FAST FOLK

MUSICAL

MAGAZINE

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Dear Editor:

As someone who was raised on folk music, I have been following with interest the discussion that has gone on in the pages of Fast Folk about what folk music is. It seems to me that one way to approach the question is not so much to ask what qualifies as folk music and what doesn't. (Though in a historical sense it is probably helpful to recognize the different strains of folk music that have evolved). Rather it seems more useful to ask what is the purpose that musicians and audiences attach to the music.

One of the major purposes I at least have always associated with folk music is communication. Communication on a personal, down to earth, face-to-face level. It is a way to keep folks in touch with each other. Something that mass technology is incapable of doing, since it needs to package and distribute goods on a mass scale.

Now, if communication for people is assumed to be a major purpose of folk music, then several related issues come to mind. First, the style and technique of the music takes on a distinctive flavor. Often folk music has been set off by its regional ties. Obviously this has helped musicians to appeal to their audiences. It is the language people know and understand best.

Another issue that always seems to come up is what are the links between folk music and politics. The role folk

music played in the 1960s and earlier has obviously created quite a legacy. In some ways this legacy has made rigid demands on what is acceptable. The folk music scene has at times seemed limited to a certain set of common topics. The idea that folk music is about communicating, though, opens up a whole other conception of what is political. Folk music is about talking about everyday life. It seems to me that just to talk about real lives today is a potentially radical thing.

Because of an overly narrow conception of the relationship between folk music and politics, a whole range of important topics has often been ignored. Yes, songs about the starving, the suffering, and the afflicted are important. But for middle America this is not something that is usually confronted (even in the era of Reaganomics). By relating to the experiences of everyday folks and what they are confronted with in their lives, a song is political. I think the classic Tom Paxton song, "What Did You Learn in School Today?" is an example of folk music reaching out and communicating to people about political topics without reciting anyone's political agenda.

Another issue that I have seen discussed in these pages is the question about commercial success. As one writer asked, if country music can make it, why not folk music? Now it seems to me that folk musicians have every bit as much right to eat as those that are not musicians. Audiences have

a (moral and political and not just legal) responsibility to pay for what they hear. The question is, though, now to keep the balance between communicating with folks and trying to appeal to the record comp. executives. For me, folk music is what it is because it has stressed the former. Country music has become associated with Nashville because it has stressed the latter.

All the great folk musicians were great communicators. They chose their styles and techniques with an eye on how to talk to people sitting in front of them. And I think these musicians were political because they addressed themselves to folks' experiences. Often their songs did not explicity say anything political: the way our society is today, it is often

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178 W. HOUSTON STREET SUITE 9 NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10014 |212| 989-7088

Editor: Jack Hardy
Associate Editor: Nancy Talanian
Recording Engineer: Mark Dann

Graphics Director: Jeff Tiedrich Photography Editor: Alan Beck Graphics Contributors: Alan Beck, Barry Fingerhut, Chuck Hancock, Germana Pucci

Contributors: Bonnie Jo Blankinship, Gary Boehm, Roger Deitz, Paul Kaplan, Bob Killian, Richard Meyer, Dan Mozell, Rick Nestler, Grant Orenstein, Angela Page, Brian Rose, Sherwood Ross, Steve Stanne, Ned Treanor

Media Consultant: Sherwood Ross
Legal Consultant: Ray Korona
Subscriptions and
Correspondence: Tom Nash,
Dianne Nash, Pat Cambouris
Sales Manager: Germana Pucci
Advertising: Nancy Talanian

Production Staff: Steve Alexander, Ruth Ann Brauser, Jay Byrd, Marilyn Lavender, Emory Lavender, Tom McGhee, Angela Page, Germana Pucci, Jay Rosen, Rob Strachan, Bob Zaidman

Cover illustration by John Hardy

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what is not discussed that is most in need of being dug up and talked about. It is what lies dormant and uncritically accepted in our lives that are often the most political issues around us. Finally, while success is important for folk musicians to survive, it has traditionally not been the end at which the music is aimed; rather, it is a means. All of the above just serves to widen the definition of folk music. Perhaps, though, it suggests where the music's roots lie.

