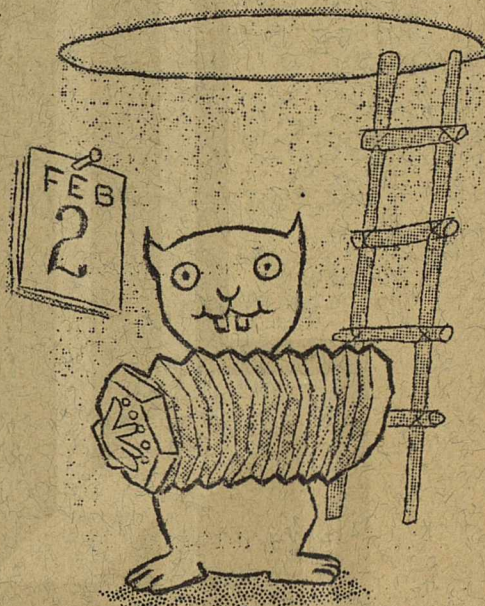


# CARAVAN

A FOLKMUSIC MAGAZINE

TEN CENTS

FEBRUARY 1958





# CARAVAN

February 1958

Issue # 7

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Slave labor - Bernice Marcus



## THE FOLK MUSICIAN'S DUTY TO HIS AUDIENCE

All over the country groups are getting together and singing and swapping folk songs and related matter. It is rapidly becoming the nation's most popular musical participating recreation, and in my opinion might well be the thing to succeed the rock & roll craze of the present moment. The young person, after hearing the records of Ives, Guthrie, Seeger, the Weavers, and others, gets himself a Stella and starts teaching himself to play. Soon he gets fairly proficient at it and is seeking out others of like mind and spirit to play with. And presently there evolves a "folk-sing" or jam-session, or call it what you will. Summer afternoons here in the city bring dozens of musicians down to Washington Square, and brings hundreds of people down to sing along and listen. Sometimes rewarding playing and singing are the result, but all too often much really talented playing is obscured in noise.

For, let's face it, fifteen guitars striking a C chord uninhibitedly will drown out good music every time. In such a company a resonated banjo can just barely make itself heard, a softer instrument of the mandolin class is lost completely. And truthfully the effect on the audience is sometimes pretty jarring. Yet it needn't be. With a little imagination real music can spring forth.

I had all this brought home to me quite vividly several years back. I had been visiting the Beacon Seegers, and at Thanksgiving time we all went down to Washington to visit Pete's father, Charles, and his family. In Peggy and Mike Seeger I found real soul-mates, and we made much (quantity, though I'm doubtful of some of the quality) music together. One night Pete halted the proceedings, explaining to us the futility of each trying to out-chord the other. He then gave out parts to "Alabama Bound". I had a bass counter-melody, Michael chorded, Peggy played the banjo, and Pete improvised up the neck. The effect was magic, and the quality of music for the entire evening changed. This incident opened up an entirely new field of thought for me. When I went back to Texas that spring I began to observe how trios of Mexican guitarists were able to keep their music from sounding repetitious, and found that they used the same system. One chorded, one played bass runs, and the third played up the neck. If their technical dexterity wasn't equal to playing freely up the neck, why they would simply capo up and play as it down at the bottom. In other words, instead of three guitars each trying to outclash the other, you had three guitars integrated together to provide not only rhythm but also melody and counter-melody. With a bit of thought and experimenting along these lines, even guitarists fairly new at the game will find they are able to go far using their imagination. And as they progress further they will find themselves branching out and becoming specialists either in the bass register or up the neck. Then they begin to be real musicians.



## Badeaux (2)

Another quality which many spontaneous sessions lack is order and (though I personally dislike the word) discipline. It is not unusual to hear three musicians taking a break simultaneously, while two or three others, seemingly angered by their own technical impotence, chord for hell-and-high-water. And where, precisely, does this leave the listener? Feeling confused, unwanted, with guilt feelings over eavesdropping, that's where. For, since the musicians won't let him hear it, evidently the music isn't being played for him. And they couldn't be playing for each other, for they couldn't possibly hear what another one is playing. So just who is such music really for? You tell me.

Jazz, which had more or less this same problem, worked it out by appointing a leader to call signals. One soloist at a time became the order of the day, with occasionally another instrument playing counter-solos. The same practice is traditional in hillbilly music. One soloist at a time. And here again a leader is usually appointed.

Occasionally this happens with some of the more informal groups I have heard around the city. A strong personality like Roger Sprung will keep a group he's working with in line, and through those who want to express themselves through a solo will get their opportunity, no one steps on another's musical toes. And this might be the solution except that every group doesn't have such a forceful personality to assume leadership and bridle the boundless enthusiasms of the folk musician. And it isn't always wise for a weaker personality to arbitrarily assume such leadership, as it can bring on resentment and hard feelings from others in the group so qualified.

The most democratic solution would be for each group as it is forming to select a leader. If a strong personality is present it might be he that is selected. If all are about the same level of development perhaps it might be better to select a neutral, a chorder perhaps, to take the reins. A leader should be aggressive rather than passive and should keep a sharp eye out for the instrumentalist who's inspired and dying to take a break. Also try to avoid embarrassing a soloist by calling on him just as his solo must start.

All of the above holds true for gatherings where singing is prominent also. Here the "leader" should also do the song leading, but better verses should give his instrumentalists all the room they need for expression. Or perhaps if the song itself is too spirited to allow for interruptions of the singing, the solos can precede and follow the singing. And while a soloist can be utilized to improvise during the singing at times to heighten the general effect of the song, he should never be limited strictly to this, for a musician deserves the right to be heard.

There is another wonderful thing that can be done to change the pace of sings. Frank Hamilton once did this at a party at Bob Gibson's place here in New York when the din of the instruments got too jarring to Frank's very sensitive ear and the pleading looks of the nonmusician guests got the better of him. Finally Frank said, "let's stop this, and pass around a guitar, and sing." And we did, and everybody took



Badeaux (3)

his turn singing a song which he liked. And though the musicians' fingers itched before and after their own times at bat, the other guests at the party heard their first real folk music at that point, and the rest of us heard some songs we never would have gotten a chance to hear otherwise. Also happily it threw the pace of the party back into low gear where it stayed for quite a while thereafter, until the restless feet resumed their tapping and the restless fingers resumed their frantic search for the improbable. And through it might sound naive, I urge all folk musicians to cultivate again an art that is rapidly becoming extinct, the art of listening. It really can be fun, and occasionally, educational.

-- Ed Badeaux  
13 January 58

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## Concert in D.C.

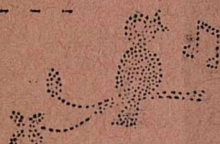
More than 200 folk-music enthusiasts filled the Jewish Community Center auditorium here last evening to hear Paul Clayton, Roger Abrahams and Gina Glaser in two hours of delightful and informative folk-singing. Frequent encores and vociferous applause indicated the enthusiasm with which these fine young singers were received, and if this is any criterion, we may look forward to other programs of this nature here in the nation's Capitol.

Presiding with an ease characterized by brevity, was John R. Dilline of Discount Record Shop and youthful impresario of the fine Sunday night Folk Music Program on WASH-FM.

Following the program, Clayton, Abrahams and Glaser were guests at a private party in the Chevy Chase home of the Frances T. Christy's and were joined in the festivities by Washington folk-singers and enthusiasts featuring individual and group singing.

--Virgil Sturgill  
Washington, D.C.  
12 January 58

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## SINGING HOLIDAYS

by Oscar Brand

The Calender in Folksong: a collection of some ninety folksongs, some well known and some less common, grouped around thirty holidays in the American year, is now available from THE FOLKLORE CENTER located at 110 MacDougal Street, New York 12, N Y.



# news notes from elektra

Fred Hellerman of The Weavers has been appointed Musical Director for ELEKTRA. He will supervise all folk music recording sessions and will assist Production Supervisor Jac Holzman with certain A & R chores.

