

Tracks 1-12 from **Feelin' Fine** (The Village Thing).

Recorded August 1972 at The Meeting House, Frenchay, Bristol.

Produced by **Ian A. Anderson**.



**Derroll Adams:** vocal and 5-string banjo.

**Danny Adams:** vocal (2, 8, 12).

**Wizz Jones:** guitar (1, 4, 5), 12-string guitar (12).

**Roland Van Campenhout:** guitar (1, 3, 11), harmonica (4), recorder (12).

Tracks 13-18 from **Along The Way** (Best Seller).

Recorded 1975 in Brussels, Belgium.

Produced by **Christoph Luhr**.

**Derroll Adams:** vocals and 5-string banjo.

**Danny Adams:** vocal (15).

**Maggie Holland:** bass guitar (13, 15, 16, 17).

**Youra Marcus:** guitar (13, 15).

**Tucker Zimmerman:** piano (14, 16), 12-string guitar (17).

Remastered by **Duncan Cowell** at Sound Mastering.

Original front cover photograph by **Richard Walker** and front design by **Rodney Matthews**.

Back and this page photos by **Dave Peabody**. This package by **Jali Roll Martian**.

Many thanks to **Danny Adams** and **Carsten Linde** for their help with relocating the long-lost master tapes and making this re-issue possible.

For more on Derroll, see [derrolladams.org](http://derrolladams.org)

GFTB 7051

Feelin' Fine

DERROLL ADAMS

## The long lost zen banjo album from 1972, plus...

1. **Darling Corey** 3:17
2. **Apprenticed In London** 1:56
3. **Freight Train Blues** 3:47
4. **Wildwood Flower** 3:55
5. **The Sky** 4:29
6. **Muleskinner Blues** 3:37
7. **Love Song** 3:15
8. **Mr Rabbit** 1:35
9. **Deep Ellum Blues** 2:16
10. **Blue Ridge Mountains** 3:41
11. **Chattering Jaw** 3:46
12. **The Valley** 5:33

Bonus tracks:

13. **Cluck Old Hen** 2:44
14. **Mountain** 4:15
15. **Dixie Darling** 2:52
16. **Anna Feher** 3:20
17. **Oregon** 2:50
18. **Memories** 3:49



5, 7, 12, 14, 18 by Derroll Adams. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16 traditional, arranged by Derroll Adams. 6: Jimmie Rodgers/George Vaughan. 15: A.P. Carter. 17: Tucker Zimmerman.

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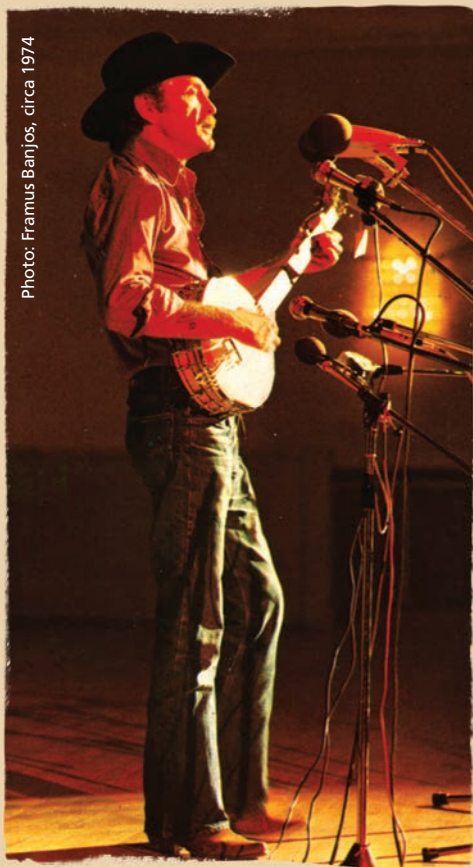
DERROLL ADAMS

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# DERROLL ADAMS FEELIN' FINE





If we lived in an ideal world, this would be part of a boxed set with a massive hardback book detailing the extraordinary life of Derroll Adams, gathering together his music, philosophy, stories and art. If you can track down *Sing Out!* Magazine from January 1967 or the *Old-Time Herald* from Summer 2003 you'll have some 12,000 words which begin to scratch the surface of his life story. In the few hundred that fit here, I can merely précis.

Derroll, as his famous song says, was born in Portland town, Oregon, in 1925. He spent a lot of his childhood in the back seats of cars travelling the north west USA, hearing early country and old-time music on the radio. He joined the Army at 16 after Pearl Harbour, later the naval coastguard. After the war he married and fathered his first child, got an ear-ring and a beard, went to art school, heard more folk music, learned the banjo, joined the Progressive Party, divorced, remarried, had two more children, met Pete Seeger, Jim Garland and Aunt Mollie Jackson, divorced again and eventually settled in Los Angeles with his third partner and two further children. Along the way he worked as a radio announcer, taxi driver, window dresser, truck driver, spray painter, dishwasher, preacher and faith healer, and studied Zen and Yoga.