Sincerely,

Larry Jacobs New York City

Gentlemen:

I have just finished reading the fine article, "A New Jersey Folkie in King Willie Nelson's Court," by Roger Deitz. I must say that this was one of the most down-to-earth and humorous pieces I have read in a long time. This type of narrative easily lends itself to your magazine, and Mr. Deitz is to be congratulated for the readability of his product.

If you continue using articles like this, your magazine will certainly be a success. At this time, let us convey to you our best wishes for success of your new magazine.

Cordially yours,

Mike Longworth C.F. Martin & Co., Inc. Nazareth, Pennsylvania

Dear Fast Folkers,

I was very happy to hear of your acquisition of the CooP subscription lists, and your obvious intentions to follow in the noble tradition of The CooP. I look forward to continuing my subscription to the musical magazine for as long as it is available. This unique opportunity to sample the talents of some of today's premiere songwriters would be a bargain at any reasonable price, let alone the absurdly economical \$4 per issue.

Sincerely,

Roy D. Hasselman Weare, New Hampshire

Dear Fast Folk,

I'm writing to tell you just how much I enjoyed the first (and definitely not the last) Fast Folk Concert at The Bottom Line. I myself am a musician from Scotland and an avid fan of live folk music in its various renditions and forms.

I thought the quality of music was high throughout and I relished the variety of the programme and the warmth that was generated.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Nyman Brooklyn, New York

Dear Folk.

I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed your Bottom Line get together. It really was fantastic music, some of the best I've ever heard. Thanks for a great evening of talent.

Sincerely,

Mindi B. Shelow Flushing, New York

Dear Fast Folks,

Congratulations once again for the wonderful show at The Bottom Line. It was a great pleasure to see all your efforts come to fruition in such an event. May this be only the beginning.

Best wishes,

John Gorka Easton, Pennsylvania

Dear Jack:

Longevity is <u>not</u> a key to greatness:
Robert Frost says that the way to tell
if a poem is great is not to wait, but
to test how it makes you respond. Did
the hair on the back of your neck rise
up when you first understood what it
was you were listening to in the songs
of Stan Rogers? Well, then. His early
death is dreadful, yes, robbing us as
it did of a great young artist who
might well have gone from strength to
strength, as he had already so clearly
done in his all-too-brief, tragically
truncated career; but of his real
power, there is already no doubt.

I enclose for your edification a copy of The Folk Life Quarterly featuring the interview with Stan Rogers which I conducted on the grounds at Mariposa some years ago. I would also refer you to the Audio magazine review of Fogarty's Cove, where I'd coined 'Alan Lightstep' as my name for what the biggies would have wanted of Stan Rogers. As someone who knew, respect-

ed, and admired Stan Rogers, I think you have your fucking nerve, frankly.

John McLaughlin Dept. of English East Stroudsburg U. Stroudsburg, PA

(Ed. Note: The above letter refers to an article published in The CooP, July/August 1983.)

Editor's Reply

Mr. McLaughlin:

I am afraid your admiration for Stan Rogers led you to misunderstand my comments after his death. Your own review, which you so kindly sent me, states what I said myself: that had he tried to make his name through regular record companies, he would have either been ignored or forced to change that quality which made him unique.

Stan Rogers's talent is not in doubt. When I spoke of him as no longer being a threat, I meant that in the context of the whole scene which consists of writer/performers who both admire and are jealous of those who do produce, and live up to their potential.

It is to Stan Rogers's credit that he transcended regional styles and stereotypes to build an audience of record buyers as well as a growing number of performers interpreting his musical legacy.

Jack Hardy

errata

In the staff box of Vol. 1, No. 1, the name of Ruth Ann Brauser should have appeared under "Production Staff." Ruth Ann typed a large portion of that issue. Our apologies for the error.

Also in Vol. 1, No. 1, John Gorka's song was improperly titled "I Saw a Stranger with Your Hair." The actual title is "Their Feet Don't Touch the Ground."



FAST FOLK CONCERT AT THE BOTTOM LINE

On Saturday night, January 28, The Bottom Line in Greenwich Village hosted its first evening of Fast Folk and CooP artists. Masters of ceremonies Jack Hardy and Christine Lavin were joined by ten other performers who sang songs they'd recorded for either The CooP or The Fast Folk Musical Magazine during the past two years.

