

# Caravan

September 1957

## THE FOLKMUSIC FANZINE

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Parcels containing small poisonous objects and/or explosives should be marked clearly "to Rafferty" and "personal".

Deadlines for next issue:  
Articles - September 20th  
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FREE  
TAKE ONE



## New York Scene - The Bizarre Theatre

The word on the New York front is "Bizarre!" Or to be more precise, the new "Bizarre Theatre" at 106 W. 3rd St, in the Village.

This new haven for the folk enthusiast, which seems to have sprung up like a toadstool, practically overnight, opened to the public on Saturday, August 13th, after less than a week of the feeblest sort of advertising. At least it looked pretty feeble: a few posters in Village windows, a few handbills with only the meagerest of information on them, and then a wildfire word-of-mouth news flash to the effect that Odetta would be on the program.

We were among the lucky ones. We bought our tickets early at Folklore Center, dropped by the theater in plenty of time and managed to get good seats. The theater itself is a slightly re-vamped garage. At one end a stage was thrown together out of moveable platforms, under a balcony that provided a somewhat proscenium-like effect. Lighting by means of spots on standards, was excellently handled, and from where we sat the acoustics were surprisingly good.

We settled in our chairs and entertained ourselves by watching the uncurtained stage, the performers-to-be who ambled about greeting friends in the audience, comparing notes on their guitars, and occasionally looking quite worried. Show-time came and went. Someone took a moment to assure the audience that, in ten more minutes, the show would start.

Finally the house was full. You couldn't have packed another folk enthusiast in with a nine-pound hammer. The lights went out and the show began.

The PA system emitted a wail of feedback, the kind you get at a typical amateur production when the sound man doesn't know how to handle his equipment. A light flashed on, on the platform above the stage area, and a face was visible, illuminated from below in the manner of a Halloween ghoul. This pseudo-Theodore made a few comments that failed to relate to the program, and then introduced the first act, a newly formed skiffle group roaring out Raise a Ruckus Tonight.

They didn't quite get their Ruckus off the ground though. It seemed as if the problem of unison weighed on them to such an extent that playing together was more work than fun, and the number lacked the enthusiasm which is so important to a good skiffle group. A lively bass and/or washboard might also have helped the effect.



Then the MC was back. After a few of his supposedly macabre performances, it became apparent that the PA feedback was intentional, for effect, rather than accidental. The MC told a few of the common gory jokes going the rounds today (damaging my favorite by bad telling, in my opinion), hammed quite a bit, missed a couple of cues, and did a very poor job of introducing acts.

He completely failed to introduce some of the performers, or else purposely ignored them. He mispronounced names and in general goofed the job of Master-of-Ceremonies completely. One singer, at least, had the guts to give the audience his right name after the MC's flubbed, mis-pronounced introduction.

After the skiffle group's weighty attempt at an opening rowser, Logan English came on and gave the show its real start. He proved to be a quite pleasant young man with a quite pleasant voice, nothing world-shattering about his style or material. But he is a solid folk-singer with a good voice and the ability to reach his audience.

Others sang and held the pace with a mixture of traditional folk-music and Washington Square type satire, and even a Tom Lehrer tidbit.

There was a short intermission, during which performers and guests alike did a little leg-stretching, some even going so far as to pick up beer or soft-drinks.

And Odetta came in.

As if drawn by a magnet, the wandering audience began to repack the house.

The second half of the program was opened by a most impressive singer, Big Dave Van Ronk. Dave sings blues with an intensity and vitality, and sometimes violence, that comes across powerfully to his audience. His performance brought a thunder of applause. Completing his part of the program, he led into another number by the skiffle group.

Another blues singer on the program was Bob Brill, who handled his material beautifully but failed to make the contact with his audience that is necessary for really effective singer-communication.

Luke Faust, a young man with a masterful hand at the 5-string banjo, sang more traditional material. And there were others, like the enchanting Ellen Adler.

And, at last there was Odetta.

Odetta and her singing have been described by better writers than I. If you've seen Odetta, there's no need for me to try to describe her. If you've heard her records, you can attempt to imagine the quality of Odetta in person. If you haven't heard Odetta, there's no use my talking to you until you go out and hear her sing. Currently



New York Scene (3)

she has out a record, ODETTA SINGS BALLADS AND BLUES on Tradition (TLP-1010) and she has records forthcoming from Riverside. (An earlier recording by "Odetta and Larry" is a collector's item that I have no information on)

Odetta sang.

