

**WORKING MY LIFE AWAY**



**Magpie**

# Magpie Sings WORKING MY LIFE AWAY

A magpie is the name of a bird which makes a lot of noise, but the Magpie is the name of a guitar-picking, harmonica-blowing, dulcimer-plucking duet who make beautiful music. Folk, country, blues, jazz, ragtime, old-timey pop—you name it, Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino will play and sing it.

How good is Magpie? Here is critic Colin Irwin writing in the influential British magazine, *Melody Maker*:

Fresh over from Washington, DC, the duo Magpie responded to their first British festival with a couple of superb sets, sending tremors down the spine by yodelling in harmony, and warming the soul with an eclecticism that embraced Jimmie Rodgers, Billie Holiday and their own material...they are simply, absolutely, unequivocally wonderful. They'll thrill you to your boots, melt your heart...

And the entertainment newspaper of Washington, D.C., the *Unicorn Times*, adds: "Ah, but Magpie is tasty. Their material is a rainbow of contemporary and traditional folk-blues-ballad classics, the roots of which stem from perhaps the real heart of every country in the world. A real heart which Terry and Greg put into and take out of every song they sing."

But enough bragging. Listen to the record and judge for yourself.

Collector Records, which specializes in songs of labor, work, protest and social commentary, is proud to add *Working My Life Away* to its catalogue. Write for free brochure which describes songs of coal miners, textile workers, railroaders, sailors, lumberjacks, working women, and other working folk.

Joe Glazer



## INSTRUMENTATION:

Terry Leonino

Vocal on all selections, guitar on "Working Girl Blues", harmonica, fretted dulcimer, and mandolin.

Greg Artzner

Vocal on all selections, English concertina on "The Chemical Worker's Song", guitar on all selections except "I Ain't Got No Home In This World Anymore."

Rolly Brown

Guitar on "The Jute Mill Song" and "Bracero".

Carolyn Kellock

String Bass on "Spinning Mills Of Home" and "Working Girl Blues".

Produced by Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino for Collector Records.

Engineered by Jim Robeson at Bias Recording Studio, Springfield, Va.

Recorded 1/26, 2/9, and 2/27/1982

Special Thanks to John and Cheryl Luntz and Joe Glazer

Design by David Whitmore, Dorothy Fall/Graphic Design

**COLLECTOR RECORDS**  
1604 Arbor View Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20902



## SIDE ONE:

**FIELD HAND MAN** by Alton and Rabon Delmore. The Delmore Brothers were well known performers of country music in the 1930's and '40's. They wrote many fine songs about life in the South. This one is a cheerful, euphemistic portrayal of life as a field hand along the Southern Mississippi.

**THE L & N DON'T STOP HERE ANYMORE** by 'Than Hall. 'Than Hall is penname for Jean Ritchie, often called the first lady of American folk music. Born and raised in Perry County, Kentucky in the heart of America's coal mining region, she has written many songs about the effects of mining on the lives of miners and their families. This haunting tune paints a portrait of unemployment and frustration after the closing of an underground mine in the wake of expanding strip mine operations. "Cudsy" vines mentioned in the third verse are Japanese cudsu, imported as a ground cover for spoilbanks from new highways and strip mines.

**I AIN'T GOT NO HOME IN THIS WORLD ANYMORE** by Woody Guthrie. Our arrangement of Woody Guthrie's classic tune about sharecropping was born out of one of our extended road trips, when unaccompanied songs are often worked out, and sometimes a song normally played with accompaniment finds an a capella arrangement out of necessity. Woody Guthrie wrote about sharecropping:

"...I reckon us croppers lives just about as next to nothin' as a body can. Cain't even hardly git enough snuff n' tabaccer ta kill our miseries. But this very mornin' I was just a tellin' my little bunch that as long as you got sharecropping you gonna have troubles that snuff ner tabaccer neither one cain't cure."