The enthusiastic response to the evening's music from capacity crowds at both shows in the 400-seat club was gratifying to both the performers and the staff of Fast Folk. The evening was successful in showing new audiences that good songs are being written and performed in the 1980s.

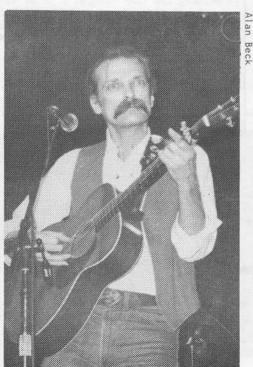
Selections from the show will appear on an upcoming issue of Fast Folk.



Offstage, Jack Hardy, Chuck Hancock, and Christine Lavin talk



Lucy Kaplanski



Erik Frandsen



Carolyn McCombs



THE SOJOURNER SINGERS

by Rick Nestler

It happens now and again. I'll be playing somewhere and when I take a break somebody says, "I hear you're a Sojourner Singer." Although this question never ceases to surprise me, it shouldn't, for the Sojourner Singers don't try to keep a low profile. A problem arises, however, when this simple statement sets off a chain of answers that I never have time to finish. So I guess this is my chance.

First of all, the name. Sojourner Truth was born a slave in Eddyville, New York. She later moved to Hurly, New York, and was freed by state proclamation in 1827. She then launched a career as a lecturer, speaking out most often against the evils of slavery. After the Civil War, she continued her work, but focused her efforts toward women's suffrage. Not a bad person at all to name a folk-singing group after. But that's not exactly where we got it. You see, we all work and sail a boat named for Sojourner Truth.

The Sojourner Truth is a 32-foot, Hudson River ferry sloop. For the sailors, Sojourner is a gaff-rigged, centerboard sloop designed by Cyrus Hamlin as a one-third-scale version of the Clearwater. The hull was laid up in Maryland in 1978 by Jake Bowers of Ferry Boat, Inc. She was then trucked to Kingston, New York, where Pete Seeger gathered an enthusiastic, if somewhat disorganized, crew to continue the work. From this evolved the Ferry Sloop Project, which became an all volunteer organization known as Ferry Sloops, Inc., the purpose of which was to finish and eventually sail the Sojourner. The boat was transferred to Yonkers where work continued for a year. Sojourner was finally launched in August 1981. She was towed to Hastings-on-Hudson where she was fitted out over the next year.

Sojourner Truth first sailed in August 1982, and she has just finished her maiden sailing season, which began with a Shad Run from Albany to New York City. In addition to the festivals on the Shad Run, Sojourner has made appearances at festivals on the Raritan River and at Sandy Hook, New Jersey. She was also the basis of a free sail training program held three nights a week when in her home port of Hastingson-Hudson.

Again, the boat is owned and operated by an organization called Ferry Sloops

Inc., P.O. Box 529, Yonkers, New York 10702. It's an all-volunteer organization dedicated to environmental education, sail training, and giving a historical background to daily existence. You might wonder what this has to do with a musical group that sings folk songs.

Well, here's the story. It takes a lot of work to keep a boat afloat. Nobody gets paid, so that means we need a lot of physical labor, done for free. With no pay, we need a lot of people to do a little work, rather than a few folks who do a lot. Ken Ekkens runs a commercial graphics firm, Steve Tepper works in the clothing trade, Maryellen Healy is an educator and sometime deckhand on the Clearwater. Lorna McKinnon is a

wildlife curator at a nature center. There are others who play in the group, but basically, the thing that they all have in common is the fact that they all sail on and maintain the Sojourner Truth.

The Sojourner Singers came into being when we found that making musical appearances helped further the cause and raise money for the boat. We don't claim to be a professional musical entity. Rather, we are the folks that "can build 'em, rig 'em, sail 'em, break 'em, fix 'em, and we deliver!" We simply like to get together to sing and play tunes we like to think will help make this world a little bit better to live in. If you have any more questions, compliments, or complaints, you can call the Sojourner Landline at (914) 478-1557 or Maryellen Healy at (914) 949-4632.