There were difficulties. In the intense heat under the lights, she had trouble keeping her guitar accurately tuned. Outside, fire trucks wailed past in full siren, forcing her to pause. And then she sang.

Behind her, in the spill of the lights, the seated performers listened with the intensity of apprentices before a master: one with tears in his eyes - another with his head thrown back, his eyes closed and his mouth open, as if her voice were something that washed over him, engulfing him. And the audience...tense and excited, completely held by the power of this woman.

When she finished, they asked for more. They begged and cried for more...particularly the performers on the stage, who were close in fact and in emotion, to her singing.

With a rather shy smile, she took up the guitar again and sang for us. Her voice filled the hall, sweeping us away from the Here-and-Now of it.

And then it was over.

We were seated there, in a revamped garage, with the overhead lamps light, and the proprietor on the stage telling us a little about the theatre and its plans. Then folding chairs were folded and stacked against the walls. People began milling about, talking refreshments and talking with each other. Photographers buzzed around, flashing their cameras at the performers. Odetta and Big Dave sat on a stage-platform, talking together. Three drummers with bongos and the like filled the room with wild rhythm. Someone threaded through the crowd passing the word to his friends that there was a party at so-'n'-so's. And slowly it all broke up.

All in all, it had been a fine show. Only one item, aside from the MC, had fallen short of satisfying the critical folkmusic fan. Much of the material had been superior to highly-touted, highly priced folk entertainment that I've seen in this city.

I, for one, am going back next time.

--LS

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Lacking more complete information on Bizarre Theatre, myself, I refer anyone who is interested to FOLKLORE CENTER, 110 MacDougal St., phone GR 3-7590 for details.



## A Seeing-Eye Dog For Rafferty

"Blind Rafferty" raises a few interesting points in his discussion of the Elektra Catalogue but the most outstanding one seems to be the one on his head. Hence the reply.

What he seems to be driving at is the old saw about, "Oh, it's too, too commercial," which has plagued folk-music for years now. It's a pretty typical attitude -- you can hear it in any coffee-shop from Greenwich Village to North Beach. It's an expression of a sort of kiddy car bohemianism which insists that that which is popular cannot be regarded as having quality or as acceptable to the self-styled avant-garde.

I won't argue with him about Elektra's jacket notes. I haven't even read the ones in question (Destine et cie). It's quite possible it's a phoney. But why castigate Cooper merely because he has a good voice and possibly some musical training? Judging his style on its merits alone is one thing but this pigeon poop about professional-talent-equals-no-folk-music-quod-erat-demonstratum is beginning to sound a little worn.

I consider myself that Folkways has done more for folk-music per se than any other single person or group but I'd hate to have to fall back on it as the only thing to listen to. Some of the items they have put out are fascinating historically and a definite contribution of a scholarly nature but some of them are also ear-grating cacophonies to listen to.

Let's face it -- Leadbelly is dead and it doesn't look as though we'll be hearing much more of Woody Guthrie. Both had that certain indefinable something that made him great without the addition of formal musical training or a fine singing voice. Unfortunately times change. You're not likely to find another Woody or another Leadbelly floating around the country for the simple reason that the conditions that created these people no longer exist.

In fact, if you dig down real deep, Josh White -- commercial tho he may be -- is one of the few singers floating around today who has a real folk-music background in the traditional manner.

Or does "Blind Rafferty" expect folk-singers in general to try and imitate something they are not. Speaking for myself I'm a little fed up with this crap of half-baked Bohemians putting on phoney accents and mannerisms they don't quite know how to imitate, in order to sound like something they aren't and never will be. Folk-music throughout the century has been a very individual expression of a people by a few of their number. I get a little bored listening to people who haven't been very much further than their own back yards, trying to put on accents from the dust-bowl or the Deep South of a hundred years ago today. They lack the imagination to put the stuff across by themselves



Lefkowitz (2)

and must fall back on the talents of others for their performances.

This isn't by any means a wholesale condemnation of the field of young talent coming up now in the folk-music field. Watch Odetta or Ed McCurdy or even Allan Arkin, if you want to stretch a point. These people may not sound like Leadbelly but they aren't Leadbelly and at least they have the courage to admit it and to sing in their own voices.

