest you think him pretentious, remember when he does Louisiana blues, as in "Welfare Blues," that he lived in Louisiana as a schoolboy. When he does the slight calypso/meringue beat of "Panama," know that he lived there too, having spend part of his youth in Panama, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. His affinity for Latin music allows him to incorporate it into his songs as a native, in songs such as "50-50," "Uno Mundo," "Feed The People," or the steel drums he plays on "Love The One You're With."

He's one of the pantheon of three rock musicians who are true multi-instrumentalists (along with Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder). That's Stephen playing the scorching Hammond B3 organ on "Old Times Good Times" (Hendrix is on Strat), and on "Love The One You're With" and "Church." His bass part on "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" is nothing short of phenomenal, the rhythmic engine that propels the song ever forward, and a part so melodic that it could easily have been spun out into its own song. In fact, Stills played bass on 25 of the songs in this collection, including "I Don't Get It" (his favorite), the doubled bass on "No Tears Left," all the bass on the first CSN album, and on much of the CSNY follow-up *Déjà Vu*. In this collection alone, you'll hear him play piano, vibraphone, banjo, congas, maracas, (eight in all, four per hand) guiro, cowbell, timbales, Coral electric sitar, 12-string guitar, harmonium, symphonic harp, harpsichord, dulcimer, and number of synthesizers doing strings, brass and pure synth sounds. As a bass player or organist, he could easily have made a career. As a composer, his mastery of those instruments informed his sensibility and his awareness of the interlocking instrumentation that would define his sound as a soloist or band leader.

Regarding "To A Flame," Arif Mardin is quoted in Ahmet Ertegun's biography as having said: "one of my great experiences was doing that ballad . . . with Stephen Stills in London. I had heard the song and arrived with an outline for a score. Stephen and I sat down at the piano and he just started. He had the whole thing, virtually note for note in his head. We worked for hours making sure he had recalled the range of the various instruments correctly, and there were a very few instances where I filled in the blanks, but even those he corrected over the course of the session. Every note of it was his."

Stephen explained to me the excitement and novelty of that session. "It was like going back to music school and composing at the same time. Arif dragged it out of me. If I had paid more attention in theory, I could have saved us a lot of time by just writing the damn thing. Arif started conducting with a pencil, but the timing was not quite on. The first chair violinist finally pulled a baton out of his case and said to Arif, loud enough for me to hear in the control room, "I say, Arif, why not let the young man have a go?"

"So amid friendly chuckles, two minutes later I was at the podium in front of 22 pieces of London's finest symphonic musicians. Two takes later, I was sweaty and spent, but it was down, with a round of applause from the room full of devastatingly accomplished musicians, all grinning from ear to ear. Arif added a zither. It was the biggest 'wow' moment of my career."

And like McCartney and Stevie Wonder, he knows his way around a recording studio, playing the studio like a musical instrument (friends call him “Captain Manyhands”). He himself crafted many of the mixes that are included here, including undetectable splices in the two-inch master tapes.

Stephen's lyrics show him to be ever the optimist about relationships, and about the world: “There's a rose in a fisted glove.” “We are not helpless” serves as a rejoinder to Neil Young's well-known refrain “leave us helpless, helpless, helpless.” Yet Stephen's optimism never veers far from human reality: “Find the cost of freedom, buried in the ground.”

### **The Treasure: Your Box Set**

I played “Bluebird” for a young friend the other day who was very impressed with the lyrics and said, “It would be great to hear Stephen Stills rap.” And so then I played him “Word Game” (from *Stephen Stills 2*). My friend said, “Wow! So he's really keeping with the times.” That's when I told him that the song was recorded in 1971, eight years before The Sugarhill Gang's “Rapper's Delight,” widely regarded the first rap record. There is not much that Stephen Stills has not done, and his influence is destined to be felt for generations to come. I'm not sure that people will still be playing and singing “Jumping Jack Flash” a hundred years from now, but I'm willing to bet that everyone will still be listening to “Love The One You're With,” “4+20,” “For What It's Worth,” “Southern Cross” and dozens more from his oeuvre.