HUDSON RIVER SLOOP SINGERS

by Ned Treanor

As an adjunct to the warbling crew members of the various Hudson River sloops -- the Clearwater, the Woody Guthrie, and the Sojourner Truth--still another brand of environmental balladeer has emerged, a sort of hybrid: namely, the Hudson River Sloop Singer. Some crew a lot, while others rarely if ever leave dry land. Some live on the water, while others are teachers, housewives, psychologists, engineers, therapists, carpenters, lawyers, managers, salespeople, secretaries, writers, editors, craftspeople, cab drivers, technicians, actors, computer programmers, and other adherents to the traditional 9-to-5 work ethic, who only occasionally venture aboard ship to experience the lure of the "bounding main." Some are professional musicians; others are nonprofessionals. But one thing that is common to all is their love of the environment and their dedication to do something to combat the wholesale destruction of our planet that we've come to embrace and been so reluctant to change or even admit to.

Begun by Pete Seeger some fifteen years ago, the group functioned as the musical crew of the good ship Clearwater until, through changes in personnel and scope, its purpose was reoriented toward fund raising for a variety of environmental concerns rather than only those championed by Clearwater, Inc. The Sloop Singers, however, still perform at a great number of Clearwater

events, such as the annual Great Hudson River Revival, the Sandy Hook Festival, and a number of festivals throughout the summer commemorating berries, corn, and pumpkins.

Numbering in excess of five dozen, and functioning without a formal statement of purpose, or even a "leader" as such, the group's members are kept informed by means of a monthly newsletter that apprises them of its various gigs that they may choose to attend as their personal schedules permit, making for an interesting smorgasbord of individuals, rather than a folk chorus. This enables the group to showcase a wide range of original and traditional material, performing styles, and abilities, giving them a unique character.

For instance, during the 18 months that I penned the newsletter and produced the majority of the group's functions, we added commercial club dates, telethons, cable TV, and a number of new causes to our list of performing credits, all of which generated additional audience for our environmental message. A five-person steering committee succeeded me in this role to further the group's ability to communicate to a broader segment of the population, while we still have a population to communicate to. Carrying this message is a lot of good music performed by people who give unselfishly of their time and talents to help make this world a better place for this generation and those to follow.



PHIL OCHS TRIBUTE

by Ned Treanor

It had been a while since we'd seen a crowd of this size turn out for an evening of Phil Ochs music. For a while, it was the sixties again, and we were back at the Gaslight, another MacDougal Street folk legend, remembering Phil's genius. My own contact with Phil several years ago had drastically altered the course of what I was then doing, so the evening's celebration held a special meaning for me. I doubt that I could offer any comments with regard to Phil that haven't already been said, perhaps more eloquently. I'd just like to state for the record that I was able to identify with his sense of commercial vs. crap; real vs. ideal; the placing of his beliefs above money; his sense of humor, honor, and social commitment; his imagination, foresight, intelligence, vision, energy, patriotism, and courage; and the legacy that he left behind in his words and music.

On October 6, 1983, a large circle of Phil's friends, old and new, about 200 in number, came to pay tribute to a man whose music has improved with age, like a fine wine, turning SpeakEasy (a folk club in New York City) into a seething mass of groupies, in the most respectful sense of the word.

Sonny Ochs, Phil's sister, served as ringmaster for the event, showcasing some 30 performers in nearly four hours of nonstep entertainment. Also present were Phil's mother and brother Michael, along with Broadside magazine cofcunder Sis Cunningham among others of note.

Despite the crowded conditions, the audience was respectful and enthusiastic as they heard one fine rendition after another of nearly 40 of such Phil Ochs classics as "Changes," as done by Galen Brandt, Martha Wingate, and Bill Burnett, or the Washington Squares' version of "There But for Fortune," or Oscar Brand's handling of "Love Me, I'm a Liberal." Friend and protege Sammy Walker performed a couple of Ochs's standards, and then did one of his own, "Legend," in honor of Phil. One of Phil's strongest influences--Jim Glover, who had taught Phil to play the guitar and who was his partner in an early-sixties folk duo, the Sundowners, was on hand to sing us some of Phil's better known songs and to give us some of his earlier, unrecorded and unpublished works. Even I got caught up in the spirit of things and joined Glover, Sonny, and Jon Stein in a unique rendering of "That's the Way It's Gonna Be."

