

Bobby Bridger - Biography

Born Bobby Durham in Columbia, Louisiana in 1945 and raised there. At North East Louisiana University, Bridger studied Art Education, graduating with a BA in 1968. Five years earlier, his maternal uncle, Archie Bridger told Bobby of their family connection to the legendary mountain man, Jim Bridger. The conversation sparked Bobby's interest in his uncle's exploits, the old west and, subsequently, Native American history. Bridger's family, including Uncle Archie, were well known musicians in East Texas. Late 1963 saw Bobby begin performing in public, having taken up the guitar a matter of months earlier. 1964-67 Bridger appeared on tv's **McCall Comes Calling** broadcast by KNOE in Monroe, Louisiana. Working with Fred Carter Jr. in Nashville, three Bobby Durham singles were released by Monument Records during 1967. Two singles followed on Nugget Records in 1968-69. Changing his performing name to Bobby Bridger, a self produced, RCA album "**Merging Of Our Minds**" was issued in 1972. "**And I Wanted To Sing For The People**," followed the next year. Bridger settled in Austin, Texas circa the early seventies and successfully performed his "**Seekers Of The Fleece**," a tribute to Jim Bridger, as a one-man show at the Creek Theatre. It was Part 1 of a trilogy of *narrative ballads* Bridger began working on in 1963. Part 3, "Lakota," concerning the decimation of the Sioux nation, was also written at this time. Bridger featured in a chapter of Jan Reid's 1974 Austin progressive music scene expose, "**The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock**." In 1975 "**Seekers Of The Fleece**," was recorded in Colorado, but thirteen years elapsed before it was officially released on cassette. Bobby was featured on the 1976, debut, season of **Austin City Limits**. A second appearance came during season three. Bridger's album "**Heal In The Wisdom**" was the 1981 debut release on his Golden Egg Record label. The title song subsequently became the anthem of the Kerrville Folk Festival. Theatrical appearances during the early eighties included the role of "The Drifter" in Dale Wasserman's "**Shakespeare & The Indians**," and the American Indian Theatre Company production of "**Black Elk Speaks**." Further developing his own "**A Ballad Of The West**," Bridger was named as First Poet in Residence of the John G. Neihardt Centre during 1977. "**Live at Kerrville**" was issued by Golden Egg, on cassette, following Bridger's appearance at the 1986 Festival. In the summer of 1988 Bobby commenced six consecutive summer seasons of performances of "**Seekers Of The Fleece**" at Old Trail Town in Cody, Wyoming. In 1994/95 the show relocated to Green River, Wyoming. 1996 saw the completion of "Pahaska," Part 2 of "**A Ballad...**" "Pahaska" was the Native American name for Buffalo Bill Cody. The world debut of the piece took place during 1996 at the Buffalo Bill Cody Historical Centre in Cody, Wyoming. Bridger recommenced his summer season at Old Trail Town in 2000, this time, featuring all three parts of "**A Ballad Of The West**." A 4 CD collection of his masterwork was released by Golden Egg in December 2000. Bridger operates two web sites, which complement the contents of the foregoing recording, at www.bbridger.com and www.aballadofthewest.com

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