Jac Holzman conducts "Adventures in Folk Music" every Sunday morning from 11:30 to noon on WBAI-FM.

Forthcoming new releases from Elektra include: "The Shanty Boys" (Roger Sprung, Mike Cohen and Lionel Kilberg); EKL-142; "Theodore Bikel Sings Jewish Folk Songs"; EKL-141; and "Marilyn Child and Glenn Yarbrough Sing Folk Songs"; EKL-143. Child and Yarbrough are currently appearing at The Limelight in Aspen, Colorado.

As of February 1st, Elektra will take additional office space in an adjacent building at 357 Bleeker Street.

ELEKTRA is actively looking for new folk talent. Interested parties should either mail or deliver audition tapes or discs for review.

THE ELEKTRA CORPORATION  
361 Bleeker Street  
New York 14, NY

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Editor's note: For detailed information on preparing an audition tape that will present your material to your best advantage see the next (March) issue of Caravan.  
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ELEKTRA

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TRADITION

For complete selections of the folk recordings from these companies see Israel Young at THE FOLKLORE CENTER  
110 MacDougal St.  
New York 12, NY



## London Letter

Finally met Guy Carawan and his wife -- just back from what sounded like an exciting and interesting trip to China -- at Alan Lomax's Boxing Day party. They told us that Peggy Seeger was expected back in England "in a couple of days", though we haven't run into her yet.

This was quite a party for a couple of comparative beginners in the world of good folk music. Seamus Ennis, with his two handsome children; Peter Kennedy, with his charming wife and their two little boys; the very lovely Shirley Collins; Alan Lomax, himself, of course -- and a number of other devotees of traditional music -- were there.

Guy sang several American traditional carols and Christmas songs with Alan helping on some of them and in exchange Shirley played her banjo and sang the beautiful English "Cherry Tree Carol" which we had heard her sing once before at the Troubadour Coffee Bar where she and John Hasted sing on Monday nights. Shirley does a lot of American material and does it well, but we think she really stands out when she does the English ballad of her own folk tradition. One of the finest things we've heard her sing is an excellent version of the "Cruel Mother" which she sang in the festival at the Cecil Sharp House a couple of months ago.

Seamus Ennis let go with "Whiskey in the Jar" and Alan joined in lustily. This was enough to get us all in on the choruses and it's a wonder the Bobbies didn't come knocking at the door to quiet us down. I guess Alan's neighbors are accustomed to hearing such musical outbursts, though, for the singing went on for hours with no complaint, even when Guy's foot was stomping so hard it probably was knocking plaster into their tea. It was a dandy evening!

Guy will be back in the States soon; I believe he's booked for a concert tour which is to begin shortly. Alan is also returning to America in a couple of months. His BBC series, "A Ballad Hunter in the British Isles", has been completed now and, as soon as he finishes a writing job or two, he'll be heading home.

Peter Kennedy, by the way, is the son of Douglas Kennedy who heads up the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Peter has probably done more field recording in England than any other collector. A fine record, called "Folksong Today", which has been released by H.M.V., is his work. This is a sampling of the best really traditional singers in the British Isles -- including Jean Robertson doing "Son Davy" (the Scot "Edward" - Child 13), Harry Cox singing his wonderful version of "The Foggy, Foggy Dew", the MacPeakes singing "Wild Mountain Thyme" (they're an Irish father and son team who accompany themselves on the Ullmann unspellable pipes), the lusty-voiced sailing barge skipper of the East Anglian coast, Bob Roberts, roaring out "Still I Love Him",



Paton (2)

etc. Fine record! I suppose it has been released on some label in the States by now -- if not, it most certainly should be.

We have been fortunate enough to meet a young Glasgow folksinger, named Robin Hall, who works five nights a week at a coffee bar in Belsize Village called "The Witch's Cauldron". Robin has a fine clear voice, plays guitar exceptionally well by English standards and, best of all, has superb taste in his choice of material. To hear his Highland Scot version of "My Bonnie Laddie's Lang a-Growing" is a truly moving experience. Another of his best numbers is a "Croodlin' Doo" version of the Lord Randal ballad, Child #12, if memory serves. The melody of this one is definitely pentatonic and one of those that haunt you for hours after you've heard it. Really beautiful! Robin, think god, keeps his accompaniments simple when he is singing a true ballad -- just enough to provide a musical backing without detracting from the two most important elements of balladry (in my opinion): the melodic line and the text. As a matter of fact, when Robin put his "Lang a-Growing" on tape for me, he elected to do it unaccompanied. The same was done with several Glasgow children's game-songs he recorded for me -- which, again, I feel is absolutely correct.

But don't get the idea that Robin is too much a "purist" to cut loose and holler once in a while. His guitar can get plenty hot when he's doing a Big Bill Broonzy number (a man he greatly admires); and, incidentally, his delightful Scot dialect disappears completely under one of the best American accents I've heard in England. He can also be extremely amusing -- i.e., when he is singing one of the Scot Nationalist songs like "The Wee Magic Stane" -- a song about the heisting of the Destiny Stane from Westminster Abbey (which is set to the "Villikins and Dinah" tune, but fails to sound trite when used with these words.)

Still, Robin's first love is what he calls the "Big Ballads" (I believe he got the expression from his mentor, Hamish Henderson of the School of Scottish Studies), and, as with Shirley Collins, it is here that he really excels. If I seem to go on at too great a length about this lad, I hope you'll forgive me -- but this is really what I came to England to find, you know, and to find it in such an humble, sincere fellow is a real bonus. I only hope we'll be hearing a good deal more of him and from him in the future. I'm sure we will.

In your letter, Lee, you posed an interesting question. I can't really answer it outright, of course, but I would like to offer a few of my own thoughts about it, if only to stimulate discussion among others who are interested. The question was -- and I quote you verbatim -- "Casual observation has led me to the opinion that the best British folksingers are generally better than the best American folksingers. Why? Or is it just that the recorded examples give this impression?"

I might as well say, right off, that I tend to agree with you and that I don't believe it's the result, only, of excellent recorded examples. But, before this starts a real war in Caravan, let me add that I'm fully conscious of the fact that it's a question, primarily,



of personal taste. ((I'll go along with that...Lee)) Perhaps you and I, Lee, lean more toward the "big ballads" than a lot of other folk-music enthusiasts do. This is not meant to sound critical of them -- let's face it, they're certainly in excellent company. Take a look, for example, at John A. and Alan Lomax's book, American Folksongs and Ballads; I think you'll find that it contains not one "Child ballad" -- yet it does contain some songs of British origin and a whole group of Spanish or Mexican songs, so the omission cannot be explained by assuming that they chose to limit the book to material of 100% American origin. I read, somewhere, that the Child ballad could well be considered the "aristocrat of folkmusic", but that does not mean that all the other forms of folkmusic and song are, automatically, of less value.

I know a lot of young folksingers who are damned fine musicians, excellent instrumentalists, and serious students of "authentic" folk-music, but they couldn't sit through twenty-five verses of a Border version of the "Twa Sisters" for love nor money. It's just not their cup of tea. On the other hand, my own saturation point with 12 bar blues is quite low -- and I don't think it means anything other than that tastes, obviously, differ. You and I dig Paul Clayton, Lee, a lot of people don't -- it's as simple as that.

The real question is where that difference in taste originates -- and here I will offer an idea that is probably not very original at all, but is one I agree with: it seems to me that there are two general areas of emphasis in the field as a whole -- the literary and the musical. This is not to say that the two are mutually exclusive, of course, but I think it's fairly obvious that the "strophic" ballad is more for the literary-minded, while the banjo tune, with only enough words thrown in to keep it from being a purely instrumental number, is favored by the individual who inclines more toward the musical side of the field. Surely there is nothing startling about this observation.

My own approach, I confess, is primarily literary, although I can get as excited as the next fellow over a beautiful melody. Perhaps you share this emphasis, somewhat, with me.