And so the evening went--David Massengill, Dave Sear, Debbie Rich, Rod Mac-Donald, Paul Kovit, Linda Russell, Rick Nestler, Peggy Atwood, Lydia Davis, Jim Price, and Lach each performed Phil's music as though they'd written it themselves, leaving the audience begging for more, a request that was granted by the likes of Joe Heukerott, Dan Einbender, Bobbie Wayne, Dan Mozell, and Marty Fink.

There is no way, in these few short sentences, to do true justice to this rare musical, emotional, and nostalgic event. It was truly an experience from beginning to end. A larger setting

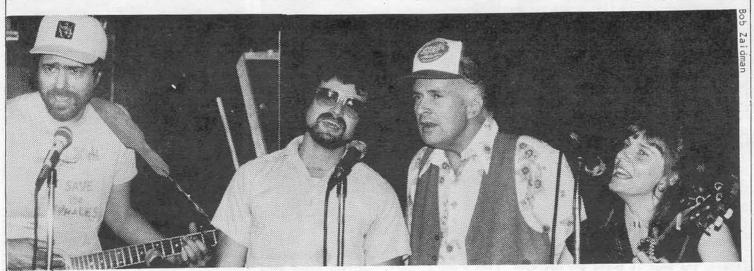
might have produced a greater financial return for whatever the good cause, but a greater evening of music and remembering and sharing and unity couldn't have been had anywhere at any price. I think that Phil would have been surprised and proud.

The CooP and The CooP Songbook
The Fast Folk Musical Magazine has
acquired the stock of back issues of The
CooP and The CooP Songbook, containing music and lyrics to most of the songs
recorded on The CooP between February
and November 1982.

Prices for each issue and for the Songbooks are \$8 in the U.S. and \$10 outside the U.S., postpaid. A catalog listing *CooPs* in stock and the songs recorded on each issue is available upon request with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

To order back issues or Songbooks, enclose a check or money order made payable to The Fast Folk Musical Magazine, and send it with your order to:

The Fast Folk Musical Magazine Inc.
Attention: Back Orders
178 West Houston Street, Suite 9
New York, New York 10014



Jim Glover, Jon Stein, Ned Treanor, and Sonny Ochs



BILL BACHMANN began his musical career with the ukelele at the age of five. He now plays a variety of instruments and has accompanied numerous songwriters and instrumentalists. His interests range from folk to bluegrass, rock, Middle-Eastern, Greek, and jazz.

OSCAR BRAND has continuously hosted a folk music program on radio station WNYC for the past 38 years. He was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His father had been an interpreter to the Indians in British Columbia for the Hudson's Bay Company, and his mother had been born to a family of Russian immigrants who had settled in Manitoba.

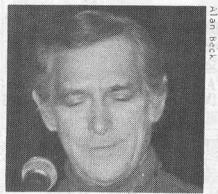
SHAWN COLVIN was born in South Dakota. Her father introduced her to guitar. She has been playing professionally since 1974, and lived in Canada, Illinois, and Texas before moving to New York City.

LYDIA ADAMS DAVIS has just released Gift of Story, her first cassette album of original songs. She was the harmony vocalist/arranger for Joe Heukerott's Bittersweet album. As a soloist with the Hudson River Sloop Singers, she has appeared on West-chester Cable TV and at the Great Hudson River Revival.



Lydia Davis

JIM GLOVER has spent most of his life in Cleveland. He attended Ohio State University in the early sixties, where he met Phil Ochs. The two sang in a duo called The Sundowners. He later went to New York City, where he performed as a solo artist before teaming up with Jean Ray, with whom he made three albums as the singing group Jim and Jean. Glover's most recent solo album is called No Need To Explain.



Oscar Brand

JACK HARDY has released five albums on the Great Divide label, some of which have been reissued by First American in this country and Pastels abroad. A sixth album, The Cauldron, is planned for release this spring. He was the editor of The Coop for two years, and is now the editor of The Fast Folk Musical Magazine.

BOB KILLIAN is a Clearwater Sloop singer who performs traditional songs and original compositions. His song on this issue, "There'll Come a Day," helped him to win a fellowship through the New Jersey Council of Arts.