**JUTE MILL SONG** by Scottish songwriter Mary Brooksbank. Mary Brooksbank, who worked for years in a Dundee jute mill, plaintively describes that work in this beautiful tune. About this work she also wrote:

"The life of the women workers of Dundee right up to the thirties was...a living hell of hard work and poverty. It was a common sight to see women, after a long ten hour day in the mill, running to the stream wash houses with the family washing. They worked up to the last few days before having their bairns."

Mary Brooksbank died in 1978. We learned the song from our good friend Holly VanAuken, who had it from Kerry Blech and Andy Cohen.

**BRACERO** by Phil Ochs. From the late forties until the early sixties, the U.S. Government and the government of Mexico cooperated in a program to provide Mexican farm workers with work visas so they could travel into Southern California to work in the fields. For many poor Mexicans this was a golden opportunity to make more money than they ever had. The program was called "Bracero". The word "bracero" came, however, to mean any Mexican migrant worker in this country, here legally or illegally. This song tells of some of the problems these illegal immigrants faced in their struggle to make a better life for themselves and their families. Phil Ochs was one of America's greatest writers of protest and topical songs. In the sixties he was the voice of a generation of Americans who opposed their government's policies in Vietnam. Phil Ochs ended his own life April 9, 1976.

**WINNSBORO COTTON MILL BLUES** Penned by an unknown mill hand in Winnsboro, North Carolina sometime during the 1920's, this song borrows its tune from "Alcoholic Blues", also well known during those days. The tune has survived oral tradition and was set to another lyric by electrical workers in Wausau, Wisconsin, during a strike in 1952.

## SIDE TWO:

**HARD TIMES** We first learned this tune from Canadian singer Margaret Christl. The Canadian version has five verses which are specifically about the life of Newfoundland fishermen. Our adaptation deals with working people in general. Other versions of the song have been sung in the United States, and it was well known during the depression of the thirties.

**SPINNING MILLS OF HOME** by Si Kahn. This song deals with a subject Terry and I have experienced working in factories in Northeastern Ohio. Many Northern factory towns are populated by displaced Southerners, who came looking for work after losing their jobs in the South for one reason or another, the closing of a mine or a textile mill. In this case, the textile mill worker from a Southern state heads for Gary, Indiana, looking for work in the rolling mills. Si Kahn is a songwriter and labor organizer from North Carolina. He has written many songs about the lives of working men and women, and has recorded three fine albums of them.

**CHEMICAL WORKER'S SONG** by Ron Angel. Ron Angel, a singer from England's industrial Northeast, writes here of his own experiences in one of the many chemical plants in that part of the country. We have the song from our friend Bill Whitman who learned it from English folksinger Vin Garbutt.

**MRS. MACDONALD'S LAMENT** (Windsaway) by Gordon Bok. A lifelong resident of the Maine coast, Gordon Bok has written many beautiful tunes and songs of the sailors and fishermen among whom he grew up. This song deals with the increasingly difficult life of the small time fishermen, whose livelihood is threatened with extinction as a result of various factors including over-fishing, and pollution, as well as governmental and economic factors. As in "Spinning Mills Of Home", these people are often forced to leave their homes and their way of life behind, just to make a living.

**WORKING GIRL BLUES** by Hazel Dickens. Born in West Virginia, the daughter of a Baptist preacher, Hazel Dickens has lived a life steeped in traditional music. This song deals with all types of jobs, all with one thing in common: the exploitation of the workers for the sake of profit.

Notes on the Songs written by MAGPIE

## Side one:

Field Hand Man	2:51
The L & N Don't Stop Here Anymore	3:47
I Ain't Got No Home In This World Anymore	2:10
The Jute Mill Song	3:21
Bracero	5:11
Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues	2:43
	20:03

## Side two:

Hard Times	3:22
Spinning Mills Of Home	3:39
Chemical Worker's Song	2:39
Mrs. MacDonald's Lament (Windsaway)	4:21
Working Girl Blues	4:05
	18:06

## STEREO

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