

## Cormac McCarthy – Bio

Cormac McCarthy was born in Ohio, but since the age of ten has mostly lived in New England. For a time, he lived in Lempster, New Hampshire and these days makes his home in South Berwick, Maine with his singer wife Sammie Haynes, and their son, Davis. McCarthy made his singing debut on Cincinnati radio station WKRC, at the age of three years, when he performed “The Ballad Of Davy Crockett” on his father’s radio programme. The song was a hit for numerous artists during 1955. Bill Hayes’ version spent five weeks at # 1 Pop, while Fess Parker, the actor who played Davy Crockett on film and tv, reached # 5, and Tennessee Ernie Ford reached #10. Cormac’s father loved jazz and classical music and introduced his son to the recordings of Errol Garner and Beethoven’s symphonies. During the sixties, Cormac’s college age sister brought home recordings by Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Eric Andersen. Inspired by what he heard, the youngster soon traded in his clarinet for a guitar.

Having enrolled as a literature/music major at New Hampshire’s Plymouth State College, Cormac’s roommate was, future singer/songwriter Bill Morrissey [b. late 1951]. Morrissey encouraged McCarthy to pursue a career in music, and Cormac began playing gigs locally. Following college McCarthy spent some time in California, where he worked in construction, as a truck driver, and as a singer on street corners. Returning to the east coast, in 1986 Reckless Records released McCarthy’s self-titled debut album and it featured liner notes by Bill Morrissey. Two years later Cormac was nominated in a couple of Boston Music Awards categories, namely Outstanding Folk/Acoustic Act and Outstanding Folk/Acoustic Album. Signing with the Green Linnet label, **“Troubled Sleep”** became the first release in their Redbird Series. Five years later the same imprint issued **“Picture Gallery Blues,”** which included “Marigold Hall” co-written by Morrissey and McCarthy. The session musicians included the late Johnny Cunningham [fiddle], Paul Geremia [slide guitar], Bill Conway [drums] and David Mansfield [violin, electric guitar, pedal steel].

A number of Fast Folk Music Magazine recordings featured Cormac McCarthy. On Issue # 302 [Feb. 1986] he performed “Waltz With The Captain’s Daughter,” on # 304 [April 1986] “Nobody But You” and on # 710 [June 1994] “When My Boat Is Built Again” which had been recorded live at the 1993 Maine Festival. Cormac was one of the performers invited, in 1993, to perform in Boston’s WUMB Folk Radio 10th Anniversary Celebration. He has appeared at numerous summer festivals including Newport [three times], and on radio shows such as NPR’s “Mountain Stage.” During early 2003 Cormac McCarthy and his wife Sammie Haynes were in Nashville during the city’s month long celebration of the life and music of Woody Guthrie [8<sup>th</sup> January to 8<sup>th</sup> February], and they presented their Guthrie programme for children **“Hard Times And Good Times In America”** throughout the city’s schools.

Apart from his own recordings, McCarthy has appeared on his wife’s children’s music albums, Bob Martin’s **“The River Turns The Wheel”** [1997], and on Morrissey’s **“Standing Eight”** [1989], **“Songs Of Mississippi John Hurt”** [1999] and **“Something I Saw Or Thought I Saw”** [2001]. “Pay Day” a track from **“Songs Of Mississippi John Hurt”** that featured Morrissey and McCarthy was subsequently included on Vanguard Records various artists compilation **“Avalon Blues: A Tribute To The Music of Mississippi John Hurt ”** [2001]. McCarthy recently reissued on CD his early recordings **“Cormac McCarthy”** and **“Troubled Sleep.”** In the early summer of 2006, following a twelve-year long silence, McCarthy self-released on his Rakish Tilt label, a self-produced album of new material titled **“Curious Thing.”**

Discography : **“Cormac McCarthy”** [1986] ; **“Troubled Sleep”** [1990] ; **“Picture Gallery Blues”** [1995] ; **“Curious Thing”** [2006] :

**Arthur Wood**

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