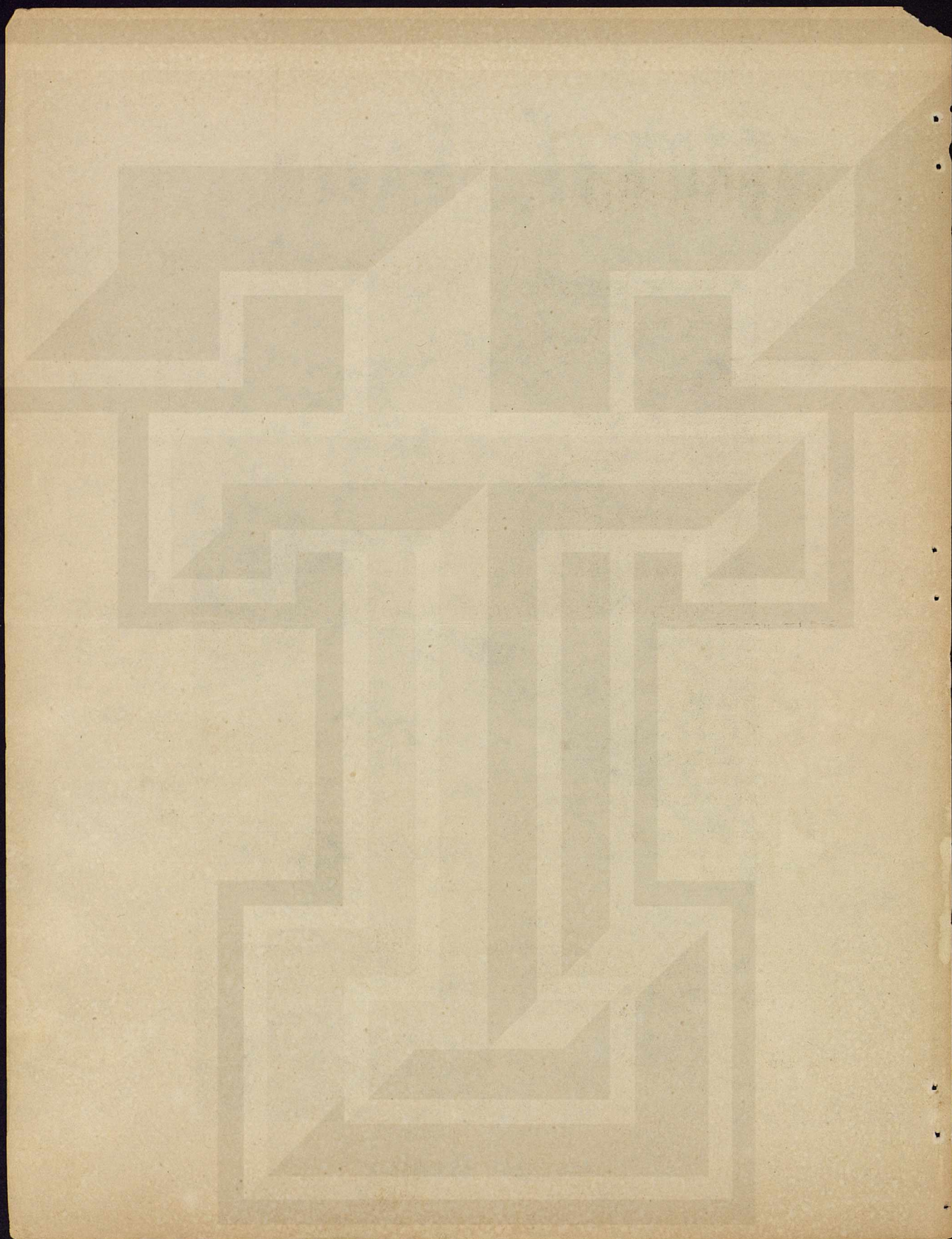


gardylou

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Oscar Brand



Gardylon

The Magazine of War to the Death

With a Cast of Thousands

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Glorious black & white cover depicting Oscar Brand singing in The Folklore Center photographed by none other than Photo-Sound Associates, who guarantee that it was their man that clicked the shutter.

The indicia this issue will be found modestly tucked into a corner of the last page.

EDITOR'S NOTE

If you looked closely at the cover of this issue, you may have noticed that it features Oscar Brand. I have long been a fan of Oscar and count him, in a way, as the folksinger who introduced me to folk music. A lot of us can point to some milestones in our lives where we ceased to be casual listeners to folk music and became enthusiasts. My milestone is a recording, SONGS AND POEMS OF THE SEA (Audio Masterpiece LPA 1220) with songs by Oscar Brand.

If you like Gardyloo, or Caravan, you can credit Oscar for being one of the people responsible for the existence of these publications. (If you don't like them, blame him.) My first publishing venture into the folk music field was inspired by a couple of concerts I'd seen him give. Later, when I was contemplating the idea of Caravan, he offered some excellent advice (more of which I should have heeded). And when I turned Caravan over to Billy Faier, Oscar was, indirectly, one of the people responsible for the beginning of Gardyloo.

So you might say that Oscar has been behind the scenes in this particular aspect of folk music folderol since its inception. And now I am pleased to bring you an article by him, and to present him on the cover of Gardyloo

--LH

Some of you were undoubtedly startled to see that our cover artist this issue isn't Tom Paley. You will be interested to note that our cover artist next issue won't be, either.

Dobson Droptumber's extensive work, FOLKSONGS OF WASH SQ, has been progressing so well that we are contemplating running it, not serially in Gy as originally intended, but in separate booklet form. We would like your opinions on this idea. We would also like any contributions you can make to this collection. Songs need not be about the NLGR. Any and all songs dealing with the New York Folknik * scene are solicited. (Does anyone know the rest of the song which begins "My name is Prestopino, that name I'll never deny...")