This isn't to say either that there is no room for a certain amount of imitation -- certainly when I want to hear Midnight Special I'd a lot rather hear a slightly raspy voice (even a phoney one) to -- say, Dyer-Bennett. But let them admit they aren't for real, and let them practise a little more before they try this sort of thing. To sing these songs a folk-singer must be an actor and a good one -- not a phoney. Go see FACE IN THE CROWD and watch a good actor at work playing a folk-singer and see how much more realistic he sounds than the average you'll hear down in the Square on Sunday afternoon.

No, I'd hesitate a long time before I'd condemn Elektra for trying to put across records that sound quite listenable instead of "real purty".

"One-Eye Lefkowitz"  
August 1957

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HAVE AT THEE. RAFFERTY !

Rarely have I read a more obviously biased, unreasonable and altogether irrational article than your "essay", THE ELEKTRA CATALOG - A Sarcophagus. How is it possible that anyone with obviously so little understanding of music dare thrust his opinions on the public? You obviously value amateurism above musical quality. Your love for the untalented and the inept performer is evident in your every sentence.

To begin with, your tirade against Jean Léon Destiné, a really talented performer with a deep understanding of his material. That "real, authentic music of Haiti" you refer to is real and authentic alright, but is it music? Perhaps there are musical values buried under that mass of dull, boring amateurish slush, and perhaps the musical archeologist would enjoy digging them out for himself. But it takes a man with Destiné's feeling and understanding to bring out those qualities which give value to the cacophony of the "real authentic music" for the listener to enjoy. Rather than wrapping this music in pink ribbons and confining it, Elektra has removed the crudities of unskilled performers and brought out the real beauty of the music.

So too with Clarence Cooper and the old standby, Josh White. Both Josh White and Clarence Cooper have talent, good voices, and the ability to put their material to decent use, which is more than Leadbelly or Blind Willie Johnson or Woody Guthrie could say. If these men represent-



Coots (2)

ed any tradition, it was that of the amateur, the poor voiceless clod who could do nothing better than shout unmelodically.

You talk about the "intensity inherent in the music" as if there were some value inherent in this blatant, unsophisticated hog-calling. Such emotional intensity is for savages. You just haven't the depth and appreciation of musical quality to understand the subtlety of emotion in the singing of a man like Clarence Cooper or Josh White. Emotion in music isn't something to be served up like chunks of pig-liver. It is there is rich fullness, for the ear and the mind capable of finding and appreciating it. I pity you that you lack the ability to understand really good folkmusic.

And, Rafferty, if you still are amazed at Elektra's ability to put out "genteel, sophisticated and utterly false" albums, you might try actually sampling their catalog, rather than spending your time loathing a small selection, and thereby condemning the whole company.

If it's authentic Haitian folkmusic you want, try VOICES OF HAITI (EKLP - 5), or if you prefer the naive, unsophisticated ethnic performing of authentic American folkmusic, try any of Elektra's recordings by Tom Paley, Jean Ritchie, Frank Warner, Jack Elliott, and others. As much as any other company in the business, if not more so, Elektra has continually released records for every taste in the field, rather than just for the few moldy-headed musical archaeologists.

Lionel Coots  
August 1957

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POETRY CORNER

ODE TO EMORY COOK

Sing a song of cartridges,  
And dual-point styli;  
Four-and-twenty speakers  
Blasting in hi-fi.

When the switch is opened  
The amplifier hums,  
And glorious full frequency  
From out the baffle comes.

--John Champion



## "BLIND RAFFERTY"

A few days ago someone handed me the latest copy of SING OUT and told me to turn to Pete Seeger's column "Johnny Appleseed, Jr." if I wanted to work up a really fine rage. I accepted the proffered magazine and my friend stepped back a few paces and waited for the explosion. There was no explosion. Of course, I disagreed with the article as expected (the contents of same are of no importance here) but I got no satisfaction out of disagreeing with Seeger. I think that the man is really great, in almost every sense of the word and it saddens me to constantly find myself in the opposition camp every time he ventures an opinion. But when he sings --

Artists of Seeger's genre are hard to come by in this day and age. He is, in my opinion, taste and honesty personified, and a Seeger concert is a lesson which no singer of folksongs can afford to miss. When he speaks on the stage, his voice rarely rises above a conversational level, and yet he is heard. There is no phoney upstaging at all. As a matter of fact "stage presence" of the Broadway variety is entirely absent. Seeger does not act; he is.