As Stephen asks in “I Give You Give Blind,” “When could something come and make me glad to be alive?” The *when* is now, and the *something* is this box set. In “Johnny's Garden”—one of my favorite songs—Stills sings about doing anything he must do to stay in this sublime place, the garden of his house in England. And like so many of Stephen's fans, I would do anything I have to do to be able to keep my ears close to Stephen's garden.

### **Coda**

I'm often asked, “What is Stephen Stills really like?” He is just like you would want him to be. He is smart, funny, and a great conversationalist. He's also one of the most attentive and generous friends I have. We talk about everything, from cars to guitars, from the nature of friendship to the nature of consciousness, from politics to poetics. He is studious and always brings a lot of information to a conversation. He has a particular interest in the brain, fitting his 40-year occupation of writing songs about our innermost mental and emotional lives. Knowing that I am not just a friend but a fan, he generously sent me this box set several months before its release so that I wouldn't have to wait to enjoy it.

Stephen has saved my life twice—once figuratively, and once literally. The first time, I was going through the kinds of relationship problems that 20 year olds do. I didn't know him back then, but the song “See The Changes” was tremendously helpful to me in understanding myself, what I was going through, and what I needed from my companion. Then, last summer, Stephen's kindness and focus on my health set in motion a chain of events that led to my being treated for a condition that I didn't know I had, and that literally saved my life. Last year on his birthday, we did one of the things we both like most—hiking in the wilderness. After we got back, we sat around and played guitar together. One song we sang together was “See The Changes.” Stephen persuaded me to sing the melody while he sang the Graham Nash part. And then I discovered he doesn't just know his part, but like a trained actor, he knows *all* the parts. That shouldn't surprise me given his thoroughness and penchant for detail. But it was a wonderful gift from him to me. And on *his* birthday. I love ya, man.

-Daniel J. Levitin

It's an accepted maxim that you should never meet your heroes because you're bound to be disappointed by them.

As a young teenager growing up in Los Angeles, I no more expected to meet Stephen Stills than the man on the moon, Neil Armstrong. Both entered my consciousness at the same time in 1969—Armstrong taking his giant leap and Stills taking huge strides across the musical landscape, first with Buffalo Springfield, then with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

When my mother gave me my first turntable at the age of 14, she gave me one long-playing record along with it (like the single dollar she always put in a new wallet for luck). It was the debut album of a new group, Crosby, Stills & Nash. The first track on the first side of my very first album was written by Stephen Stills. It's seven minutes and 24 seconds long (at the time, an astonishing length for radio which was still wedded to a format that expected songs to be no more than three minutes in length) and it was called “Suite: Judy Blue Eyes.” My life had changed forever.

But when that needle dropped, I never imagined, not in my wildest dreams, that it would also someday lead me to a 30-year friendship with Stephen Stills.

I first came to know him through our shared passion for politics. Stephen comes from a Democratic tradition—his grandfather was a ward organizer for Franklin Delano Roosevelt in *southern* Illinois, not exactly a hotbed of progressivism. As a teenager in Florida, he campaigned for JFK, handing out fliers before he was old enough to vote, and, in his words, “getting buses for the day of the election to get people to the right polls, and don't let no sheriff turn you around to send you home.”

Over the last five decades, no artist I know has devoted more personal time and energy to the American political process than Stephen. And he goes into the trenches where it matters most, fighting for House and Senate

candidates who are stunned that he understands politics better than they do. He knows where his help is most valuable and that's where he goes, often showing up without even needing to be asked.

That's not to say he hasn't also had a huge impact on the national stage as well. Every Democratic nominee for president since Jimmy Carter has called on Stephen for help and he has always stepped up. Win or lose, he's gone the extra mile, fitting in benefit concerts for candidates during already grueling tours or even making special trips if a race was close. I know. I was there. It wasn't glamorous; it was hard work. But Stephen is also a small "d" democrat. He knows that elections matter. And unlike many other musicians, he's not afraid of the consequences of standing up for who and what he believes in.