*Note: while Mr Droptumber is primarily interested in folksongs about folkniks, folknik folksongs on other subjects will be happily considered and whenever possible included in the collection.

Oscar Brand

Good Evening, Friend

"Dear Mr Bran," (wrote the nice lady), "I have been listening to your program since I was a little girl. Now my little daughter enjoys dancing and singing along with the music. She is two years old. When are you having auditions?"

It is generally believed that I am an old fat man with a grey beard. This has not been true since 1946. It is also not true that I audition two year old folksingers. We have, on occasion, had three year old guests, but anything younger would be too childish.

In October, 1945, I was fired from the Army which was busy consolidating itself and hoping for another war. I wrote to all the radio stations in the Northeast asking for a chance to sing old Christmas folksongs to relieve the burden on Noel, Adeste Fidelis, and White Christmas. Five stations responded. Two of them suggested that I become a sponsor and write my own ticket. WLIB, WNYC, and WNEW invited my participation in their schedule.

On December 9th I sang on WNYC and the habit became too strong to break. I have never received any salary or expense money from the station and they have never received any salary from me. They don't hear my programs before the broadcast and never complain until the protesting letters begin pouring into the Mayer's office.

Over the years the program has had as guests most of folkmusic's finest adherents--writers, singers, and entrepreneurs. We have also had gifted amateurs, grammar school choruses, ship's companies, private-stock recordings, and even bird-calls (traditional, of course.) In fourteen years I have refused only four prospective guests. Where a guest or his material is weak, I try to work with him to find more esoteric or interesting songs, and to choose

Brand (2)

melodies which would enhance his voice. This makes me seem somewhat arrogant, but since I am somewhat arrogant, and since it enables me to program young people who would otherwise be rejected, I consider the extra work worthwhile.

There are only ten thousand, three hundred and forty seven folkmusic fans in the WNYC broadcast area. There are also twenty thousand peripheral fans who follow the mellifluous trail of some special singer...Odetaphiles, Bikelphants, Seeger-lovers, Dyer-Bennetdoters, etc. Even I have a few loyal adherents. There aren't many of these, since the major part of my family is still in Canada.

But the bulk of the audience which listens to the Folksong Festival (WNYC 6 - 6:30 PM, Sundays) is a fly-by-night bunch. They are portable radioists, used car dialers, and house-hold FM rambler, on their way from one frequency to another who are caught ear-wise by the power or charm of some traditional song. I found it a notable week when the mail includes a letter reading, "I never listen to folkmusic but I happened to hear...etc." Of course, we never know how many possible folkniks have been frightened away forever from joining our happy band.

The reports have it that our listening audience is in the hundreds of thousands. But when I open a program with "Good evening, friend," it isn't only of my many affectations. I take the show personally. It is really a labor of love. And no other station can afford the price.

-- Oscar Brand

NOTE FROM THE WILDS OF NEW JERSEY

My attention has been called to the fact that I was given credit for the photo of the Greenbriar Boys which beautified the cover of the June issue of Gardyloo. Whereas the camera equipment and dark-room work were indeed mine, the photograph itself was actually taken by my good friend, Joe Daniels of Washington, D.C. I hereby extend apologies to Joe on behalf of Gardyloo and myself for this oversight.

-- Paul Prestopino

WOODY

GUTHRIE

Washington Square: 7/26/59

It was about 6 o'clock and I felt that I'd had enough for one day, having heard both Mike Seeger and Dave Van Ronk sing, and Lori Holland talk about singing, and Mike Seeger talk about tuning, so I crossed the Square and headed east.

In the park I saw John Cohen playing the autoharp, so I sat down to listen. I also saw a man drinking root beer and smoking a cigaret. He was accomplishing both of these acts with a great deal of difficulty. A few minutes later I realized that this man was Woody Guthrie.

John played and sang the Reuben James and Woody joined in. He was somewhat off time, but the lyrics seemed much more meaningful than usual.

Even more difficult for Woody were his efforts to pick mandolin. I think anyone who didn't know who he was would have over-estimated his age by twenty years.

But Woody is still Woody, unique American poet, who fits his verse to Carter family tunes, and writes songs on subjects which tackled by other people would produce only disgust.

--Alex Kochanoff

WOODY & TOM

"THINGS TO TRY"

On Sunday, July 26, Woody Guthrie was at Washington Square. I think this was his first appearance there since 1954.

This list of song titles is just one page of an alphabetical work list of songs compiled by Tom Paley and Woody when they were singing around together about ten years ago.

I believe this collection was arrived at in the following manner: First, Tom made an alphabetical list of the folk songs he could do at that time. Then Woody put in his own additions of titles he knew, songs he had written, songs he had not yet written, and titles which seemed to belong on a list of song titles.

I don't think it will ever be possible to check out all the songs on the complete list (every letter in the alphabet is as fully developed. I once asked Woody about a remarkable title encountered under the B's -- song 74 -- Baby Shit A New Dime. In response, Woody came up with a complete song on this subject which not only commented on the problems of child rearing, but also touched on the difficulties of contemporary economics and the high cost of living.

Woody's spelling is as original and expressive and intentional as everything else he puts his heart and mind to.

As to the complexities of this list -- song 63 may refer to the well-known mining song, Down Down Down.