I think that this is the key to his entire greatness. The man has no need to act in order to establish contact with his audience. He genuinely respects the people who are listening to him and refuses to insult their sensibilities with insincere theatrics. And they respond, not to an actor or stage personality, but to the man.

He treats his material in much the same way. I doubt if Seeger considers himself a "folklorist" per se; but rather he looks at folk-music as a human being; subject to love, hate, enthusiasm, sorrow-in short, all of the emotions with which folkmusic deals. He is not "preserving" folklore but living it, and so are we, and he knows it. He neither sings up nor down to his material but with it. And there is no dichotomy between the performer and the content of his songs. This is the reason why one never gets the "isn't this cute" or "how quaint" impression from Seeger's singing. When he sings, ALL of him is involved. Which is another lesson that many singers of folksongs could profit by.

Again, I can't say I think much of Pete's point of view on many subjects. He is forever espousing causes which at best leave me cold. But I can't say that I think that he would be better off without his causes and opinions. However wrong I happen to think they may be, they reflect a genuine concern with the real world which, to my way of thinking, is an indispensable part of a whole person, which ...



Rafferty (2)

I think Pete Seeger is.

The tragedy is that there are almost none like him. He is almost unique and insofar as such people in folk music are rare, then it becomes necessary to form "societies for the preservation of folklore" -- or perhaps the word should be "embalming".

While I am on the subject of embalming, I'd like to add a footnote to last month's column. I did not intend the article as a blanket indictment against all of the artists who have ever recorded for Elektra, some of whom I have the greatest respect for. (Tom Paley and Frank Warner, for example) Each record and each artist must, of course, be evaluated separately. I did not think it would be necessary to explain this, but evidently some illiterates had some semi-literates read the article to them. Anyway, my opinions on Elektra's overall approach are unchanged. (For whatever they're worth.)

--Rafferty  
August 1957

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(letter excerpt)

Dear Lee,

About seven years ago I attended a square dance at the Henry Street Settlement, just out of curiosity, and became fascinated by the dancing and the folk singing which took place afterwards. I kept coming back until the dances and the folk songs became a lot more familiar. I started to attend folk music concerts and folk dancing at Folk Dance House. Someone told me about the singing at the square (Washington Square) and I went down there on a Sunday afternoon. I found that I also liked that very much. One day a fellow named Bill Fland from Philadelphia brought a crude instrument down to the square, made of a washtub, a string and a stick, which he called a washtub bass. The instrument appealed to me. It was just about this time that I met a fellow named Lionel Kilberg at the square. He said he could make a bass much better looking and much better sounding than the one Bill Fland had. He did and I asked him to make one for me as well. Since that time we have been playing our basses at the square and really having a swell time for ourselves. People are very surprised that we can get such good tones from such a weird looking contraption. Surprisingly enough, we do get a tone very similar to a regular bull fiddle. Your article about the skiffle bands in England was very interesting as these groups use an instrument which is very much like the washtub bass. If anyone wants to start a skiffle band...have washtub bass, will travel. I think it would be a lot of fun.

I would like the words to the following songs. Perhaps you can get them for me... THE THREE RAVENS (Richard Dyer-Bennett version), THE KERRY RECRUIT (Richard Dyer-Bennett version) and DON'T ROLL THEM BLOOD SHOT EYES AT ME (Dave Van Ronk version).

Sincerely,

Irwin Lutzky



## WITH MY EAR TO THE GROUND

He's a fairly tall guy, on the thin side, with a rather large and slightly asymmetrical nose, and he wears a red-blond beard. His name is Russell Quay; he is an artist by profession, and he runs one of Soho's most popular music clubs - the Skiffle Cellar in Greek Street.

This place is a cellar. You come in from the street, passing the posters advertising Cinerama Holiday on the side wall of the Casino, you enter a shabby hallway, go to the end, turn a hundred and eighty degrees, go down a flight of stairs, pay your admission at the foot, and you're in. What the place was originally, I don't know. It's long, low-ceilinged; the right-hand wall is painted with a hideous mural showing African natives in advanced stages of undress. About half the length of the cellar is occupied by chairs, with a space left near the door for the latecomers (and there are plenty of these) to stand. Then a low stage, very small; beyond that a narrow extension leading to a soft drinks and sandwich bar.

