



(LYRCD 6002)

FOUR LEGGED TALES

Animal stories from Here and Away

Told by Laura Simms,

Accompanied by The Real Myth Ensemble

with Randy Crafton, Jorge Alfano, Amy Platt, and friends.

TRACKS

- 1 - Rabbit and Lion – Zimbabwe (4:01)
- 2 - Dog and Elephant - India – Persia (3:48)
- 3 - Two Bears - Northwest Coast Indian (4:32)
- 4 - Monkey, Partridge, and Elephant – India (1:53)
- 5 - Raven - Inuit People (7:30)
- 6 - Antelope and Deer - Blackfoot Indian (1:44)
- 7 - Animal Tails – Byelorusse (7:13)
- 8 - Wolf - Blackfoot Indian (5:16)
- 9 - She Goat – Nepal (7:44)
- 10-Elk - Osage Indian (2:16)
- 11-Monkey and Frog - West Africa (4:03)
- 12-Banyan Deer - A Jataka Tale (5:06)

World folklore abounds with animal tales. We have always shared our world with a vast array of four legged creatures, fish and birds, both seen and never seen by the human eye. Stories are the most direct and

experiential way of learning about ourselves, and the relationship between people and the natural world. I have chosen the most wonderful stories I could find - tales filled with heart and humor, wit, wisdom and kindness. I wanted to make a CD that could be listened to again and again, and would be a treasure house of enjoyment. So many of our children have little contact with wildlife, but when a child listens to a story, the child becomes the story. They imagine and feel everything in the tale. In this way children do more than learn about nature, they inhabit the natural world and bring it alive within themselves. There is no greater way to encourage a sense of belonging to our world, or finding meaning in one's life. To listen is to participate in being a citizen of the entire world. To listen is to invoke the inherent power of creativity, goodness and understanding in our shared experience.

A native American elder once told me that the greatest healers and teachers knew that the ordinary world was magical and their greatest talent was to know how to listen. Stories feed the heart, and teach us to listen. Stories feed the earth, awaken the imagination, enliven intelligence and bring delight. FOUR LEGGED TALES range from short folktales and teaching stories to longer myths and fairy tales. Each one is carefully chosen and tailor-made for a child's thorough intellectual enchantment. They are recorded with musical composition, ideas and sounds from throughout the world's bounty of listening.

1)

RABBIT and LION is a story about non aggression, and the power of imagination. It is a joyful tale. I have adapted it from an oral tale told to me by the great Shona storyteller Ephat Mujuru, who is from Zimbabwe in Africa. Lion's song is sung by my son Ishmael who comes from Sierra Leone. (4:01)

Music: Randy: mbiras & shakers; Ishmael: voice (traditional);

Arranged by: Randy Crafton & Laura Simms

2)

DOG and ELEPHANT, the most unlikely and the best of friends. This story has been told in Persia and by travelers on the Silk Route.

When I was growing up the tale was told to me by my Aunt Zelda who had traveled the world. "This will make you sad and then very happy!"

She said. (3:48)

Music: Randy: kanjira, darbouka, bells & tanpura; Jorge: shenai & bansuri flute;

Composed by: Randy Crafton & Jorge Alfano

3)

TWO BEARS is both legend (a story based on historical events from a long time ago) and myth (events like dreams that speak of important truths in pictures and symbols). It is a tale from the Northwest Coast Indians that has mystery, magic and another special friendship. Like many of the stories you will hear it took place in a time when people and animals spoke to one another, and sometimes could turn into one another. (4:32)

Music: Randy: shaman drum, jaw harp & shakers; Jorge: ocarina & Native American Flute

Composed by: Randy Crafton & Jorge Alfano

4)

MONKEY, PARTRIDGE, and ELEPHANT is a teaching tale from India. Pay close attention to their marvelous conversation and the way the music tells its own story. (1:53)

Music: Randy: darbouka; Jorge: saz; Amy Platt: clarinet;

Composed by: Randy Crafton & Jorge Alfano

5)

RAVEN was the God of Creation of the Inuit People (Eskimo). He was half bird and half human. He was a magical, powerful and curious creator. This is one of hundreds of myths of the origin of the earth, the animals and birds and people. Close your eyes, listen, and let the music help you bring everything to life with your imagination. (7:30)

Music: Randy: kalimba; Janet Axelrod: flute & alto flute; Michelle Kinney: cello;

Composed by: Randy Crafton

6)

ANTELOPE and DEER had a contest. Have you ever seen these graceful animals in the wild? They have lived in our world for a long time. They are everyday animals respected for their secret holy ways. Often hunted for food and skin and bone, their images occur in petroglyphs, stories and dances. They are honored for their beauty and their gifts. The story is a teaching tale for children told by Native American tribes who live near plains and forests. (1:44)

Music: Randy: shamam drum & rain stick; Amy: double ocarina

Composed by: Randy Crafton & Amy Platt

7)

ANIMAL TAILS, a how-to tale from Byelorussie, always makes me laugh. But it is a wise tale about the nature of us all...our greed and kindness, cleverness and foolish ways. Enjoy Bear, Lion, Fox, Rabbit, and more. The music will make you want to dance. (7:13)

Music: Randy: dulcimer & frame drum; Amy: clarinet & bass clarinet;
Jorge: guitar;
Composed by: Randy Crafton and Jorge Alfano

8)

WOLF is a more serious tale, a legend told about a blackfoot Indian Girl. The story happened long ago, and is said to be true. "Only the one who listens can say if a story is true or not." Listen closely. How an animal so often feared is the very one whose bravery saves the girl, and more.