--John Cohen

TOM PALEY & WOODY GUTHRIE
Things To Try

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. UNION MAID | 58. Up Your Hatch |
| 2. Untold (Treasures) | 59. Up Your Bolevarde |
| 3. Union Train | 61. UP YOUR Azzle |
| 4. Unions My Religion | 62. Up, Up, Up |
| 5. Union Burying Grounds | 63. Ans To: UP UP UP |
| 6. UAWCIO | 64. Up Country Blues |
| 7. Union Man | 65. Up Your Ladder |
| 8. United Nations Make A Chain | 66. Up The Old Ladder |
| 9. Unclouded Day | 67. Up to The Stars |
| 10. Under The Double Eagele | 68. Up To Pocatello |
| 11. Under The RR Bridge | 69. Up Yandroe |
| 12. Union Set Me Free | 70. Uppity Upp |
| 13. Union Fights For Me | 71. Up The Old Trail |
| 14. Union Girl Waltz | 72. Up Their Noses |
| 15. U Boat Sinking | 73. UNION Pacific Blues |
| 16. UK UBoat Blowed Up | 74. Union Pacific Rag |
| 17. Until You Knock On My Door | 75. Union Pacific Worker |
| 18. Until Churchill Comes Round | 76. UNION Pacific Wreck |
| 19. Until Joe Staleen Goes Wrong | 77. Union Pacific Gal |
| 20. Until Chiang Kycheck Gets Wise | 78. Union Pacific Hobo |
| 21. U'll Bee Myne Inn Soure Blossom Time | 80. Union Pacific Ridoe |
| 23. Under the Belly Of The Snake | 81. UP Rounder |
| 24. United We'll Win | 82. Union Pacific Heat |
| 25. United All nd Singly None | 83. Under Utah Muds |
| 26. Und Der Ilsa Koche Bitchenn | 84. Under Utah Sands |
| 27. Und Doze Communizytt Dit Kum | 85. Union Ragdown |
| 28. Und Myne Fuerher Vent Boom | 86. Down To Raggytown |
| 29. Unsaid Love can Be So Goode | 87. United KuKlux Blues |
| 30. Under The Wheel Of Humankind | 88. |
| 31. United Rambling Hobo March | 89. |
| 32. United Sickly Wobbly Chant | 90. |
| 33. UE & Me | 91. |
| 34. UAW And All, and All | 92. |
| 35. United Hand Of Workers | 93. |
| 36. Ute Indian Maiden | 94. |
| 38. Upee Indian Hornyprong | 95. |
| 39. United Landlord Themesong | 96. |
| 40. Unity Unity Yah Yahh Yahhh | 97. |
| 41. Under The Shadow Of Betty Sanders | 98. |
| 42. Under T he Spell Of The Daily News | 99. |
| 43. Under, (Down Out And) | 100. |
| 44. Under (Sunken) | |
| 45. United Echoes Of Maiden Lane | |
| 46. United Echoes Of Shinbone Alley | |
| 47. Under The Elevated Railroad | |
| 48. Under The Windy Ghosty Tree | |
| 49. Under The Sod | |
| 50. Under The Grass Roots | |
| 51. Under | |
| 52. Under The Kovers | |
| 53. Under Kover Man (I'm An) | |
| 54. Under The Tapped Foné Wire | |
| 55. Uuoodle Dee Uoodle Dee Daye | |
| 56. Up Your | |

NEWPORT REPORT

When Pete Seeger, singing Darlin' Cory, stepped into the swirling mist--colored by the lights blue and red and amber--to open the first concert of the Newport Folk Festival, it was as though by some magic we were witnessing the birth of our folk music revival. For this man and this song are surely as great a landmark as any. The concert that followed, the most dazzling I've seen, brilliantly bore out this theme. Each performer in his way illuminated a facet of folk music. Each stood out alone, and yet they all merged into a fabric of breath-taking richness, the whole cloth of our song.

Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, who came on next, caught the earthy laughing spontaneity of the blues. The Kossoy Sisters showed that two city girls can capture a fair share of the mystery and vitality of mountain music. John Jacob Niles, surely the Dali of folk music, cut up like all get out and yet was so touchingly sincere that Black Is The Color and his other songs, more wailed than sung, were immensely moving. Martha Schlamme, closing the first portion, managed amazingly to amplify her charming intimate style to encompass the outdoor audience of five thousand.

The New Lost City Ramblers, starting the second part, did manage to take us back to 1932. The openness and sincerity with which they approach their music is completely winning; they have chosen to do something extremely difficult, for the least bit of artifice or self-consciousness would make their (largely cornball) material unbearable; as it is, their performance is true and exhilarating.

Next at bat was Memphis Slim, a grand tall man with a gold tooth, who showed us what fine things can happen to songs such as John Henry when they go up to Chicago and get all mixed in with boogie. The Professor Alex Bradford Gospel Singers, jauntily dressed in flowing red serapes, performed some original religious songs as though they were auditioning for Radio City Music Hall; they did demonstrate that the beat of Negro music is pretty powerful, no matter how crapped up the songs get.

Cynthia Gooding, her auburn hair glowing in the mist like a halo, opened the final portion with some rousing Mexican numbers. She was challenged at one point by a fog horn, but--sure enough--she managed to out-resonate it. She is a singer of enormous vitality and range plus a charming aplomb. She makes one realize that folk music is one of the "deep arts".

Frank Warner next caught up the audience with his usual stories and songs (but he didn't have the photographs), followed by Odetta, who also thrilled everyone with numbers from her standard repertoire. Then Pete Seeger came back to remind us that there are still topical folk songs--such as What A Friend We Have In Congress--and also, with Abiyoyo, that he is one of the best damn story-tellers around.

Mr Lorillard's party afterwards was such a success that they reopened the bar three times. Memphis Slim and Sonny Terry played and an exotic part-Indian girl danced barefoot. Lionel Kilberg (at last) got to sit in with his Brownie Bass.

At the symposium Sunday morning, Dr Willis James demonstrated some yells which he suggested were a basis of American folk music. Alan Lomax reiterated his story of the union of Negro music with the square white European music; it is always a joy to listen to this man, a true poet among theorists. Moses Asch then read an address in which he expressed fear that the books of collectors such as Lomax would establish the one "correct" version of a folk song--a danger which seems to me unlikely. He also spoke on how hit singles come about. Stanley Earle Hyman brilliantly summarized the diverse opinions and added a few sound ones of his own. The moderator, Marshall Stearns, stifled any discussion of the thorny copyright problem--for which several in the audience were waiting. Mr Lomax, though, did tell the marvelous story of Grandpa Hicks, who, after receiving royalties on Tom Dooley, re-strung his banjo and gathered his friends together to collect some more songs.