It's open seven nights a week, and packed out. I hold membership card number 1270. The total has now passed the fifteen hundred mark. I shudder to think what would happen if the whole lot decided to come all on one evening.

The programme is simple, and regular: one or two skiffle groups, plus one or more featured solo attractions. The evening before I wrote this column I went down there - taking very good care to arrive early, having made the mistake of getting in ten minutes after the start once before on a Sunday (their second busiest night). For a very particular purpose.

Russell took his skiffle group - the City Ramblers - to Moscow for the Youth Festival.

This group is one of the liveliest and most original around town. It comes as a positive relief when, after forty minutes' music from one of the 'ordinary' groups, such as the Southern Wayfarers (three guitars, tub bass and washboard) who are the supporting residents at the Cellar on Sundays, the Ramblers get up on the stand and really begin to belt it out.

Russell leads on cuatro - four-string Spanish guitar. He sings pleasantly, and as solo specialties does Cockney music-hall songs like Villikins and his Dinah. In my humble opinion he is a great deal better on these than on the blues which he also tackles.

Along with him is his wife, Hylda Sims, also on guitar - orthodox Spanish type. Hylda takes the woman's blues, and does several vocal features; her choice of solo material includes such popular favourites as Three Lovely Lassies in Banyon and The Bold Irish Navvy.



Brunner (2)

Third in the front line - and for my money far and away the best - is a young Glaswegian called Jim McGregor, who came down to London towards the end of last year, and whom I first heard playing at the now defunct Nancy Whisky Club. He is an extremely capable guitarist, adding the jazz-styled chording on numbers like Good Morning Blues, on which he does a fine beaty boogie-styled bass borrowed from the Huddie Ledbetter version. He sings in a very pleasant and attractive voice. His solo features are always good, and he has a dry line of humour. Last night, for example:

"And now I'd like to do a song" (imagine this in a soft Scots accent) "which according to Ewan MacColl and other folk musicologists all the children always sing in the streets o' Glasgow."

Slow shake of head. No further comment. Delighted grins from the audience.

A blues like Trouble in Mind or a lively jazz standard like Doctor Jazz is always the signal for a long and enjoyable solo from youthful Chris Bateson. He joined the Ramblers by accident during the Soho Fair last year. They were playing in the streets as usual during that festival, when this guy comes up and starts playing the blues. They like him so much he joins them right away. And what is his instrument?

A trumpet mouthpiece and a paraffin (kerosene to our American freinds) funnel...

He does play trumpet as well, but for the purposes of skiffle music his improvised instrument, often muted with his hand or a small tin can, serves admirably. He also plays musical jug.

With a washboard across her knees, to which a cymbal, a hooter, a woodblock, a cowbell and other odds and ends have been attached one by one, sits Shirley Bland, an attractive girl with a fine-boned face and blonde hair gathered at the back of her head. She is one of the most capable and rhythmic players of that difficult instrument in London. She too sings, very very well indeed, in a voice which reminds me of no one else so much as Ruth Etting. She has that same 'flat-topped' quality as if the highest harmonics of her voice were those you could hear; it is a pure soprano, not sophisticated, but excellently controlled, with a clarity like cold water.

When she comes forward to sing, usually with Jim accompanying, she stands very still with her hands behind her. Then the two of them work out something like The Juniper Tree, or Pharaoh's Army Got Drowned.

The line-up of this most versatile of skiffle groups is rounded off by a tub-bass player and a fiddler.

And how, I asked Russell, did this go over in Moscow?

"Wonderfully well," he told me when I cornered him - well, he didn't make the slightest move to get away... "They know quite a lot about jazz, of course, through listening to Voice of America and from other sources, but this music of ours was completely new."



Russell and his group spent two weeks in Moscow - the full period of the Festival. In that time they played at concert halls, Moscow University and elsewhere - even setting up in business in Red Square. Everywhere they proved extremely popular. The Russians, according to Russell, immediately spotted the 'home-made' quality of the music - in fact, that skiffle is the sort of music you can make for yourself.