ROD MACDONALD, 35, is a folksinger/songwriter from Connecticut. Rod lives in Greenwich Village and tours in the South, Midwest, and New England. He has an album, No Commercial Traffic.

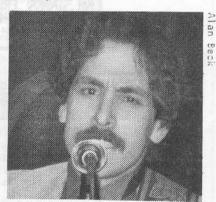


Rod MacDonald

RICK NESTLER has been performing and writing songs for over 14 years. He is a singing member of the crew of the Sojourner Truth, and also performs in concert halls, clubs, and coffee houses, and at the South Street Seaport.

PHIL OCHS was one of the major voices of the sixtles folk music era. Born in El Paso, Texas, in 1940, Phil was a political activist, an organizer, a traveler, and a poet who left a legacy of incisive topical songs before he took his own life in 1976.

DAVID ROTH, a native of Chicago, came to New York three years ago by way of Alaska. His heroes include Dan Fogelterg, Buskin & Batteau, Paul Winter, and Josh Joffen. Thanks to music, he is financially secure for the rest of his life, unless he needs to buy something.



Davis Roth

PETE SEEGER was born to a musical family in 1919, and learned to play banjo, guitar, and other instruments at an early age. His folk music career began when he assisted Alan Lomax for a year at the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song. He was a member of the singing groups the Almanac Singers and the Weavers. (The latter were blacklisted from commercial work during the McCarthy era for popularizing topical songs.) He helped form People's Songs, Inc., the forerunner of Sing Out! magazine. Today, Seeger continues to sing for the anti-nuclear movement, for world peace, and for jobs for all peoples. His songs express his understanding and hope for a better world.

SAMMY WALKER is from Norcross, Georgia. He arrived in New York in 1975, where he came to the attention of Broadside magazine and the late Phil Ochs. He has several albums on Warner Brothers. He now lives in upstate New York with his wife Carol.



SIDE ONE CREDITS SIDE TWO

- Next Door Neighbor (David Roth)
 David Roth/Vocal & Guitar
 Josh Joffen/Vocal & Guitar
 Mark Dann/Bass
- Lake Erie (Lydia Davis)
 Lydia Davis/Vocal & Guitar
 Delf Maria Hohman/Banjo
- The Preppie Anthem (Oscar Brand)
 Oscar Brand/Vocal δ Guitar
- 4. Legends (Sammy Walker)
 Sammy Walker/Vocal ε Guitar
- 5. Hands (Phil Gchs) ·
 Jim Glover/Vocal & Guitar
- *6. Every Living Thing (Rod MacDonald)
 Rod MacDonald/Vocal & Guitar
 John Kruth/Mandolin
 Mark Dann/Bass
 Tom Intondi/Vocal

- *1. I Don't Know Why (Shawn Colvin) Shawn Colvin/Vocal & Guitar Mark Dann/Bass
- The Blanket (Jack Hardy)
 Jack Hardy/Vocal & Guitar
 Jeff Hardy/Bass & Vocal
 Chris Hardy/Fiddle & Vocal
 Mark Dann/Guitar
 Howie Wyeth/Drums
- *3. Kandymann (Bill Bachmann) Bill Bachmann/Vocal & Guitar Frank Christian/Guitar Mark Dann/Bass Howie Wyeth/Drums
- 4. Broad Old River (Pete Seeger)
 Pete Seeger/Vocal & Banjo
 Dan Einbender/Guitar & Vocal
 Travis Jeffrey/Guitar & Vocal
 Al Nejmeh/Guitar & Vocal
 Steve Stanne/Dobro & Vocal
- 5. There'll Come a Day (Bob Killian) Bob Killian/Vocal & Guitar Pete Seeger/Banjo & Vocal Rick Nestler/Guitar & Vocal Steve Stanne/Dobro & Vocal Vocals--Maryellen Healy, Rita Falbel, Dan Einbender, Joe Heukerott
- 6. The River That Flows Both Ways (Rick Nestler) Rick Nestler/Vocal & Guitar Pete Seeger/Banjo & Vocal Steve Stanne/Dobro & Vocal

Note: All songs recorded live at SpeakEasy by Jay Rosen except (*) which was recorded by Mark Dann.