Rain failed to dampen the soaring spirits of the afternoon concert. Pete Seeger, who was master of ceremonies, was in better form than on the preceding evening. The New Lost City Ramblers and Memphis Slim were again up to snuff. Cherubim and Seraphim made an unscheduled appearance; they didn't do too well, but it was nice to be assured that they really exist. Three dance groups seemed like wasted time on the cramped festival stage and I took shelter from the rain.

Pat Clancy sang a long ballad and Tommy Makem did the wonderful shoemaker's work song--both without accompaniment. Singin' is as natural a part of these men as an arm or a leg and, as always, I was deeply moved.

Billy Faier and Frank Hamilton, who furnished many brilliant accompaniments during the festival, each had his place in the rain that afternoon. To me, Billy is the Matisse of folk music. His All My Trials was one of the high points of the festival; he approaches a song so boldly and on such a large scale that the vast expanse at Newport (which hurt so many performers) worked to his advantage. Frank sounds better each time I hear him; he is one of the few young folksingers who really swings.

Jimmy Driftwood sang "a little ole song that I got copyrighted" with verve. He also played his "bow"--a giant Jew's harp. Earl Scruggs proved to be a modest performer, receiving a well deserved ovation. Unfortunately, he is so modest that the hillbilly troop he was with seemed to hog his share of the program.

Oscar Brand was the capable (though harried) master of ceremonies

at the final concert. He sang some of his songs to good effect. Jean Ritchie was, as always, charming, but not heard to best advantage under these conditions. Rev. Gary Davis also didn't hit his stride, although Barry Kornfeld ably and modestly abetted him.

Ed McCurdy's hearty Frankie and Johnny was another of the festival's highlights. For his encore he stilled the vast audience with his gentle rendering of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.

The Stanley Brothers, who have managed to escape the forced 'folksiness' of so many country groups, were a delight. They even included a bit about starting a Model T Ford--I had thought it was a lost art.

Leon Bibb, Barbara Dane (a blonde young blues singer with a big voice), and Bob Gibson pleased the audience mightily, as did Jimmy Driftwood again, with that song again.

Then the Kingston Trio came on. Most of the audience of five thousand five hundred was delirious with joy. This group--for which they had waited patiently all evening in the rain--turned out to be about two and a half times as good as Fabian (since one of the Kingston boys is very short). What connection these frenetic tinselly showmen have with a folk festival eludes me, except that it is mainly folk songs they choose to vulgarize. But if their presence will assure the audience which enables the festival to present the other performers on the program, I shall grit my teeth and welcome them.

When the Kingston Trio left the stage to make way for Earl Scruggs, the audience set up a commotion that Oscar Brand, with all his guile, couldn't quell. Finally, with the Kingstons' reappearance guaranteed, the audience listened courteously to Scruggs. As I left, the Kingstons were explaining that they learned Coplas from "Mexico's two most famous mariachis--Cynthia Gooding and Theo Bikel", but the trash I heard as I walked through the parking lot didn't resemble anything I'd heard before.

So what does Newport add up to? In its favor, the sound system is superb. But the seating area is so large that from the back the singers look like chess pieces. Virtually all the performers can be heard to better advantage in concert here in New York. Maybe next year they'll have more singers we don't get here. Also, Newport is a lovely town, full of grotesque improbable old mansions. Accommodations and the food are good. Its beach has the biggest breakers I've ever let throw me about.

As Lomax pointed out, the Newport Folk Festival is a tremendous "publicity stunt" for folk music. But it's more than that. It's undeniably thrilling to see everyone gathered and jumbled up like a deck of playing cards and thrown together in a string of concerts, come rain or come shine.

I'm for it.

--Mark Morris

FOLK SINGING ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT & CHUTZBAH

After my third or fourth hilarious re-reading of "Folksinging and Artistic Development" -- (D. Shapiro and D. Lauffer - Gardyloo #4) I suddenly got the horrid thought that this collection of adolescent self-adulation might have been written in a serious vein. While I realize the improbability of this, the vague possibility that some uninformed innocent might take these ananities to heart prompts this analysis of the ideas (?) presented therein. If in writing this I have demonstrated a lack of appreciation for a satiric essay, I hereby apologize.

The basic thesis of Messrs. Shapiro and Lauffer seems to be that the "old generation" of folk singers has, for reasons of death or commercialism, ceased to be an active influence in folk music; and that the present generation (as illustrated by such luminaries as Winston, Dave Cohen, Rifkin, and Lauffer) is taking tired old folk music and raising it to new heights. Ha!

The members of the younger generation mentioned, without exception fall into a class which may conveniently be described as "ethniks" (i.e. singers and instrumentalists who are not folksingers because they are not a continuation of any known folk tradition, are not entertainers because they are not entertaining enough, and are not artists because they fail to even vaguely approach any conceivable artistic standards.) Their departures from a folk tradition are due more to an abysmal and total lack of understanding of this tradition than to any "improvements" that they may have to offer. They consistently fail to distinguish between the idiom of the music which they attempt to play, and the individual style of the performers whom they so assiduously copy.

Then we have the much-discussed question of "Emphasis on Instrumental Technique". As far as can be ascertained, this emphasis has been achieved by almost entirely ignoring the words of the song, and simultaneously, playing an accompaniment which is copied as closely as possible from whichever member of the "old generation" happened to make the record in the first place. Since this learning of instrumen-

Need (2)

tal arrangements by rote is inevitably accompanied by some loss in precision, emotional impart, etc., this process, combined with the ever-present garbling of the content of the song, puts the ethnik in the position of being little but a low-fidelity record reproducing machine. Could it be that present trends in audio equipment will make this younger generation technologically obsolete?