So naturally I asked him whether he expected to see skiffle groups consisting of tub-bass, washboard and balalaikas. But he doesn't think so. Though there is a good deal of Russian folk music which shares qualities of improvisation and so forth which distinguish the Anglo-American-negro tradition on which skiffle is based, a very high proportion of it, despite a seeming primitiveness, is in fact highly stylised.

During their time in the Soviet Union, Russell and his group had no real chance to meet and talk with Russian folk musicians. They were kept too busy! They were much in demand, which prevented them from doing more than meet other people backstage on the occasion of their public appearances.

Of the group's repertoire, the most popular numbers proved to be the 'showcase' items, which give each member of the group a chance to show what he or she can do; blues featuring guitar boogie work, such as the above-mentioned version of Good Morning Blues; and the British folksongs featured in particular by Hylda.

So I thanked Russell for his information, congratulated him on being the first person to carry such a versatile group of interpreters of Anglo-American folk music behind the 'Iron Curtain' - which seems, fortunately, to be getting pretty rusty in places - and went back to mark time during the rest of a somewhat sad set by the Wayfarers until it was time to enjoy the Ramblers' music in their first set of the night.

Following the interval, the guests were brought on. Of the two who were featured, one is a character to be borne in mind. He goes under the handle of Zom. He is a dark-haired guy, thin, of medium height, with a face like an axe-blade - at any rate, that's what it reminds me of. It is also perfectly deadpan. It needs to be. Zom's main stock-in-trade is parody, barbed with alternate broad humour and piercing wit. Over a soft guitar accompaniment, which he plays himself ("I hear rumours. People are saying I haven't got a guitar, since I borrow a different one every time I come to this club. Well, I have got a guitar. It's in hock."), he delivers his modernised fairy tales in jive talk, his talking blues, and his London adaptations of popular American traditional songs. Here, with due acknowledgement to a great performer, is a brief sample or two:

"I was born - in old East Grinstead;  
Aldgate High - Street I did roam..."

"Now I'm goin' to tell you the story 'bout David and Goliath...  
Now David...he looked after his father's flock of - women. Eveings he played amplified harp with King Sol and his City Swingers..."



Brunner (4)

One of these days someone with one of the big record companies is going to hear that man, and you will be saying 'Zom' in the same breath as Stan Freberg.

One of the most interesting things about the skiffle movement in town is that almost everyone directly connected with it, except for the really popular singers, who've had to move out of touch into the world of professional entertainment (and not even all those!) and those who have come from the latter field into the skiffle field for a quick bit of cashing-in, maintains a real liking for the music and its performers. At the Skiffle Cellar you will usually spot half a dozen people, well known in their own groups, who've come along to enjoy listening to the competition. Last night there was the leader of a South London group at the Cellar, a girl from John Hasted's old folk-song group, a washboard player and vocalist from yet another group - and that was a Sunday, a busy night. I recall one time when three of the Vipers, one of the two or three most commercially successful outfits in the country, who had been topping the bill at one of London's leading variety theatres, dropped in to hear the Ramblers sing and play.

My good friend Chas McDevitt, currently on a very successful variety tour in the north and midlands, has unfortunately been the first person to suffer from a trend which has become a regrettable habit over here - that of taking composer-credit on an arrangement of a tune which is believed to be traditional, without taking adequate steps to ensure that no composer is in fact known for it. His discing with Nancy Whisky of Freight Train has, I hear, initiated a claim by a woman in the States for composer credit. While regretting that it happens to Chas, I feel that the tendency to appropriate material haphazard is not a sensible one, and I hope that when this case comes up for judgement (at the time of writing I do not know if it has even been heard), it will clarify the confused situation.

As it stands, I gather, the arranger of a traditional tune is entitled to the same royalties as the composer if it is recorded. That is all right in the case of - for example - Johnny Dankworth's Experiment with Mice, which was a treatment of Three Blind Mice in just about every conceivable jazz style. But when traditional folk-songs become a popular trend, someone is bound to make a mistake in deciding what is, and what isn't, traditional. Remember Home on the Range?

To append a personal note in conclusion: I help a party a few nights ago, and the company enjoyed contributions to an impromptu midnight cabaret from singers and musicians known and unknown. Joy Hymen, a Jewish girl who sings and plays guitar (there were so many guitars it looked like a fretted instrument player's convention! I counted nine in the apartment at the peak time) started us off with Banyon, Dink's Song, Villikins, and an Israeli song I wouldn't dare to try and spell. Another friend of mine - also, by coincidence, a Jew - Michael Myer, then treated us to I Know My Love, Caviar, and an interminable but excellent version of that queen of border ballads, Eppie Morrie. He is, alas, no Ewan MacColl...