What I'm getting at is this: the "best British folksingers" to whom you probably refer are (am I right?) Ewan MacColl, A.L. Lloyd, Seamus Ennis and, possibly, Jean Robertson. Well, has it occurred to you that there might be some significance in the fact that every one of these great singers sings unaccompanied -- or accompanied (very occasionally) by someone else. Their concern is, first and foremost, with the simple melodic line -- (by this I mean the melody alone, as opposed to melody, harmony, chords, counterpoints, etc.; I don't mean to imply that the melodies, themselves, are uncomplicated) -- and the text. They are folk-singers. Ennis, of course, is also a superb piper, but he, too, sings the ballads without accompaniment.

It makes one wonder what effect the widespread use of guitar and banjo has had on American singers -- and on American songs as well. Compare, for example, Lloyd's singing of "Lord Bateman" in the Riverside Child Ballad Series and the American version sung (and played) by Pleaz Mobley on AAFS 58. It seems to me that the instrument compels



Paton (4)

the singer to "squeeze" the ballad into a particular time scheme -- 3-4 or 4-4 or what have you -- which, in turn, robs him of the freedom to linger here and there on significant words or phrases. Cecil Sharp, in the introduction to his Appalachian collection, says, "I came across but one singer who sang to an instrumental accompaniment," (Italics mine. S.P.), yet almost all of the "best American folksingers" who are recording today accompany themselves on one instrument or another. Doesn't it stand to reason that, the more a singer must concentrate on his accompaniment, the less attention he can pay to "telling the story"? One or the other must become, to some degree, unconscious, and it seems to me that, in the case of many American folksingers, the instrument wins the major part of the attention -- to the detriment of the voice, itself, and the effective "telling" of the ballad text.


You know me well enough, I hope, to understand that I'm not suggesting that the ballad be 'dramatized' and sung in an operatic tenor. God forbid! But to tell a story well should not imply histrionics. Ewan MacColl, I should say, is one of the best story-tellers alive today, yet he's far from an opera star. When he sings a ballad, I, for one, am somehow compelled to listen to the words -- and I think it's because he is really listening to them, too. Let me quote once more from Mr Sharp: "(the ballad singer) is merely relating a story in a peculiarly effective way he has learned from his elders, his conscious attention (is) wholly concentrated upon what he is singing and not upon the effect he himself is producing." (Again, the italics are mine. S.P.) He goes on to say that this is, perhaps, more true of English than American singers, but the point I want to make is there in the quotation. I'm quite convinced that our American folksingers (the professionals who are on record, at any rate) are entirely too self-conscious and too instrument-conscious and not sufficiently story- conscious to do the ballad really well.

I've some other ideas pertaining to this question, but they are still pretty embryonic. They have to do with dialect, speech mannerisms, etc., and their effect on "voice placement", as well as "attitude toward tradition" and other such subjective hogwash. I'll leave them to float around in my mind for a while before I'm audacious enough to expose them to criticism. What I've said already is enough, I hope, to get some exchange underway.

Sincerely,

Sandy Paton  
London  
3 Jan 58

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I will give my love an apple without any core,  
I will give my love a house without any door,  
I will give my love a palace wherein she may be,  
And she may unlock it without any key.

How can there be an apple without any core?  
How can there be a house without any door?  
How can there be a palace wherein she may be,  
And she may unlock it without any key?

My head is an apple without any core,  
My mind is the house without any door,  
My heart is the palace wherein she may be,  
And she may unlock it without any key.

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Letter Excerpt

John Greenway  
Dept. of Anthropology  
University of Colorado  
Boulder, Colorado

# WATTLE RECORDS

I am encouraged by your invitation to submit "items pertinent to the folk field for sale" to announce that I am trying to reduce a huge debt to my Australian recording company and the customs people by peddling copies of two 10" LP (33-1/3) records I made while on a Fulbright Research Fellowship in Australia during 1956--1957:

"WORKIN' ON A BUILDIN'" Sung with guitar and five-string banjo by John Greenway. Wattle Recordings C 1: 10" LP. Contains: "The Cat Came Back," "The Farmer's Curst Wife," "Tying a Knot in the Devil's Tail," "Devilish Mary", "Workin' on a Buildin'", "The Blue Tail Fly", "The Dreary Black Hills", "Hobo's Lullaby", "1913 Massacre", "John Henry", and "The Erie Canal". Pamphlet containing words and background notes about each song included.

AMERICAN SONGS OF PROTEST Sung with guitar by John Greenway. Wattle Recordings C2: 10" LP. Contains: "Talking Dust Bowl", "Do Re Mi", "Tom Joad", "Union Burying Ground", "Buffalo Skinners", "The Dishonest Miller", "Jay Gould's Daughter", "Rebel Girl", "Ladies Auxiliary", and "Which Side Are You On?". Pamphlet containing words and background notes about each song included.

The price of \$4.75 each may in the face of supermarket competition seem exorbitant, but gives me a profit, including royalties, of about 30¢ a record. I had a great deal of experience in Australia singing on the Menopause Circuit and to more knowledgeable groups, and I think this is reflected in the records, which are better than anyone who has heard me sing has a right to expect.

Cordially,  
John Greenway

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## FOLK MUSIC : A DYING ART?

Boyd Raeburn, self confessed square, in the December issue of Caravan, has given me cause to think, and I wish he hadn't.

Quo the hell vadimus, folkmusic? Raeburn says that he is a square; e.g., an Outsider, thereby implying the existence of Insiders and an Inside. Now, the thing I like about folkmusic is that there isn't any such thing as an Inside, and Insiders, about it. The rank amateur, with a few records, no voice to speak of, a bit of guitar pickin', and just having fun, isn't widely separated from the "expert" who knows version 79-C of Queen Elizabeth I's favorite dirty song.

Now, this is a matter of a great deal more importance than it seems to be. Any art, to me, is a method of communication; communication between and about people and life, particularly. The one who does the creating, the "artist" (Hayakawa help us!) has to do his job in the common speech of the audience, not in a special language. He has to be in and of the "audience", the people he communicates to; in fact, he has to receive more than he sends, in a special sense.

But when an art-form is dying or already dead, something peculiar happens. The audience leaves, and the artist discovers that he needed something that he got from them, the material out of which he made his pictures or his stories or his music. But he's gotten out of touch; they aren't with him. He begins to talk in terms that are less and less understandable, except to his own circle; ultimately, his speech becomes gibberish, because he has gone on talking after there was nothing left for him to say.

Then the Inner Circle starts to form. The Code gets going, a collection of special, nearly meaningless, terms in which to talk about what you're doing; or better, in which to conceal the fact that you are not doing anything. The High Priests, who talk the gibberish better than anyone else, assume their pontifical seats. Gradually the real "artists" die off or go get jobs at City Hall, and the total phonies begin to come in. These are the kind of people whose shrivelled little souls need something desperately, something they can get by being Insiders, even if what they are inside happens to be a mausoleum.

Meanwhile, the common people go right along having fun. If they are allowed to, they buy fairly good books, they seem to have some taste in matters of painting and music, and some of them even do a little creative work themselves out in the garage on a Sunday afternoon. Naturally, these ordinary citizens have their rough spots; a few years of being educated under the kind of female babu who can hammer Joe Smith's little boy into being tone-deaf, anti-egghead, and nearly illiterate. But even after going through Benedict Arnold High the average citizen is still capable of liking good things in the arts,



Mason (2)

tough little soul that he is.

However, the aforementioned High Priests don't like him anymore. They don't believe they need him. He eats popcorn at the Mahler concert; he doesn't read the little poetry magazines, and he hisses the villain -- under his breath, of course. He's no use to the Insiders, except to be a square, an Outsider.

They're right; they don't need people anymore. The art of poetry does without them quite well; painting has almost gotten rid of its unwelcome audience, and modern music -- (NOT pops) appears to be designed for playing by the deaf to the dead.