The remainder of the article in question deals with two major points: firstly, that the younger generation has absolutely no background in folk music, and secondly, that "they know the difference between an old Martin and a Washburn" and that "they listen to each other with a critical ear". Both points are cheerfully granted, for whatever they are worth.

Mentioning the names quoted above in the same breath as the names of Leadbelly, Guthrie, Lemon Jeffereson, Josh White, et. al. may well be a stirring affirmation of democracy in action. From either a musical or folkloristic standpoint, however, it indicates a stupefying lack of perspective.

-- L.F. Need

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BILLY FAIER
WRITES...

Dear Lee,

As we both know, one of the most frequent criticisms hurled at both Gardylloo and Caravan is that people write in these magazines who don't know what they are talking about. We also know that most of this criticism is unfounded. Young people have more than every right to express their feelings and opinions in a magazine devoted to them. Furthermore there is usually much truth in between the occasional bit of tripe.

However, in the latest issue of Gardylloo there is an example of complete 100% tripe which mars your otherwise excellent publication. I refer to D. Shapiro's "Folksinging and Artistic Development". Shapiro's thesis seems to be that the young city folksinger has "raised the standards of the art of performing to a height that the true 'folk' never could." Incredibly enough, he bases this statement on the fact that the city folksinger is interested in the difference between various makes of old instruments and that they listen to each other and can tell who really can play and who is just "strumming a few chords". (Presumably the 'folk' were not interested in their instruments or technique.) Shapiro claims that the generation of 'old folk-

Faier (2)

singers', Leadbelly, Guthrie, Lemon Jefferson and Josh White, have all died off or gone commercial. Quite true, perhaps, but then he says that while their records and tradition still exist, they (the old timers) no longer exist as an active force. What the blazes does Shapiro think tradition is if it isn't an active force? An inactive tradition is a dead tradition.

The young city folksinger, I predict, will make a tremendous contribution to our country's folk heritage AS LONG AS THEIR INSPIRATION COMES FROM THE "OLD TIMERS". Let the youngsters for the next twenty years learn only from the records and singing of their immediate predecessors and their singing will become as spineless and meaningless as the 'pop' trash we are bombarded with today.

What Shapiro definitely does not understand is that Lomax and his colleagues are not trying to stuff and save 'the tradition' as a museum piece but are trying to keep the tradition alive with all the implications of chance and development that this liveness implies. But in order to take part in a traditional stream of change and development, or to put it quite simply, in order to take part in the folk process we must first seep ourselves in that tradition so that we can feel it and breath it. We must understand it from our brains and to our guts; otherwise our changes are of as little value as those of Tin Pan Alley whose changes are dollar-directed only. If we do this, we will, of course, add to the tradition, things that would not have occurred had the tradition remained in the country. But the songs, old and new, will remain alive and vibrant.

Shapiro accuses Lomax, Thomas, and their colleagues of "fighting the progress of an art". The fact of the matter is, Mr Shapiro and his colleagues are ignoring the art and I'm quite sure his singing, if he sings, shows it.

Any young city folksinger that thinks because he can play rings around Kazee, or any other old-timey picker, he has any more talent is kidding himself. The old timers had only their father, and maybe a couple of friends to learn from. We have dozens of banjo and guitar players in our record collections. We can play them over and over until we have mastered them. This glut of instrumental styles available to us does not raise the level of the art one bit unless we can feel the same reverence to a particular strum as the oldtimers who knew only one or two. We are inventive because we know that many styles exist and we can therefore combine and extend them until they sound different. This is not necessarily creativity. Look at the old timers; the ones we revere today as the best instrumentalists (Macon, Travis, and Scruggs today) were the professionals who got around and saw and heard many different styles.

One final word about instruments. The most moving solo folk song performances on recordings of people like Guthrie, Rodgers, Kelly Harrel, and many others are without exception accompanied extremely simply.

Mr D. Shapiro, please go back to school and learn something or shut up.

-- Billy Faier

BRING THE "SINGING" BACK TO "FOLK SINGING"

It has been apparent to many people in New York who follow the world of folk music here that singing has gone out of style. In a recent article by D. Shapiro, which appeared in Gardyloo, there appeared what was evidently an apology for this phenomenon.

It's the writer's opinion that folk music should be sung by anyone who enjoys doing it...if not professionally on the concert stage or nightclub, in the living room or in Washington Square Park, etc. I would rather listen to a poor singer who is enjoying himself than one with perhaps a good voice, who doesn't care what he's singing about as long as people are looking at him. However the trend has been for making an instrumental number out of almost every type of song. I am not referring to music which is obviously dance music, or music to be listened to primarily as a demonstration of instrumental skill. It was stated in D. Shapiro's article that the performers he admires "are not mere imitators of the folk". He went on to say that "they have raised the standards of the art of performing folksongs..." It should be noted that generally they have raised these standards merely instrumentally, certainly not vocally. Perhaps this is due to the fact that, in the absence of formal training, good singing demands a certain amount of natural talent which can't be wholly compensated for by hard work and a good ear for music. Instrumental skill can be achieved by a great many who are willing to work at it. This is very admirable, but what are the drawbacks?