In Los Angeles, he joined the World Folk Artists who included Frank Hamilton, Weston Gavin, Odetta, Jo Mapes and Guy Carawan. In 1954 he was introduced to actor Will Geer who had a herb farm in Topanga Canyon and a community of left- and beat-leaning actors and artists in-

cluding Lord Buckley, James Dean, Bess & Butch Hawes, sometimes Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston and – eventually – Ramblin' Jack Elliott.

Derroll and Jack hit it off and became a great duo. After Jack married and went to Europe with his wife June, they sent for Derroll in 1957 and the pair became underground sensations in London and Paris, influencing a generation of musicians and making albums in London and Italy. Jack eventually returned to America, but Derroll stayed in Europe where he married a decorator for Christian Dior, moved to Brussels, setting up a window dressing business and having two more offspring.

By the mid-'60s, Derroll was a guru to musicians in England, a hero to Donovan (who Derroll introduced to Bob Dylan, as seen in the Pennebaker film *Don't Look Back's* hotel scene) and not only folk artists like Wizz Jones, Bert Jansch, John Renbourn, Alex Campbell, Ralph McTell, Billy Connolly and many more, but also pop musicians like Rod Stewart, Long John Baldry and Ronnie Lane. But alcohol got the better of him and he retreated to Belgium where, divorced again, he came close to death.

The turning point came in 1970 when he married his final, long-lasting partner Danny, who helped him back to health. Already re-establishing himself in Belgium, Holland and Germany, in 1972 he returned to England for a triumphant comeback at Cambridge Folk Festival, and immediately afterwards came down to Bristol with Danny and Belgian multi-instrumental-

ist Roland Van Campenhout for a few days recording. They were joined by long-time admirer Wizz Jones, and this resulting album, *Feelin' Fine*, was hailed by many, then and later, as his finest ever work. There was a serenity to Derroll's presence and the selection of some of his best ever songs coupled with the deceptive softness of his 'zen banjo' approach, the company of sympathetic musicians and relaxed surroundings brought out his very best.

It was onwards and upwards from there. Derroll and Danny's daughter Rebecca was born. Derroll was re-welcomed with open arms by the European folk community to many of whom he was already a legendary father figure, and he continued performing until the early '90s, only once briefly returning to play in America in 1976 when Donovan took him as a tour guest. In his latter years, when failing health prevented him from performing, he returned to painting, writing and his interests in history and eastern philosophy. He passed away in Antwerp in 2000.

For this first-ever re-issue of *Feelin' Fine* – the tapes vanished for many years – I've added the six tracks from Derroll's subsequent Belgian album *Along The Way* which I think fit closest with its special ambience, including re-uniting *The Mountain* (once adapted by Donovan) with *The Valley* and *The Sky* in his zen trilogy, and including Tucker Zimmerman's wonderful biographical song *Oregon*.

Ian Anderson, November 2016.

“When Ian Anderson told me about the Village Thing and their ideas of record making, it sounded pretty good, and then when he asked me if I'd like to do a record with them I agreed right away, specially when he said it would be very free and I could have who I wanted to play with, 'just sit around and play music.' Hell, that's what we did. First I asked for Roland who is a fine all-round musician and one of Belgium's best, and Wizz Jones who is also a fine musician and I guess can pick about anything on a guitar. Luck was with me and they had the time, so that's what we did, sat together and just played music. We had none of us played together before and we're all in different boats in this music world so we could really do some fooling around. Then I got the idea, why not ask my wife Danny (Danielle) to sing a bit with us? I generally work alone but at home Danny and I sing a bit together and I always thought it sounded kinda nice.

For three days we sat around and played and sang, sometimes taping, sometimes not, and little by little we came up with what you hear on this record. Then it came to the choice of the songs. A few of the songs I have been singing around, a few of my own and things we liked. *Freight Train Blues* I heard back when I was a little one, don't even remember when but I always liked the words. *The Valley* I made up during some tough times – it originally was supposed to be a kids' song but it got kind of serious. *The Mule Skinner Blues* is one of my favourites and

has been for years – I guess I'd sort of feel like a traitor if I didn't use it, it's an old friend. *Wildwood Flower* too is an old friend from my childhood. *Deep Ellum Blues* I learned in the South Pacific during the war: about half of the guys I was aboard ship with were Southerners and some of them sure could play. Well, I don't know, but I figure if you mixed this all together you've got something you could call *Feelin' Fine*. We were all just feelin' fine: Danny, Wizz, Roland, Ian who was busy running those electric machines, and of course me too. It was a great time. The sun was shining just like now and we just played music, enjoyed being alive. Before I sign off, though, I'd like to say thanks to my old buddy Alex Campbell (you old rascal), thank you to Roland, and you too Wizz – thanks a lot man – and Ian, good shot! And Danny, wow! Big big thanks to you.”



*Derroll* 1972

On *Along The Way*, Derroll noted “It was Bert Jansch who got me doing *Cluck Old Hen* and Wizz Jones who turned me on to *Anna Feher*.”