But there are living arts. Popular writing is going pretty strong. And there's a good deal of fine stuff swimming around in that particular cess pool -- even in the paper backs. And I think pretty highly of some TV, in spite of the heavy hold-down on subject and treatment. The radio seems to have a good deal of top-grade music these days, and even in pop music something good shows now and then.

Which, at longish last, brings us up to folk music. When I saw it last, it was a living art, in quite good health, in fact. As for Burl Ives, I like his singing, own a batch of his platters, and ain't nobody yet told me I shouldn't enjoy same, even if he does sing on key, and even if you can understand what he's singing. I like Pete Seeger, too. I even like John Jacob Niles.

A folksong isn't necessarily a "traditional song". It's a song that is alive, singable, rhythmic, and communicative. It can be sung by anybody, for the pleasure of singing it. Now, that definition covers both the antiques, the imitation antiques such as "Black, black", and even a few moderns. It does not cover the so-called pop songs, which are hardly ever singable anyway - fortunately. That crud "popular" music is actually a special phenomenon, the product of the same kind of massive propagandizing that is making it harder and harder to buy a plain ol' cigarette without a filter or an American car without Flash Gordon tailfins. Pop music is neither liked nor disliked by the average adult these days; it's nothing but a continuous noise you can get on your local disk-jockey station, intended to keep the night shift awake.

Anyway, to turn to square Raeburn a moment, sure, there are some professional folk singers who research around and dig up previously unsung stuff. Sometimes it's worth singing, and sometimes, it isn't; then, dammit, they sing it anyway, I fear.

But I think the historical end of folk music is a side alley, for specialists, interesting when it produces singable material, and otherwise just a special field of history, not of music. Folk music is being written now, and it will go right on being written -- or at least, created and remembered, for later writing -- as long as folk singing is a living art.

(And aside -- what the hell is wrong with Whack Fol de Diddle? Man's gotta fill in a line sometimes -- and nonsense songs aren't always



Mason (3)

quite as silly as they seem. And even if they were, they'd still be fun. Which, sir, "fun" sir, is why I like music, sir.)

Thereby coming at last to the point. I'm worrying about the current state of folk music. The stuff is currently enjoying a wider audience than ever before, thanks mostly to the LP I suspect. But there's already a faint smell of Inside and Outside psychology about the field. The faint line between the performers and the audience is getting thicker, and the folk in the pit have stopped joining in on the choruses. The Brahmins, with codes of criticism that they can use to downgrade everything from Burl Ives to the Elektra catalog, are moving in. Such phony Brahmins, too.

Pete Seeger is a good singer, but basically a Brahmin, of a special kind. A political Brahmin, for a long time tied to the most Inside of the political cults, he still can't help making foolish political noise at times when all we want the man to do is to pick up the box and sing

Anyway, leave me perorate. I want people to sing badly, loudly and often, and accompany themselves on second-hand guitars, not too skillfully. I want to admire and enjoy a good musician, while reserving the right to be third rate myself. I am a shy individual, personally, and I hate to be surrounded by experts at anything -- one or two experts and six amateurs is a far better ratio.

So, I want folk music to stay alive. I don't mind the historians, but if they want to sneer at me, as an amateur, or if they want to turn up their noses at a pro who popularizes and makes money at it -- like Ives -- then to hell with them. And I don't mind the Village specimens who haven't anything else to do with the time between visits to the Unemployment Insurance office but practice. Sometimes they're good. But if they clot up into cliques and start to invent a private language for the purpose of discussing each other's excellences and the Outsider's ignorance -- why, then, the hell with them.

--David Mason

-----  
letter excerpt

#### NEW ENGLAND FOLK FESTIVAL

You might like to print a note on the New England Folk Festival which will be held at Tufts College, Medford, Mass., from April 11 - 13, 1958. The Festival includes exhibitions and participation in folk and square dancing, fiddling, singing, food, books, costumes, arts, and crafts. The Sunday session comprises instruction in specialized fields of folk dancing. Information may be had from the New England Folk Festival Assn., 30 Pemberton Square, Boston 8, Mass. From the NYC area, Libby Harris, of 54 Midwood St., Valley Stream, N Y, will lead a weekend auto trip to the Festival for the College Alumni Hiking Club. Non-members are welcome. (Israel Young is a member of the NEFFA and may have further data on it.)

Kelvin Domovs  
Brooklyn 26, N Y



letter excerpt

### The Washington Square Problem

In reading Caravan I find a greatly developed interest in the skiffle groups, etc., what they are doing, and why, and an interest in problems in England, folksong wise, etc.

I do not however see any mention of a problem which is with us right here.

For quite some years it has been our privilege to go out onto the Washington Square Fountain area during the summer months, on Sundays, and sing and play as much as we like. Now, from appearances, the area may be wiped out to make way for a highway.

I don't resent the highway, but I would appreciate the aid of other folksingers in New York City in locating a new site.

For the past few years it has been the privilege of Irwin Lutzky and myself to obtain the permits for these sessions and I don't want to see them stop. I find it difficult to cover all of the city myself, but I am will to accept suggestions for suitable sites.

Incidentally, to the Greenwich Village Fathers, I believe it would be worth keeping the folksingers in the Village area, since they have been an attraction here for (I believe) seventeen years.

Yours truly,  
Lionel Kilberg  
141 Attorney Street  
New York, N Y

-----  
Letter Excerpt

### A NOTE ON "PUTTIN' ON THE STYLE"

Tell Sandy Paton that the present popularity of "Puttin' On The Style" stems from children at Camp Woodland in the Catskills. They learned it from Ernie Sager, a local man, at one of their summer folk festivals. I learned it from them. The Gateway Singers and others learned it from me. Bob DeCormier, and others, carried it across the land, too. The original author (probably late 19th Century) is unknown.

Best Wishes,  
Pete Seeger



WITH MY EAR TO THE GROUND - Brunner

Interval ("Let's make it ten minutes, please, not more!") at a hoot at the Princess Louise the other Sunday night. Me, in character as the London rep of CARAVAN, standing near the exit trying to catch wealthy-looking folk music addicts before they get to the bar and spend their money on something more transitory than a subscription to CARA. A voice raised through a sudden near-silence.

" - and it's available here through this John Brunner."

"That's me," I said, and the speaker was Eric Winter, the editor of SING.

He's a large, balding man, with a Northern accent that defies the fact of his living in West Hampstead, London, and he says that if he could get the vitality of writing which is to be found in CARA into his own magazine, he'd be well pleased. He went so far as to reprint most of Rafferty's article from the second issue of CARA as the lead item in the December SING.

Anyway, we wound up going back to his place after the hoot along with a couple of other people who'd been peddling Topic Records at the hoot, to dispose of some drink left over from a party the previous evening.

Eric and his very attractive wife Audrey were mulling over the idea of a party before Guy Carawan went back to the States, and pretty soon it jelled into a project, and - but that's what this column is mostly about, because Eric said it would be a ceilidh to end all ceilidhs, and he was pretty near right...

It was on a Monday, of all days, but we sure as blazes weren't going to miss it on that account. Around 8.45 on the evening concerned we showed up at the right place - a lovely and large house in an isolated area of London, not far from the BBC's big TV station at Alexandra Palace, which Eric had borrowed from friends for the occasion. We were met by some of our six hosts (two Winters, two Curtises and two Barretts) and passed along to acquire drinks and get sociable before the evening's music commenced.

The ceilidh opened with what Eric described as the best non-skiffle group in London - the Southerners, a couple of girls with nice voices, washboard doubling kazoo and a versatile front line. Reading from left to right: he played guitar and sang lead in Russian on "Kalinka"; he played guitar and we'd heard him at the hoot the previous evening (this man labours under a terrible handicap - spoken indistinctly his name sounds like "Lonnie Donegan", but it's Tommy Donnelly), and he plays guitar and does very good talking blues. On this occasion he did "Talking Moscow" (see the issue of SING above-mentioned).



And that's probably a cut and a half above the group I hear showed up at Folklore Center recently off a British liner, though at the time of writing I haven't seen the review of their show.