He said it best in an interview he once did for my radio show on Air America: "I have not abrogated my rights as a citizen to express my point of view. I do not use my stage as a bully pulpit, but if there's a chance to hold a fundraising concert then I'm no different than a lawyer that writes a brief from his own point of view. I say what I think, and it is the audience's right to ignore my opinion and still like my music."

At his core, Stephen Stills is an intensely private man who doesn't feel comfortable with self-promotion, let alone flattery. He is a gentleman in the best sense of that word, where modesty is a measure of character and respect is earned not sought.

But I can say what he will not. Stephen has had a huge impact on this country he loves so deeply. His life has been about deeds, not just words. Although the words he has written have left an indelible mark on our political consciousness as well: "There's a man with a gun over there, telling me I've got to beware."

Or this remarkable historical plea from "Daylight Again," which you will hear included in this box set: "I think about a hundred years ago, how my fathers bled. I think I see a valley, covered with bones in blue. All the brave soldiers that cannot get older been asking after you. Hear the past a calling, from Armageddon's side. When everyone's talking and no one is listening, how can we decide?"

Stephen has given us all an immeasurable gift—words and music that have politically inspired multiple generations in America and around the world. Stephen Stills has been the metronome of our collective social consciousness for almost half a century—a strong, constant voice for America's children, no matter how old we've become. He is to our time what Mark Twain and H.L. Mencken were to theirs a century ago, a keen and acerbic observer of the public square, telling stories that mock the mighty for their hypocrisy without ever taking himself too seriously.

Had he chosen a different career, Stephen Stills might have become a gifted teacher. Yet, in truth, that is precisely what he is. Few people I've ever known, including acclaimed authors and noted scholars, are either as well-informed or intellectually curious as this largely self-educated man. He is a voracious student of history and no one should ever go one-on-one with him in a debate over public policy unless they enjoy carrying their head around in a valise.

My friend Stills has the perfect surname for the life he's led and shared through his music. His enormous body of work is nothing less than a series of snapshots—aural pictures that viscerally capture and preserve our lives in song, both individually ("Sit Down I Think I Love You," "You Don't Have To Cry" and "Change Partners") and collectively ("For What It's Worth," "Daylight Again" and "Feed The People")

This box set, lovingly and brilliantly produced by Graham Nash and Joel Bernstein, provides us with a magnificent compilation of those unforgettable, often searing images.

Speaking personally, I can't think of a single song that has kept me more hopeful throughout my life than "Carry On," which is, of course, the perfect title for this collection. It is also an apt metaphor for the quintessentially American life of Stephen Arthur Stills, a man who has carried on as a patriot poet when so many others have left the battlefield or refused even to join in the fight.

And always, *always* Stephen has stayed in that fight—never backing down, never giving in. Through troubled times, Stephen Stills has been a truth teller when honesty is painful; a clarion when the times required it. In the truest sense of a thousand-year tradition, Stephen is a troubadour, the musician as messenger.

And he truly is a musician's musician. If you match him against almost any of his contemporaries, it's a knockout in the first round. No other artist has demonstrated the staying power of Stephen Stills. To use another sports metaphor, he's a five-point player. He can write, he can sing, he can play any instrument, he can tell a story and he can capture a moment better than anyone alive. From "4+20" to "Forty-Nine Reasons," Stephen is, by all the numbers, an all-star. It's no accident that he has been inducted twice into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

I've been lucky. I met my hero and was not disappointed; just the opposite. Yet it was as my friend, not as an artist, that Stephen gave me his greatest gift. It came in the form of a lesson that can only be demonstrated by life, not lecture.

And it is this: Heroes are not who we need to know—they're who we need to *become*. Ironically, this consummate wordsmith has now shown me more by example than through all of his extraordinary lyrics combined.



That being said, Stephen Stills' words and music will outlast us all. As they should. Enjoy them here and play them for someone you love, then Carry On!

