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Music in history

Discovery String Band debuts Lewis and recording, concert.

By SARA AGNEW of the Tribune's staff

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Days with the Corps of Discovery must have grown long

Imagine rowing up the Missouri River with the sun on you hours of the day stretching out before you, a humbling im body of water lapping hungrily at the keelboat. To pass th sang, raising their voices in rhythm with their oars.

At night, Pierre Cruzatte, an experienced boatman who w Omaha Indian, would entertain the men around the camp When the voyagers encountered American Indian tribes, fellow boatman George Gibson were often called upon to communication gap by playing their fiddles.

Music was a tool and a balm for the Corps of Discovery.

Realizing that, five area musicians set out on a voyage to of the explorers through music similar to that played durir What they created is a 70-minute CD, " 'Most Perfect Ha Clark: A Musical Journey," a musical interpretation of the expedition from St. Louis to the Pacific coast. The CD inc period, traditional and original music.

On Saturday, the Discovery String Band - Cathy Barton, Dyer and Paul and Win Grace - will celebrate the release premiere their program "Lewis & Clark: A Musical Voyage the Missouri Theatre, 203 S. Ninth St.

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Doors open at 7 p.m., and the program begins at 8 p.m. advance and \$12 at the door. The program will include music with readings from journals Meriwether Lewis and William Concessions will be served, and costumed AmeriCorps members provide information on the Lewis and Clark events in Missouri.

To guide their project, the musicians read the journals of Lewis and Clark in which the men often referred to music. The problem was that Clark never wrote down the songs.

"I would give anything to know what tunes they were playing," said Dyer. "No one saw fit to put that in the journal. My theory is that they didn't write it down because music was such a normal part of life that they didn't have to make note of it."

Grace and her husband, who both speak French, focused on the music of speaking explorers and the music they brought to the journey. They did an exhaustive study of music from the period and selected the CD they suspected might have been played on the expedition. The piece is a traditional French-Canadian/Métis fiddle tune, a mix of Scottish, American Indian and French derivation.

Cathy Barton wrote five original songs for the CD, finding inspiration from journal entries. Her songs vary from instrumental to lyrics about Sacagawea, Clark's slave York and the explorers' encounters with a prairie dog. Some of the songs are set to traditional music.

"We wanted this album to be less about us and more about the history, which to me is a much bigger thing," Barton said.

Dave Para, who rarely writes music, penned "Ursa Horrik Liberty" about the group's encounter with a bear, played a version of Thomas Jefferson's campaign song.

In his research, Dyer became especially enamored with the music of the Lewis and Clark expedition, which led to his writing "Meriwether Lewis," which traces the journey over 100 days.

Dyer said the cost of making the CD originally was going to be covered by the Missouri River Communities Network, but when that funding fell through, the musicians took on the expenses themselves.

MUSICIANS TOOK ON THE EXPENSES THEMSELVES.

"It became a personal project," he said.

To order tickets, call the Missouri Theatre at 875-0600.

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