Hyam (see CARA 4) was there and sang; John Forman was there and sang; Fred and Betty Dallas were there and sang; Sandy and Caroline Paton were ditto and ditto...

Brief personal discursion. Last November or thereabout, Lee dropped me a line saying that under separate cover she was sending me a folk singer. He didn't show. Eric Winter then informed me he was already in town and Troubadour and the Breadbasket, so I wrote him care of the latter and told him to phone me which he did and we finally connected at this party.

Sandy's a very nice guy and a fine singer, and he and Caroline provided some of the highspots of the evening, including the only Child ballad sung. He knew the number, moreover... ("Lord Bateman", for those interested.)

A Liverpool Irishman from Cambridge, by name Stan Kelly, was there and sang - including and especially a wonderful calypso-styled parody of "Riley's Daughter", which he did completely in character as Stanley Kelafonte.

Dominic Behan was there - the "Dublin nightingale" - and not only sang but recited. He did Burns's "Tam Lin's Prayer", with actions. (Not quite all the actions - he didn't attempt, for example, to lift a lawless leg upon anyone...) Dominic is a considerable character, given too much to posturing and affectation when performing for my taste, but definitely a fine entertainer.

Alan Lomax was there, and gave us some splendid stuff, mostly accompanied by Guy Carawan's banjo as well as his own guitar. I enjoyed particularly a "Frankie and Albert" that had everyone singing along with real vigour.

Since Guy was the reason for the party in the first place, discursion number two. He'll be back in the States before this appears in CARA. He's a very good singer indeed, with an excellent tenor voice, and his banjo playing bothers me, it's so good. He's tall, dark, lean and talented. The previous evening he'd brought along to the Louise a whole bunch of instruments he acquired on his recent trip to China, including a three-stringed moon guitar out of which - he said - he is proposing to wallop banjo tunes, though he hadn't found time to learn it well enough to give us more than a vague impression of what he meant.

Chris Barber and Otilie Patterson were there. Chris - as readers of CARA 1 and the British well know - is the leader of one of our best-known trad jazz bands, and it was when playing in his rhythm section that Lonnie Donegan re-



corded his notorious version of "Rock Island Line". There wasn't a double bass in the house, and he didn't have his trombone with him, so we didn't hear from him. But we did hear from Otilie, who sings blues with his band - the first time I'd heard her sing anything but blues. She did two or three traditional Irish songs, very pleasantly, her voice sounding much better at close quarters than it does when she's shouting into a mike over the Barber band.

There was Johnny Ambrose, too, whom Eric introduced as having been singing folk songs since before they became popular. He covered practically the whole of Europe and the States. Eric Winter himself sang "Charlie Mopps" - that's a pleasantly crazy song in praise of the man who invented beer. And there were probably other people...

Purely by coincidence, I didn't have to be in the office at nine next morning; my first appointment was a business call at ten. It was as well - I woke up at nine-thirty...

Up to now WMETTG has been predominantly reportage. I don't want anyone to get the idea, though, that this is a proper news column I'm doing from London. If it was, I should have been fired by now for missing such things as the English Folk Dance and Song Society's Jubilee show - owing to lack of time and other commitments. No, this is just a column, with me pounding the typer for the benefit of those who care to read the result.

So I'm going to parade a few ideas and opinions of my own...sparked in the first couple of instances by things that happened at this party of Eric and Audrey's.

Let's begin, since it happened first, with Fred Dallas singing a certain song of his own composition - a pretty good song, with a singable refrain, fairly typical of a whole school of modern pseudo-folksongs intended to point a moral. The subject's immaterial, except insofar as it was a piece of straight political propaganda. Not - and I'm drawing a fairly fine distinction here - social comment.

I object.

I object in exactly the same spirit as I'd object to a Fascist getting up and singing me a song about how all the evils of the modern world are due to the Jews.

Now this distinction I mentioned - between political propaganda and social comment - is one which has cropped up the day I happen to be writing this in a column in a leading London daily paper. I agree with the writer of said column that it's worth drawing.

Take "Talking Atomic Blues," for example, since Guy did it at the party; take Fred Dallas's own song about "The Family of Man". These I'd say were social comment; they deal with facts and attitudes that affect our whole society.



The late Robert Lindner had some pointed things to say about the kind of dunderhead who argues that because Communists say they're in favour of peace, he has to be against it. But to pass off propaganda under the guise of folksong is something I feel we can do without. No wonder (so I'm told) FBI agents investigating subversion in the States are informed that the word "hootenanny" may occur in a suspect's conversation...

Incidentally, can anyone tell me the derivation of that rather horrible word?

Now for an equally controversial and quite different subject. Picture the scene at this same party. Big room, lots of people sitting round. Otilie singing an Irish song, in my opinion rather well (see above). In the front row on the floor near her, about two feet away from me to my right and probably smoking one of my cigarettes: Alan Lomax, wearing a disapproving and rather bored look.

Now me, I'm a heck of a long way from being an authority on folk song. Too, Otilie's no Margaret Barry - Margaret just happens to combine a fine natural voice with the right, authentic, folk-type background. But Otilie was singing well and with feeling, and she has a good voice at close quarters. I was mainly delighted that she was singing something from her own background - she is of Irish birth - instead of blues, which she doesn't handle so well. No British singer does, really.

But, listening to her, I started thinking over this argument regarding "authenticity" in folksong, and so far as I think it matters (not very much), let's make the following division, which is so obvious it can't be original.

A folk singer proper: Margaret Barry, Blind Lemon, Bill Broonzy, Muddy Waters - a product of a folk tradition and thereby limited to performing well within it.

A singer of folk songs: everybody else - almost.

There are, of course, some people - say Josh White, who is extremely sophisticated and yet is indubitably the product of a folk tradition, though he's not limited to it - who upset that tidy classification. There are also Paul Robeson and Peter Pears and others who make nonsense of the whole concept by singing folksongs as if they were contrived songs composed in the formal European tradition.

But - skipping that point - if I was forbidden to listen to everybody in one of my groups, I'd wish to retain the singers of folksongs. It's fascinating, true, to hear a seventy-five-year-old Dorset farm labourer creaking out a ballad that's been lost otherwise for fifty years, just as it is to hear a convict work-gang chopping to the accompaniment of a song you can only learn by going "up the river";



and a concert tenor can make one unholy mess out of "Frankie and Albert" - all granted.

I submit, though, that merely because today a good many genuine folk singers happen to be not only untutored but the possessors of small vocal talent is no good reason for condemning the owner of a fine and/or well-trained voice for applying it to folksongs simply because he or she likes the things. Take Burl Ives, for example. I gather, though I don't know why, that Ives's name is practically a dirty word in some quarters. Personalities aside, and after admitting that he can't sing calypsoes although he tries and his version of "John Henry" is a shame, I find the fact that he likes singing folksongs an excellent excuse for him to do so. Okay, he's polished, he's a trained singer. So what? A large proportion of what we refer to as "folk" songs these days were composed and first performed by highly sophisticated minstrels and minnesingers.

Standards of good and bad singing vary, of course, from place to place and period to period. (I recall hearing on a Lomax broadcast a while back an interview he had with a negro convict whom he asked what the qualifications of a good worksong leader were, and the convict eliminated everything bar a sense of time. He could have a voice like a cement mixer, or no voice at all if he could whistle, providing his rhythm was one the men could work to.) But in the societies where our present-day folksong heritage struck roots, it was the outstanding singers, not the ordinary ones, who got ahead. The idea that a singer can't be genuine, can't feel and convey the emotion and the true impact of a folksong, if he's trained, smacks to me of the tendency towards embalming which characterises - even these days - too many people involved in the folk music field.

The hoots at the Princess Louise got a write-up in the Melody Maker of 18th January. (The photos with it were quite lousy.) Warning to British readers thinking of attending: the pub opens at seven p.m. and there's standing room only - quite literally - by five past. Come early.