Let's examine the elements involved in a song...especially a "folk" song. There is the melody, of course. This can be very delicate and musical, or it can be primitive and simple, as with most work songs. In either case, the melody serves a function. The function of the melody in most songs is to convey words, which tell a story, create a mood, rouse emotions. This takes us to another, and very much abused element of folksong...the words. Ah, yes, the words. They can be exquisite, ugly, or even boring, but they are there to tell us something. A good singer communicates with the audience. He thinks about what he is singing, he sees pictures in his mind. He sees a period, a culture, an entire people. More important, he sees the feelings and reactions of an individual. Emotion can be conveyed, and people can be moved through the combination of melody and words. The audience can feel an empathy for people who lived many years before them, or who live many miles away. Instrumental skill is to be admired and can

Holland (2)

enhance a song, but it should not overpower it, and it certainly should not be used as a substitute for effective singing. It's a bit absurd to present a lyric song or a ballad as an instrumental with vocal accompaniment.

--- Lori Holland

WINNIE WINSTON WRITES...

After reading Mr Shapiro's letter I was most certainly impressed. I feel, however, that too much emphasis has been placed on my name. In most part, I agree with Dan's statements. I would, however, like to add a few comments.

If the folk music of our country is to be preserved at all, it will be by the urban folk singer. It can clearly be seen that most of the records issued today are those recorded with urban singers. It must be stressed that the urban singer is not a folk singer, but rather, a singer of folk songs. I feel that Dan overlooked this point.

The older urban folksingers have already had their heyday, and in their place has arisen the "sing it everybody" type of thing. This I find revolting. The younger set have taken to imitating their prototype, Seeger (Pete, that is), to such an extent that I am sickened. While Pete (who is one hell of a nice guy) is a fine musician and maintains a true understanding of folk music, his followers know little or nothing about folk music except what they hear and see from Pete.

In general, their understanding is so low that it cannot be measured. What irks me even more is their feeling of superiority to the urban performer. Another point--hand in hand with this attitude is some sort of vague idealistic political concept. What I object to is the taking of songs out of their original social context in order to show injustice to the working class (or something like that) when the song never had this meaning. I feel that this is one of the most important aspects to consider when discussing the artistic development of folksongs. This has been the influence of Seeger--fine! So group singing promoted brotherhood--fine again! But when a million Seegerites all take up the call--all stamping their feet, and with their heads thrown back, pounding on their new long-necked Vega banjos -- all without a basic understanding of folk music -- ECCH! Some say, "Well, this is the folk process." I don't agree.

Winston (2)

The urban performer has at his fingertips a large source of material. Since he is not tied down to any tradition, he can do what he wants, and thus adapt material to his needs. However, as Dan pointed out, the emphasis on instrumentation has taken precedence. The urban folksinger has taken up instrumental virtuosity, and has let the vocal aspects fall by the way. I have found myself guilty of this to a great extent, and am doing my best to compensate in many ways. It is indeed unfortunate that along with the instrumentation fling comes the "trying to be better than the next person" philosophy.

The entire problem with this instrumentation jazz is that all of a sudden, everyone is trying to pick Scruggs banjo or Travis guitar, and most of them do it to gain some sort of prestige. The majority of these people have no realization of what they are doing (instrumental-wise). Since they are concentrating on the instrument, their repertoires are not well rounded, and tend to be alike. (Try Scruggs picking Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender.) With the tradition of group singing and fast picking, everything now sounds alike.

It is true that they have raised the standard of a song, but they have also lowered everything else. Damn, I don't three-finger pick everything! That which should be, I do -- that which picking is incongruous, I don't.

To me, folk music is a personal thing. I enjoy playing the guitar and banjo for my own pleasure, not to be better than someone else. I feel there is a bit of me in every song I sing, and in every piece I play. Every once in a while I come home from Washington Square saying "folkmusic stinks!" NOT SO! I love it more than anything. These people who kvetch and don't understand it annoy me, though.

-- Winnie Winston

=====

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THE LOST CHORD

(or)

WHEN THE BLUEGRASS TURNS TO GOLD, MAGGIE

being

An Heartfelt Complaynt and Disquisition

by a

GENTLEMAN OF LEISURE

upon the disappearance of the nylon-strung
guitar and the bare-finger-bone plucking
thereof.

Being lately come into this fair city from some of the remoter colonies I am distressed -- verily distressed! -- to note the eclipse of the quiet folksinger. Yea, though I walk through the vally of the shadow of Washington Square Arch, I shall hear no nylon; thy thumbpick and fingerpick they comfort me not.

Without intentional offense to the world's champion banjo-tuning team and their many admirers and emulators, what has happened to the non-bluegrass, non-hillbilly, folksinger? A recent visit to the Square -- my first since arriving here -- disclosed some half-dozen aggregations of wire-stringed instruments and instrumentalists, one lonely Flamencist, and a mob of teen-age types carrying a banner inscribed, "I am lost, please return me to 1943" and singing "cause" songs with a slightly apologetic militance. O Tempora!

Perhaps all things, even folkery, progress by fads and fashions; certainly, instrumental proficiency is being emphasized, with pleasing and often startling results; a neglected area of American folkmusic is being explored and exploited, all to good advantage. The beginners still sing, mainly because they haven't the technique to play bluegrass, but they also seem to lack the discrimination to sing other than the hackneyed old standards, and protest songs with a somewhat shopworn social significance.

It is the middle ground that is being bypassed; the vast store of more-or-less "polite" ballads, the narrative songs, foreign material, etc., etc. The current emphasis on the "noisy" (or, at best, fast-and-loud) instrumental techniques has left many of the younger singers unequipped to handle the ballad and lyric tradition, even when they finally dis over the gems that are to be found in it.

(con't on page 22)

Dan Shapiro

Summa Apologetica

When an inexperienced novice enters a new field, he usually becomes full of ideas about the field, which he believes are just too avant garde for everyone else.

Since the publication of my article in the last issue, I have received replies ranging from:

"Your ideas are valid, though incorrect."

to:

"I thought your article was ridiculous, and so did John Cohen."

