



Bob Gibson & Bob Hamilton Camp **"At The Gate Of Horn"** Collectors Choice Music

This album was recorded *in concert* at the original location of Chicago's, The Gate Of Horn during April 1961. Bob Camp, born in London in 1934, relocated to Hollywood, California with his family at the onset of World War II, and subsequently became an actor and sometime singer. The late Bob Gibson, born in New York in 1931, settled on a career performing music after meeting Pete Seeger in the early nineteen-fifties. By the time this recording was made Gibson already had seven solo albums to his credit and a reputation as one of folk's finest *live* performers. At the dawn of the nineteen-sixties both artists were managed by Albert Grossman, who persuaded them to work as a duo, with the longer-term aim of forming a boy-girl-boy trio. The two Bob's resisted the latter proposal, so Albert constructed Peter, Paul and Mary instead. Back in 1986 Bob told me, *"It wasn't Mary Travers, but Albert told us she was taller than Bob and I."* It's ironic to recall that a couple of decades later, Bob teamed up with Tom Paxton and Anne Hills as The Best Of Friends – sadly, that trio never got around to make an official recording.

The songs featured on **"At The Gate Of Horn"** are a mix of traditional ["Skillet Good And Greasy"] and originals ["Two In The Middle"], with the bulk of the tunes being penned by Gibson. Camp and Frank Hamilton co-wrote a few of the songs with Gibson. The late Shel Silverstein, who penned the original liner notes, faithfully reproduced here albeit in small print, co-wrote "First Battalion" - the opening segment of the album's Civil War Trilogy - with Camp. The American Civil War has been a *fertile source and/or inspiration* for song lyrics for countless decades. In September 1960, John Stewart's group, The Cumberland Three, released two separate albums, subtitled **"The Yankees"** and **"The Rebels,"** while in recent times Richard Shindell superbly [and poignantly] reflected on those sad and bloody times in his songs, "Arrowhead" [1994] and "Reunion Hill" [1997].

The two Bob's high-energy presentation, with Gibson on 12-string guitar and 5-string banjo supported by Herb Brown on stand-up bass, is underscored by a good deal of between song banter and humour, some of it, sadly, now dated. The latter could also be said for a few of the songs, including "Chicago Cops," a song inspired lyrically by, *the then current revelations regarding*, those stalwart upholders of the law. As for the compositions where Bob is credited as the writer, in 1986 he admitted to me that during the early years of his career he *"tinkered a lot,"* with many of his early credits being adaptations of traditional songs. For instance, "Betty And Dupree" owes much to the standard, "Frankie And Johnny." In total the foregoing detracts little from the fact that this album, a classic in its time, remains precisely that.

Folkwax Rating 8 out of 10

Arthur Wood
Kerrville Kronikles 04/02