I suppose maybe I'll be forgiven for saying that Mike Myer (Letter column, November CARA) has withdrawn the comments he made about my concentrating on skiffle... Yes, truly, folk music is on the up and up in Britain, and a very good thing too.

John Brunner,  
London.  
January 1958.



In answer to my request  
for more information about...

## "The Three Sisters"

a letter from  
Mary Corby  
East Keansburg, N J

As I told you in my last letter, I used to play "The Three Sisters" when I was a little girl. I think it must be something of a rarity because my older sisters don't remember it, nor does my younger sister, and I haven't heard anyone at all sing it since I was a child. I am giving you the words as we used to sing them. Like most singing games it is quite repetitious.



1. There were three sisters gathering flowers (three times)  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O.
2. There came a robber passing by ( " " )  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O.
3. He took the first sister by the hand ( " " )  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O.
4. "Will you be a robber's wife,  
Or will you die by my great knife?  
Will you be a robber's wife  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O."
5. "I won't be a robber's wife,  
I'd rather die by your great knife.  
I won't be a robber's wife,  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O."

(He stabs her and she falls dead.)

There were two sisters gathering flowers (three times)  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O.

(Repeat the second and third verses, singing "second sister" instead of "first sister". Then sing ---)

"See your sister lying there ( " " )  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O."

"I see my sister lying there ( " " )  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O."

(Now sing the fourth and fifth verses.)



Corby (2)

There was one sister gathering flowers  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O.

( three times )

(Repeat the second and third verses, singing  
"last sister", then sing again ---)

"See your sisters lying there  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O."

( " " )

"I see my sisters lying there  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O."

( " " )

"Will you be a robber's wife,  
Or will you die by my great knife?  
Will you be a robber's wife  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O?"

"I won't be a robber's wife,  
And I won't die by your great knife.  
I won't be a robber's wife,  
Down by the green, by the burnie, O."

(She grabs his knife and stabs him and he falls dead.)

I have written down the music for this. I am no musician, so it is a little rough, but I think you'll be able to read it all right. The game is played with four children, three for the sisters and one for the robber. When there are extra children they form a chorus, singing the narrative portion. The action simply follows the song.

You want to know about me? I'm a wife and mother, middle-aged. I was born in Scotland and came to America when I was sixteen. I like to sing, though I don't have much of a voice. I have absolutely no talent as a musician, so I play the autoharp for my own accompaniment and sing away to my heart's content.

The reason I know so many songs is because I come from a singing family. Even today, a family get-together is an excuse for us to sing all the old songs we sang withour parents when we were young. Our favorite recreation was to gather round the fire-place while my father played his mandolin or reed-accordion (melodeon, it was called in Scotland) and we all sang. My younger brother played the dulcimer--not the dulcimer of this country, but what was called a dulcimer in Scotland. It is a four-sided instrument, strung with many strings, and is played by striking the strings very fast with wooden sticks.

PS. Joan, my daughter, who plays the guitar, says she plays "The Three Sisters" in D minor.

As ever,  
Mary



# To everyone who enjoys having fun

New York area news

A folkdance group for beginners is being initiated, which will meet for the first time on Sunday, January 19th, and every Sunday thereafter, At Hartley House, 413 West 46th St (off 9th Ave.).

I have requested this to be published as an open letter so that I may extend a cordial invitation to those of you who may, at one time or another, have toyed with the idea of folk dancing but who have, for any of a number of reasons, been reluctant to make a first attempt. Rest assured that the group will be conducted in such a way as to be most beneficial to those of you who have never done any folk dancing or who, possibly, have never done any dancing at all. Nobody need feel that any previous dance experience is necessary in order to participate. Those of you who may have done some folk dancing in the past and are interested in attending the group are also welcome.

I very strongly believe in folk dancing as a recreational activity, aimed principally at having fun and the group will be conducted accordingly.

It is to be assumed that those of you who subscribe to this publication are greatly interested in folk music and folk lore, a wealth of which, needless to say, in a part of any folk dance activity.

I sincerely hope that you will accept this invitation and afford me the opportunity of welcoming you personally at Hartley House.

8:00 - 11:00 PM  
every Sunday

Admission \$1.00

Sincerely,

Gladys Dab  
Group Leader

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Advance Program Schedule

Steve Werdenschlag

## "FOLK MUSIC AROUND THE WORLD" WKCR-FM 89.9MC

- Tue. Feb 11 - The Calender in Song, Vol I (Review of "Singing Holidays" by selection of songs from same.)  
Thu. 13 - Valentine Eve: Love Songs.  
Tue. 18 - Special Feature Columbia-Rutgets basketball game.  
Thu. 20 - "Singing Holidays" again. (Vol I only took us halfway through the year.)  
Tue. 25 - Record review: The Weavers at Carnegie Hall.  
& Carl Sandburg sings songs from the American Songbag.  
Thu. 27 - Ray Boguslav, in person.  
Tue. Mar. 4 - Record Review: Alan Arkin sings Folk Songs Once Over Light-ly & The Song Swappers sing Folksongs of Four Continents  
Mar. 11 - Odetta Mar. 18 - Theo Bikel (both in person)



# WHERE TO HEAR FOLK MUSIC IN YOUR AREA

## WHERE TO HEAR FOLK MUSIC IN YOUR AREA

New York  
Concerts OSCAR BRAND, CYNTHIA GOODING, & JIMMY MacDONALD 3rd Annual Festival of Folksong presented by Brooklyn Community - Woodward School, Inc., Margot Mayo Music, Folklore and Dance Dept. (proceeds to Scholarship Fund) Friday 28 Feb 8 PM sharp, at Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lafayette Ave & Ashland Place. Subscription \$1.50 and \$2. Send orders to Brooklyn Community-Woodward School, 321 Clinton Ave, Brooklyn 5; or Square Dance Services, 507 Fifth Ave; or call Festival Committee, Days NEvins 8-2830, after 7 PM, President 4-1443

PETE SEEGER - Hootenanny - Carnegie Hall 22 Feb Midnight (see page 12 for details) tickets \$2.00 plus tax at Carnegie Hall box office or Folklore Center. All seats reserved.

MARAIS & MIRANDA - Wed 5 Feb 8:30 Town Hall.

RICHARD DYER-BENNET - Sat 15 Feb 8:30 Town Hall.

DAVE VAN RONK, ROY BERKELEY & SURPRISE GUEST, New York Folk Singers' Guild Concert, 28th Feb 8:15 at Adelphi Hall, 74 Fifth Ave. 50¢.

ROGER ABRAHAMS is scheduled for a Folklore Center store concert, either the first or second Monday in February. Check at Folklore Center for complete information.

NY  
regulars  
(live)

THE SHANTY BOYS (Mike Cohen Lionel Kilberg & Roger Sprung) The first Friday in each month at Studio 205, CBS Bldg. 213 W 53rd St. Admission 90¢. Guest artists often appear.

AMERICAN YOUTH HOSTELS' SONG FEST every Sunday at 8PM at AYH Headquarters, 14 W 8th St, NYC. A donation (members 35¢, guests 50¢) is requested (tax deductible). Group singing and solos by guest artists, under the leadership of BARRY KORNFIELD. (Highly recommended)

NY radio

OSCAR BRAND's Folksong Festival, WNYC AM & FM, 6PM Sundays, features the singing of Oscar, guest artists, records and news of local folkmusic activities.

JAC HOLZMAN's Adventures in Folk Music, WBAI-FM, Sundays at 11:30 AM until noon. That's at 99.5 Mg.

STEVE WERDENSCHLAG's Folkmusic Around The World, WKCR-FM (Columbia U), Tues & Thurs at 9 PM. For details of forthcoming broadcasts see page 24). 89.9 Mg.



Where to...can't

Folklore with Lorrie, WBAI-FM 99.5 Mg. 11 PM Mondays.  
Many noted singers make guests appearances on this show.

GEORGE LOBRIE, Grand Concert of Folk Music, WNCN-FM, 10-12PM  
Sundays.

Folkmusic of the World, WQXR, 2:05 - 2:30 PM, Sundays.