I have found that if I have any ambition of eventually becoming a folk musician in New York, I had better recant, or start making plans for founding a new Urban Folk movement. I have no such plans at the moment, so until I have:

I hereby apologize for whatever factual errors appear in my article (Dan Lauffer, as my editor, must bear at least partial responsibility for these). I also apologize for going off half-cocked and writing articles before I knew the field thoroughly enough.

HOWEVER:

This is not a complete recantation. I would like to reaffirm the following:

I. That there is an "art of performing folk music". Familiarity with small details is not necessary for a knowledge of this fact.

II. That as in all arts -- and again no knowledge of picayune details is necessary -- it is stifling and stagnating to hold "the tradition" up as a sacred cow and imitate it. As Fred Gerlach says on the jacket of his record, GALLOWS POLE, "It is my attempt to perform this music and of course to alter it to conform to my own condition of expression" (emphasis is mine).

I would like to apologize to Dan Lauffer for making him persona non grata on the NY Folk scene. Dan has had no part in the present article and anything he may write in answer to criticism or recanting is done independently of me.

If and when I re-enter the NY folk scene, I hope to be received without prejudice for the follies of my youth.

-- D. Shapiro
July 19, 1959

LINER NOTES

FROM THE ACCOMPANIST

I am limiting myself to facts in these explanatory notes. Opinions will be labelled as such.

Fact: Beyond the early hillbilly field there has been little or no tradition of purely instrumental music in the folk field. The general class that this music was found in was as accompaniment for various dances as the Negro jigs, sukey jumps, buck dances, and play party dances. The white breakdowns, reels and square dances fostered their own style of music now classified as "Bluegrass".

Fact: There is a trend, currently, toward a larger variety of instrumentals being acceptable, and hence more popularly performed in the folk field. This has been paralleled in the C&W field by the works of such guitarists as Chet Atkins, Hank Snow, and Merle Travis, which are being taken "verbatim" into the folk field. The Bluegrass band, too, is being copied "verbatim".

Fact: As Mr Faier has so astutely put it, there is a "mad rush for repertoire". This becomes more and more feasible with the widespread reissues from companies as Folkways and Riverside, and the widespread taping of record collections.

Fact: There is also a trend toward attempting to go beyond the direct copying of a style and "improving" it to make it more of a showpiece for the performer's instrumental virtuosity, or more palatable for a mass distribution.

This, by the way, was intended to be the main point of the article.

Opinion: If this is bad, Mr Faier is a prime offender. See such recordings as The Hellbound Train on TRAVELIN' MAN (Riverside 12-657).

Fact: The voices of today's folksingers are not what they used to be, in spite of recruits from the theater and others with trained voices such as Odetta and Leon Bibb.

Opinion: Same as above, as cited in a recent issue of the New York Times.

Fact: Mr Shapiro is new to the field of folk music and hence writes in terms of the small group of his acquaintance. The names of many persons in the same circle, or equivalent quality, as Lederman and Traum were not mentioned.

Lauffer (2)

The entire group between this circle and the very top was ignored.

Fact: Nowhere, positively nowhere was any comparison of the talents and performances of this circle of performers and those of the "old Masters" intended, or intentionally implied. It is highly possible that members of this circle may become advanced enough to enter the circles of those who have had the token acclaim of being recorded, presented in concerts, or having their names "dropped" in mass media magazines, and possibly even reach the top of the heap because of the wealth of material that is presented for him to exploit.

Personally Speaking: We have a hell of a long life ahead of us and a hell of a lot of potential to fulfill in one way or another. If we seem like a bunch of snotty kids in our statements, it's because for the most part we have exploited all the material at our disposal as best we can, and what's left is beyond us, economically, in terms of rarity, and most of all in terms of experience.

It's so hard to be at the bottom of the heap.

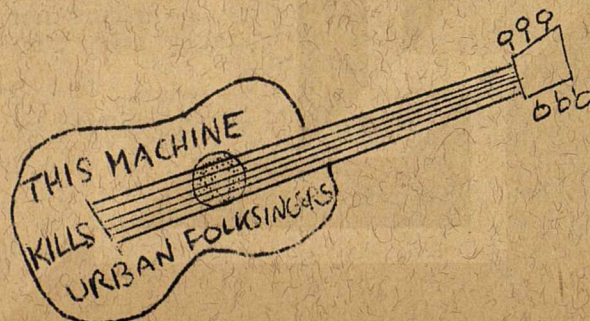
-- Dan Lauffer

THE LOST CHORD
(con't from page 19)

As an example, consider a young singer of much promise, Robin Christensen. In the not-so-recent Folksingers Guild concert in which he appeared, Robin's best number, to my mind, was The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington. Ideally suited to his light and pleasant tenor voice, the song was marred severely by an inappropriate banjo accompaniment, when the style demands a more-or-less classical technique on a non-wire-stringed guitar.

Certainly, let us have the NLCR, the Bluegrassers, and the rest, but let's hope, too, that their excitement doesn't so distort the picture that every up-and-coming folksinger must frail and wail to the exclusion of all else.

--Dave Beadle



Editorial news
creeps insidiously
into

Lee Hoffman

new york scene ➡

As of this writing, it is a hot humid month by the name of August. And those of you who have been looking for a new issue of Gardyloo since the 1st or so of this month will have decided by now that there either is no August issue, or else (in case of mail subscribers) I didn't send you your copy. I admire your admirable self-restraint, in the latter case, since so far I've received no violent letters of complaint. The former assumption is the correct one. There just wasn't any August issue.

Now there is a Septmeber issue with what should be editorial as the opening of New York Scene, which is indicative in part of the vaguely confused and lackadasical mood of the editor at present. Whether or not there'll be an October issue out about a month from now I can not say as yet. When, in making up the indicia I labelled this 'zine "more or less monthly", I put that qualification in for a reason. Anyway, I'll endeavor to put another issue of this sterling little magazine into your grimy little hands at the first convenient opportunity.