-David Bender

### Tracklisting:

#### Disc One

1. "Travelin'" – Stephen Stills\*
2. "High Flyin' Bird" – The Au Go Go Singers
3. "Sit Down I Think I Love You" – Buffalo Springfield
4. "Go And Say Goodbye" – Buffalo Springfield
5. "For What It's Worth" – Buffalo Springfield
6. "Everydays" – Buffalo Springfield\*
7. "Pretty Girl Why" – Buffalo Springfield
8. "Bluebird" – Buffalo Springfield
9. "Rock 'n' Roll Woman" – Buffalo Springfield
10. "Special Care" – Buffalo Springfield
11. "Questions" – Buffalo Springfield
12. "Uno Mundo" – Buffalo Springfield
13. "Four Days Gone" – Buffalo Springfield
14. "Who Ran Away?" – Stephen Stills\*
15. "Forty-Nine Reasons" – Stephen Stills\*
16. "Helplessly Hoping" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
17. "You Don't Have To Cry" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
18. "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
19. "4+20" – Stephen Stills\*
20. "So Begins The Task" – Stephen Stills\*
21. "The Lee Shore" – Stephen Stills\*
22. "Carry On/Questions" – Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
23. "Woodstock" – Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

#### Disc Two

1. "Love The One You're With" – Stephen Stills
2. "Old Times Good Times" – Stephen Stills
3. "Black Queen" – Stephen Stills
4. "No-Name Jam" – Stephen Stills & Jimi Hendrix\*
5. "Go Back Home" – Stephen Stills
6. "Marianne" – Stephen Stills
7. "My Love Is A Gentle Thing" – Stephen Stills
8. "Fishes And Scorpions" – Stephen Stills
9. "The Treasure" – Stephen Stills\*
10. "To A Flame" – Stephen Stills\*
11. "Cherokee" – Stephen Stills
12. "Song Of Love" – Stephen Stills
13. "Rock 'n' Roll Crazies/Cuban Bluegrass" – Stephen Stills
14. "Jet Set (Sigh)" – Stephen Stills
15. "It Doesn't Matter" – Stephen Stills
16. "Colorado" – Stephen Stills
17. "Johnny's Garden" – Stephen Stills
18. "Change Partners" – Stephen Stills\*
19. "Do For Others" – Stephen Stills and Steve Fromholz\*
20. "Find The Cost Of Freedom" – Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young\*
21. "Little Miss Bright Eyes" – Stephen Stills\*
22. "Isn't It About Time" – Stephen Stills

#### Disc Three

1. "Turn Back The Pages" – Stephen Stills
2. "First Things First" – Stephen Stills\*
3. "My Angel" – Stephen Stills\*
4. "Love Story" – Stephen Stills
5. "As I Come Of Age" – Stephen Stills
6. "Know You Got To Run" – Stephen Stills\*
7. "Black Coral" – Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young\*
8. "I Give You Give Blind" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
9. "Crossroads/You Can't Catch Me" – Stephen Stills\*
10. "See The Changes" – Crosby, Stills & Nash\*

11. "Thoroughfare Gap" – Stephen Stills
12. "Lowdown" – Stephen Stills
13. "Cuba Al Fin" (edit) – Stephen Stills
14. "Dear Mr. Fantasy" – Stephen Stills & Graham Nash
15. "Spanish Suite" – Stephen Stills
16. "Feel Your Love" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
17. "Raise A Voice" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
18. "Daylight Again" – Crosby, Stills & Nash

Disc Four

1. "Southern Cross" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
2. "Dark Star" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
3. "Turn Your Back On Love" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
4. "War Games" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
5. "50/50" – Stephen Stills
6. "Welfare Blues" – Stephen Stills\*
7. "Church (Part Of Someone)" – Stephen Stills\*
8. "I Don't Get It" – Stephen Stills
9. "Isn't It So" – Stephen Stills
10. "Haven't We Lost Enough?" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
11. "Ballad Of Hollis Brown" – Stephen Stills
12. "Treetop Flyer" – Stephen Stills
13. "Heart's Gate" – Stephen Stills
14. "Girl From The North Country" – Crosby, Stills & Nash\*
15. "Feed The People" – Stephen Stills
16. "Panama" – Crosby, Stills & Nash
17. "No Tears Left" – Crosby, Stills & Nash\*
18. "Ole Man Trouble" – Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young\*
19. "Ain't It Always" – Stephen Stills

\*previously unreleased

**STEPHEN STILLS: Carry On**

4CD Edition

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