Berkeley Calif. radio BARRY OLIVIER's Midnight Special, KPFA-FM 11:30 til midnight,  
Saturdays. Barry also publishes a newssheet of folkmusic  
activities.

BILLY FAIER is doing a regular weekly broadcast over KPFA-FM,  
No info on time at present.

Concerts scheduled in Berkeley ODETTA, 12 February, Berkeley Little Theater.

ROLF COHEN, MIKE WERNHAM, CARL GRANICH & JO LANG, 15 Feb,  
Berkeley High School Little Theatre.

for complete information on the Berkeley Scene, and news of  
folkmusic activity in that area, check with Jack's Record  
Cellar, 400 Haight St, San Francisco 17, Calif.

WASH DC JOHN DILDINE does a folkmusic radio show on WASH-FM (97.1 mg)  
10 til 11 PM, Sundays.

Monthly "Hoots" are now taking place in Washington and vicin-  
ity, and they're featuring some really fine talent. For full  
information call John Dildine, HEMlock 4-2625 (a metropolitan  
Washington number) or contact him c/o WASH-FM, Folk Music  
Program, 1913 F St NW, Wash 4, DC.

PHIL. PA. Folksingers gather informally to sing on Sunday afternoons at  
The Gilded Cage, 261 S 21st St, Ph 3, Pa.

PETE STEVENS' Folkmusic Festival, WXPB (U of Pa) 730&1460 kc.  
Thur, 7:30 - 8 PM. If you're interested in appearing on this  
show contact Pete at Baring 2-5065 or BA 2-9355.

BOSTON & Vicinity, Mass. Try a coffee shop called TULLA'S COFFEE GRINDER, Mt Auburn St,  
Harvard Square, Cambridge. Street number is 89.

CHICAGO - see addenda

#### WHERE TO CONTACT FELLOW FOLKMUSIC ENTHUSIASTS

First try any of the coffee shops listed above, if there're  
in your area. In San Francisco, check at Jack's Record  
Cellar. (See page 10 for more info). In New York check at  
The Folklore Center, 110 MacDougal St, NY 12. Their bulletin  
board carries information on all folk activity in the area.  
Most of the NY folksingers can be contacted through the  
Folklore Center.



### Where to (3)

NYC            The Young Folklorists, a group of young people interested in various phases of folklore meet at Alexandre Studios, 318 W 57th St. They can be contacted at MO 2-6114 or PR 3-1037.

For information concerning folkmusic activity in the following areas, you may contact these people:

Berkeley     Fritz Schuder, Thornwall 3-0213.  
Calif

Wabash       Robert & Juanita Coulson, 105 Stitt St. They offer their  
Ind           hospitality to the travelling folksinger.

Wash DC      John R Dildine c/o WASH FM, 1319 F St NW.; Wash 4. HEmlock  
4-2625

Cambridge   Bill Chapple or Dick Zaffrom at TR 6-2670 (Leverett House)  
Mass          Harvard.

Sapulpa,     Wes Whittlesey, 614 S Independence. (Hospitality)  
Okla

London       Mike Moorcock; 36, Semley Rd.; Norbury, London SW 16.  
England      After 7 PM phone POLLards 8161. (Hospitality)

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### WHERE TO BUY OR SELL INSTRUMENTS OR THE LIKE

NEW YORK    Check the bulletin board at Folklore Center.

Cortesano Instrument Co. 106 MacDougal St NY 12. AL 4-7470.  
Open 2-11 PM daily except Sundays.

PHIL PA     Locker's Fine Musical Instruments - 21 S 18th St, Ph 3, Pa.  
All kinds of new and used instruments.

NEW YORK    GUITARS, DULCIMERS & BANJOS - Roger Abrahams, 159 Prince St.  
Phone GR 7-7046. Also instruction for beginners.

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### WHERE TO GET INSTRUCTION ON FOLK INSTRUMENTS

NYC           GUITAR & BANJO - Dick Weissman, 410 W 110th St, NYC 25  
MO 3-1139

GUITAR & BANJO, for beginners - Roger Abrahams, 159 Prince St  
GR 7-7046

MUSIC INSTRUCTION - Ed Badeaux, 639 E 11th St., NYC

CHI, ILL     BANJO & GUITAR     Eliot Kenin, 741 Linn, Burton Judson Ct.,  
1005 E 60th St., Chicago 37.



## Where To (4)

ADDENDA A program of folk song films featuring such performers as Burl Ives, Pete Seeger and Josh White will be shown at the "Live & Film Folk Concert" at Carnegie Chapter Hall, 8 Feb, 8:30 PM.

CHICAGO NEWS Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee are currently playing at the GATE OF HORN.

A new school devoted to the study of folk song and folk instruments has been opened in Chicago, under the leadership of Frank Hamilton & Win Stracke. It's the OLD TOWN SCHOOL OF FOLK MUSIC, at 333 West North Avenue, Chicago 10. Evening and afternoon classes are offered. For details, write, or call after 1 PM. Whitehall 4-7475.

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If you have any information suitable for listing in the "Where To..." Dept., please send it along. If you are in with a group that would welcome the itinerant folksinger, are up-to-date on activities in your locality and would welcome contact from interested persons, or would like to offer your hospitality to the folksinger who's passing through, please let us know. If you teach a folk instrument, or have one to sell (or want to buy one) we will be glad to list this information. There is no charge for advertising in Caravan.

If you have news of any sort pertinent to the folk field, please pass it along to us, too.  
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As regular readers of Caravan may have noticed, this issue is about half again as large as usual. This is due to circumstances beyond our control, and probably won't happen again in the near future, since it isn't practical timewise, and isn't financially feasible as a regular thing.

## INDICIA

CARAVAN, a folkmusic magazine, is a non-profit, non-professional publication, produced monthly by Lee Shaw, Apt 5P, 780 Greenwich Street, New York 14, NY. It is sold for 10¢ a copy. Subscriptions are accepted in any amount up to \$1.00. Please don't send more than one dollar. In New York, Caravan can be purchased at Folklore Center, 110 MacDougal St, where the current issue and a couple of recent back issues are available. In non-dollar countries, subscriptions can be had by material trades with the editor, or from John Brunner, 114 Fellows Rd., London NW 3, England, at 6d per copy. We'll be glad to send anyone a sample copy on request.

Caravan depends on you the readers for contents. We cannot pay for material but we'll give you a copy of the issue in which your work appears, and our thanks. If you have something to say about folkmusic, say it in writing. All letters considered for publication unless clearly marked otherwise. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the publisher and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the magazine, except insofar as we believe in freedom of opinion.



Dave Van Ronk

## ETHICS AND THE FOLKSINGER

Recently a flurry of activity in the folkmusic field has spotlighted a problem which seems to be almost unique in the arts; that of the professional non-professional. That is to say performers who allow themselves to be jimmied by any petty promoter who comes along, just in order to "be heard". Aside from the stupidity of this attitude this is a serious breach of ethics.

There are quite a few singers of folksongs floating around and very few job opportunities open. So few in fact that a great many accomplished artists must earn livings in other fields or starve. Add to this the arty entrepreneur with a shoe-string budget looking for free, or cheap, talent, and a musicians' union that devotes its time to taking your money and telling you where you can't work, and the confusion of the folksingers' professional world starts to become apparent.

I know several folksingers who have taken jobs without pay, not quite understanding that aside from its artistic nature singing in front of an audience is work like any other job and that even if they do not need or want pay a great many of their colleagues do and that in any other line of endeavor their practices are referred to as scabbing and its practioners are known as scabs.

"But these people are as poor as we are and they can't afford to pay us." In some cases this is quite true, but business men who have no cash have absolutely no right to employ singers, and entrepreneurs who cop the poverty plea would have their faces laughed in if there weren't so many militant victim-types around this field. Dishwashers, waiters and janitors demand wages for their work. They rarely contribute their talents free to help some small businessman line his pockets. Why should you?