Brunner (5)

We were also fortunate in having with us Hyam Morris, who, after being a member and leader of various skiffle groups around town, is now doing cabaret as a solo artist and who rounded off the proceedings nicely. As well as a couple of American songs - Bowling Green and Hi Liley Liley Lo - he did Calypso Blues, a West African-French song called Curri Curri; a ridiculously funny Italian "folksong, which I learned from an Italian folk", Lo Tremendo Nicolai; something French which I've forgotten, and more. It was a small-scale world tour in song.

John Brunner  
London August 1957

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EXCERPTED FROM A LETTER FROM JOHN:

...I found the following charming fragment which I have never run across...

"We are three brethren out of Spain,  
Come to court your daughter Jane."  
"My daughter Jane she is too young  
She has not learned her mother tongue."

"Be she young or be she old,  
For her beauty she must be sold;  
So fare you well, my lady gay,  
We'll call again another day."

"Turn back, turn back, thou scornful knight,  
And rub thy spurs till they be bright."  
"Of my spurs take you no thought,  
For in this land they were not bought.  
So fare you well, my lady gay,  
We'll call again another day."

"Turn back, turn back, thou scornful knight,  
And take the fairest in they sight."  
"The fairest maid that I can see  
Is pretty Nancy, come to me."

"Here comes your daughter safe and sound,  
Every pocket with a thousand pound,  
Every finger with a gay gold ring,  
Please to take your daughter in."

Now it seems to me that this may be a children's game - like Nuts in May or Kiss in the Ring or Postman's Knock. But the phrasing, especially the 'scornful knight' and the three brethren, suggests a ballad origin. No commentary, explanation, source or instructions for playing the game, if it is a game, is given.

If you have, or can locate anything similar in any collection, preferably with its tune, I'd really be glad if you would let me have it. This fascinates me; in particular, I think the last verse given here is one of the most charming I have run across in the field.

John Brunner, inquirer



## The Last Word

First off, thanks very much for the response on CARAVAN #1. It is most gratifying to be so well received. I had doubts about the reception something of this sort would get. After all, a folkmusic fanzine...? But your letters, and the comments from members of the New York group, reassure me. So you now have in hand the second issue of CARAVAN.

As to news items: I have <sup>been</sup> confined with a virus for a couple of weeks, and unable to circulate and pick up local news. Nary so much as an unfounded rumor to report. If you have some news pertinent to the field, why don't you drop me a line about it? Any sort of news: free plugs for forthcoming events, etc.

Regarding material, I am advised to impress upon you the fact that CARAVAN is dependant on its readers for articles. With a staff of one editor and two staff writers, the lack of outside contributions could easily lead to stagnation. This month, we are proud to have two articles by non-staff members, who feel the urge to Say Something. Admittedly, this is a non-profit operation and cannot pay its contributors, but we do promise you a readership of interested people in various corners of the world. (Although our readership at present is concentrated in the NY and London areas, we do reach readers in three countries and such obscure locations in the US as North Manchester, Indiana.) And we will be glad to mail sample copies of CARAVAN to anyone who you think might be interested. Just send us the names and addresses. Send us your name and address too, if you want to receive CARAVAN by mail, in a plain envelope.

In Manhattan, CARAVAN is available at FOLKLORE CENTER, at 110 MacDougal Street, where you can also browse an excellent assortment of folklore literature and folkmusic records (and maybe even buy something). Also, if you see me in Washington Square on Sunday afternoon, I'll probably have a few spare copies with me, and if I do you're welcome to 'em.

And remember, any letters of comment (or otherwise) will be considered for publication, unless clearly marked not for prying eyes. The term DNQ (Do Not Quote) is adequate.

A reader suggests that we might like to operate a folkmusic exchange: that is, if you want the words to something, or information about some song, or the like, you write to us, and we'll publish your request, and maybe some reader will have the info you want and send it along, and then we can either publish it or send it on to the requestor. Well, such a policy seems to have gotten itself under way without nudging...see the letters from John Brunner and Irwin Lutzky...so if you have questions to ask, or can answer the questions asked herein, how about writing?



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