What's new in New York, you may be asking, now that you've turned to this column. Well, I don't have the answer. Oh, a few things have been happening. Rubyann and Oscar Brand have a new son. Mike Seeger flashed through town in a VW, carrying a new autoharp. Bob Yellin has a motorcycle. The new issue of Caravan is out. The editor of Gardyloo passed another birthday, with a grimace. John Cohen wandered off to his brother's place. Woody Guthrie has been making it to Wash Sq on Sundays. Roger Sprung has led a troupe of folkfans to the Asheville Festival. Dick Greenhaus has been appearing, playing fiddle, in a production of GREEN GROW THE LILACS. And a horde of folkniks have fallen ill to a siege of sports car race enthusiasm, which has been taking them away from Wash Sq on occasional Sunday afternoons.

But what, you may ask, is happening on the folk music scene around NY? Well, if you ask that, you're in the wrong magazine. Our news of the folk music scene is far from comprehensive. We can tell you that the new bluegrass album, MOUNTAIN MUSIC BLUEGRASS STYLE is out on Folkways. And Folkways will soon release an album of cowboy songs by Harry Jackson which is highly recommended. A series of concerts is planned for Town Hall, but we haven't any real data on that yet.

Israel G Young's eagerly awaited FOLK MUSIC GUIDE USA should be out soon. This magazine offers an innovation in the field: it is making payment to authors for articles, Israel tells us, and should be bringing us vital and interesting material by people who really know what they're talking about. Plans for the first issue include an article by Sam Charters. This little magazine should really fill a long felt need on the folk music scene.

Folk music keeps cropping up on TV. The TODAY program did a 4th of July production featuring Oscar Brand and Jean Ritchie that was excellent. At the other end of the spectrum a re-broadcast of a British R&R show included a rendition of the What Shall We Do With A Drunken Sailor Cha Cha.

Department of Missing Persons: Billy Faier -- please pick up the mail that was delivered here for you. Ben Rifkin -- I miss my Dobson.

Around Wash Sq, the antagonism of the police, the press and the general public are combining to make a Sunday afternoon in the Square something less than pleasant. It's a shame that something isn't being done to improve the public relations of the folknik field and the outer world. Or perhaps nothing can be done.

Roy Berkeley will be recording on the Coral label in the near future. Oscar Brand's book of bawdy songs will be out soon. Readers have sent in the following Anti-social notes: Mike Seeger seen frailing an undefinable 8-string instrument in Wash Sq...Who was it that got no further than the first two lines of 7 verses of John Henry?...Sylvia, in a moment of absent-mindedness, asks, "Max Who?"...I am Lost, please return me to the Coexistence Bagel Shop...Pete Stevens is reported vacationing in California...Donnie Leace has departed for Philadelphia.

I N D I C I A

GARDYLOO is an amateur magazine edited and published every once in a while (more or less monthly) by Lee Hoffman, assisted by Winnie Winston and with encouragement from staff photographers, Aaron Rennert and Ray Sullivan. The price is 15¢ per copy, subscriptions at the rate of 7 issues for \$1. Opinions expressed in this magazine are damn well not necessarily those of the editor or staff, and don't necessarily reflect the official opinions of the magazine as a whole. Gardyloo eagerly solicits material for use in this magazine from all and sundry (subject eventually to the approval of the editor). All letters received will be considered for publication unless clearly marked otherwise. Ad space is offered at the rate of \$10 per page, 5 per half and \$2.50 per quarter page.

Lee Hoffman
basement
54 E 7th Street
New York 3, N Y

A NEWS NOTE FROM BOB BRILL

Several bits of news. First of all we received a letter this morning from Gina Henshaw (nee Glaser). She has a son named Paul, born August 2. She and Ian plan to leave England for Paris in about three months and after Paris they plan to come to New York. She didn't say how long they would stay in Paris so we don't know when they expect to hit NY. But they do plan to come.

(Doris Stone) has been in Hot Springs, Arkansas, for the past several weeks for her health. And while down there she has been doing a lot of singing over various radio stations, including CBS, backed up by electrified and non-electrified instruments. (Local musicians for whom she has great praise.) As a result a lot of fan mail has come in and she has been offered two half hour TV shows for CBS Little Rock and a regular spot on radio as well as several invitations to sing at local events. She didn't say when she's coming back but she misses New York very much despite her Arkansas triumph.

Oh, yes, Max has taken to wearing a monocle with dark glass in it.

-- Bob and Sylvia

THE NEW BUCK'S ROCK SONG BOOK is out.

This is a right handsome volume chock full of songs, with words, melody lines, chords and background information (which shows a healthy interest in backgrounds, although not a markedly comprehensive knowledge). The book was edited by Winnie Winston and Josh Rifkin, and contains such items as Leaving Home, He's Coming Back To Earth Ain, Battleship of Maine, I'm My Own Grandpa, The Great Assembly, Miner's Lifeguard (& Bosses Lifeguard), Engine 143, Gilgary Mountain, Old Bell Cow, Butcher Boy (man, what a scholarly note!), Crash on the Highway, Weavily Wheat, Adam In The Garden Pinnin' Leaves, etc.

Banjo & guitar chords are provided along with capo-ing data for banjo. A list of production credits is awesome. A discography lists some of Winnie's and Josh's favorite records. And the whole is ornamented with drawings. Mimeography is not all that it should be considering the equipment available to the Buck's Rock crowd (some of the pages in my copy are badly out of line, or marred with excess offset, but unlike the copy of the previous issue that I have, none of the pages are in upsidedown)

Despite a few crudities, it is a nice book, and many of the songs in it are, to my knowledge, not available in in-print songbooks other than this one. The price is \$1 per copy, available at THE FOLKLORE CENTER, 110 MacDougal St, in NYC, or from Dr. Ernst Bulova, Buck's Rock Work Camp, New Milford, Conn.



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