"I need the experience." This is possibly the most inane excuse of all. American Youth Hostels (AYH) runs a very commendable service whereby folksingers are farmed out to hospitals and charity benefits, etc. The pay is the same as at Sherri's Loft (none) and no one is lining his pockets at anyone's expense. You can go to the traction ward and get a captive audience if you like and these people need the entertainment. There are colleges with courses on folklore that can use live singers and in the summer there is always Washington Square in NYC. If you must make money, find fellows, pool your resources, hire a hall and wail, or if you're broke find a backer and work on a percentage.

If there was less irresponsibility and more understanding among folksingers more of us might be able to eke out a living at it, and even if we continue to sit on our haunches as least we would not be known as easy marks for professional welchers. If you must sing without pay sing for non-profit enterprises. Don't make another man's living for him, if it doesn't help you, and only hurts the rest of us.

--Dave Van Ronk ("Blind Rafferty")  
January 1958



A brand new New York City folksong  
by a popular New York City Folk...

## BALLAD OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

tune: FFV (or 'Engine One Hundred and Forty Three' or 'The Wreck on the C and O', or 'George Alley')

Along came the IRT, a-cannonballing through,  
From two-hundred-and-forty-second street, to Flatbush Avenue.  
At 5:15 one Friday eve she pulled into Times Square,  
The people filled the station, and Georgie, he was there.

The people filled the platform, they milled and massed around,  
And Georgie looked upon that train, and it was Brooklyn bound.  
He vowed at once that train to board, the weekend not to roam,  
For Georgie was a shipping clerk, and Brooklyn was his home.

The people charged into that train, a million head or more,  
George used his elbows and his knees, until he reached the door.  
But when he reached those portals, he could not stand the gaff.  
The brakeman closed the door on him, and cut poor George in half.

The train pulled out of Times Square, the swiftest on the line.  
It carried poor Georgie's head along, and left his body behind.  
Poor Georgie died a hero's death, his martyrdom's plain to see --  
And the very last words that Georgie said were, "Screw the IRT."

So when you ride the IRT and you approach Times Square,  
Incline your head a few degrees and say a silent prayer,  
For his body lies between the ties, amidst the dust and dew,  
And his head, it rides the IRT -- to Flatbush Avenue.

(Hearts and flowers over and out)

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Oscar Brand sings

### "PIE IN THE SKY"

and other satires in folksong on the new  
Tradition record "Pie in the Sky"  
TLP 1022



# New York Scene



A number of interesting concerts took place in NY during the month of February. TOM PALEY & BROWNIE MCGHEE gave a spirited but disorganized show at Actor's Playhouse one Midnight, under the auspices of Folklore Center. FRED GERLACH gave a really exciting performance in the Folklore Center itself...one of the fabulous "store concerts". DAVE VAN RONK gave a store concert the following week that filled the store beyond capacity; people who had come in from the environs pleaded with Israel to be let in, until the store itself was jammed, and the back room was well-filled with standees who, from there, could only listen.

And Ken Joffe produced another "Folkmusic Festival" at Carnegie Hall. This one came off quite a bit better than the last one due entirely, I suspect, to the efforts of OSCAR BRAND who helped organize the show, and who acted as master-of-ceremonies. As you will recall, if you were there, the first of the series was not organized at all. This second show featured ODETTA, OSCAR BRAND, SUSAN REED, TOM GLAZER, and the ever-popular SHANTY BOYS. SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE MCGHEE were scheduled but couldn't make it, due to a conflicting club date in Chicago. The only complaints I heard from fellow audience members were (1) ODETTA didn't sing enough, (2) SONNY & BROWNIE were sorely missed, and (3) the customary complaints about the Hall. Carnegie Hall is a miserable place for a folkmusic concert. It is a huge, drafty barn with mediocre acoustics, in which it is practically impossible for a performer to achieve any intimacy with his audience. We can only hope that someday some beneficent mad bomber will blow it up.

There were other concerts, too, and the usual round of regular events. I finally got over to AYH for one of their Sunday night song fests, and found it very enjoyable...far better than most of the casual gatherings I've attended.

News on the record scene: a number of new releases are scheduled from the major folkmusic companies. Tradition is releasing PIE IN THE SKY, Satire in Folksong, (TLP 1022) sung by Oscar Brand, which contains, among other things, his very popular "Talking Atom Blues". Riverside has a batch of new ones: three albums of field recordings made by Ken Goldstein in North Carolina (including one of Obray Ramsey); "Timber-r-r!" by Paul Clayton, a collection of lumberjack songs; "Champions and Sporting Blades" by Lloyd & MacColl, and (probably on their Judson label) The Art of the 5-string Banjo, by Billy Faier, and "Banjo, Banjo and More Banjo" by Eric Weissberg, Billy Faier and Dick Weissman. New releases from Elektra include "The Shanty Boys", Roger Sprung, Lionel Kilberg and Mike Cohen; "Theodore Bikel Sings Jewish Folk Songs" and "Marilyn Child and Glenn Yarbrough Sing Folk Songs". From Folkways, look for "British Broadside Ballads in Popular Tradition" sung by Paul Clayton (FW 8708). They are also releasing an album of Suffragette



## New York Scene (2)

Songs by Elizabeth Knight; Scottish Folk Songs for Women by Lori Holland; Songs of Martha's Vinyard by E.G. Huntington.

The famed collection "Pills To Purge Meloncholy" by Durfey, in six volumes, is to be reprinted in its entirety, probably under the imprint "Folklore Library". It will sell for around \$25, although the price is not yet certain. Speaking of books, "American Balladry from British Broad-sides" by G. Malcolm Laws Jr., American Folklore Society is highly recommended. It is a guide for students and collectors of traditional song.

The New York Folksingers' Guild is planning to present a concert every month. Outstanding in their concerts is the presentation of new talent...young folksingers who have rarely been heard on the concert stage.

SOCIAL NOTES FROM ALL OVER: Logan English, who disappeared into the wilds of California just before Christmas, has been heard from and is expected back in NYC this month. Barry Kornfeld found his capo. Fred Gerlach is going west, to open at the Club Cosmos in Los Angeles this month. Roger Abrahams returned from Virginia sporting a bristly bread, but removed it within the month. Israel Young has entirely remodeled the front window at Folklore Center, doing all the work himself. Susan Reed and Oscar Brand appeared on Monitor, Saturday January 18th, singing and discussing folkmusic. By the time this is published, Bob Leventhal will be out of the Army, and covering California news for Caravan. In connection with the twelfth anniversary of his radio show, Folksong Festival, Oscar Brand is giving away a mimeographed booklet containing the words to 32 of the songs that he has sung during the past year...for details listen to Folksong Festival, WNYC AM & FM at 6:30 PM Sundays. Lee and Larry Shaw and, probably, John Cohen are planning to drive down to Washington, DC, the weekend of February 1-2, to deliver a few copies of Caravan to subscribers in the area. This issue of Caravan owes special thanks to Bernice Marcus for assistance in the slave labor department. Oscar Brand is working as technical director and lyric writer for a forthcoming spectacular which Agnes DeMille is preparing for the TV series "Seven Lively Arts" on the subject of the Gold Rush. This will be broadcast this month. Gina Glaser will probably be travelling to Cambridge, Mass sometime next month to give a concert there. Dave Sternlight is doing further research on the coffee shop situation and expects to have a report on the subject prepared for the next issue of Caravan. A lot of people have been complaining lately about Riverside's unsatisfactory packaging of their records: a bare disc in a cardboard jacket, with no protective wrapper of plastic or paper is too likely to be damaged while still on a dealer's shelf, especially since so many customers like to pull the record out of its jacket and admire its surface before they buy it. A lot of other companies manage to put protective paper wrappers around their records, why can't Riverside? That's a question I've heard more than once around town. Rumor has it that the Shanty Boys are scheduled for a series of appearances as live guests on Oscar Brand's "Folksong Festival". We'd like to see some local producer do a concert with the four of them. Their portion of the program at Carnegie Hall was good.

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