(5:16)

Music: Randy: frame drum & shakers;
Jorge: Native American flute, pan flute & guitar;
Composed by: Randy Crafton & Jorge Alfano

9)

SHE-GOAT is a fairy tale told in Nepal, close to the roof of the world. It is a very different Cinderella tale. As in so many stories, we are reminded that when we trust the special friendship of animals and the magic of the natural world, we receive great gifts. The Buddhist and Newari people of Nepal believe in the great merit that one receives from compassionate actions. Listen for the sound of goats walking. (7:44)

Music: Randy: kanjira and clay bowls; Steve Gorn: bansuri flutes and tanpura; Brad Dutz: clay bowls; Clay bowls made by Susan Rawcliff.
Composed by: Randy Crafton, Steve Gorn and Brad Dutz

10)

ELK is from the Osage, a Native American Tribe. I heard the story told by Mary Platt, storyteller. I was struck by the magical logic of the story which explains in images how things of the world came down from the sky to earth. The song was taught to me many years ago by an Ogalala Sioux elder. It is a song about eagles flying and eagles walking on the earth. (2:16)

Music: Randy: shaman drum & rain stick; Laura: voice (traditional song);
Arranged by: Laura Simms & Randy Crafton

(11)

MONKEY AND FROG is a West African folktale. It is familiar and so funny that Randy, Jorge and I improvised music and words to emphasize the humanity of it all. Some tales are like that, using obvious qualities observed in animals to point out our own peculiarities. Sit back, relax and listen. But don't be lazy! Listen to the last story after this one too. (4:03)

Music: Randy: drums; Jorge: bass; Amy Platt: tenor sax;
Composed by: Randy Crafton, Jorge Alfano and Amy Platt

12)

BANYAN DEER, from the storehouse of the Jataka tales of Asia - teaching tales based on the many rebirths of the Buddha. It is one of my favorite stories to tell. The Buddha a great teacher born in Northern India, taught by his example. he was reborn for thousands of years. He became a human being , a blade of grass, every animal and every kind of person: both rich and poor, good and bad. So when he was reborn, he had total understanding and compassion. In this story, the Buddha is born as the King of the Banyan Deer. 5:06
Music: Jorge: shakuhachi ; Randy: shruti box;
Composed by: Jorge Alfano

We hope that you enjoyed our stories and music and brought them alive with your images and feelings. In this way, just as the Buddha learned sympathy and understanding through his rebirths, you too will experience your own animal ears and eyes...seeing yourself joyfully as part of the natural world, as you listen. When you have listened, make up your own stories, tell your friends our stories and keep your eyes open for the ordinary magic of things all around as well as within yourself.

- Laura Simms

Producers Note: Laura Simms should be a national treasure. In addition to being an endless volume of myths, legends and stories from around the globe, she is also a fantastic performer. The positive messages which underlie all of her work are valuable information from many indigeneous cultures who rely on her to pass this on to future generations. I am proud to have assisted with this process through the creation of this recording.

Randy Crafton - producer

Special Thanks to: Vi Hilbert, Mary Platt, Ishmael Beah, Ephat Mujuru, and all the musicians who gave so much of their time and heart. With special appreciation to Randy Crafton who was ceaseless in concern for detail and just the right sound. I profoundly hope that this will gladden the hearts of children everywhere. All the stories are retellings and adaptations from cultural stories - any errors in interpretation are mine.

Laura Simms

Credits:

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The Real Myth Ensemble

Laura Simms, a native of Brooklyn, New York, is of Romanian and Polish descent. Since 1968, she has been a leading force in the revival of storytelling as a global fine art. She is best known for her monumental retellings of ancient myth and fairy tale with their illumination of contemporary living. She is an award winning recording and video artist and tours continuously throughout the world, most recently in Wales, and Phillipines, and Israel. She can be heard in venues ranging from main stage theaters to hospitals, prisons, schools and conferences.

Randy Crafton performs on many percussion instruments from as many countries, with his specialty being the frame drums. He has recorded with artists such as Glen Velez, Howard Levy, David Amram and John Whelan. His most recent releases on Lyrichord include Hal-an-tow and Duologue. He has produced and performed on the following Lyrichord releases: The Celtic Fiddle of Liz Knowles, Fish on the Desert, by R.A. Fish and Friends, and La Traversee, by Sandra Reid.

Jorge Alfano a native of Buenos Aires, Argentina has been a professional musician performing, recording and composing for the last 18 years. His work can be heard on CBS, Song, BMG, RCA, Ariola and Interdisc. His most recent Lyrichord Discs projects include INTI and One Heart. Jorge has also produced and performed on: Capoeira by Guiherme Franco, The Didjeridu, by Seachnasaigh and has produced Ichi On Buttsu and Makoto Shinjitsu by Ronnie Nyogetsu Seldin. Jorge performs on the fretless bass guitar and a large collection of flutes and traditional instruments from around the world.

Amy Platt performs on clarinet, bass clarinet and soprano and tenor saxophones. She is one of a new breed of musicians who combines the finest training in the western classical tradition (MM The Juilliard School, BM, The Manhattan School of Music) with knowledge of jazz, pop, and world music forms. Through her musical affiliations with world renown artists Howard Levy, Anthony Braxton, Steve Gorn, Omar Faruk Tekbilek, Amit Chatterjee, David Amram and Harvey Keitel, she has developed a style fluid in many genres of music.



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