

FAST FOLK

M U S I C A L M A G A Z I N E

MARCH 1984

VOL. 1, NO. 3



FAST FOLK
MUSICAL MAGAZINE

PUBLISHED BY THE FAST FOLK MUSICAL MAGAZINE, INC.
A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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

Art & Photography Contributors:
Dennis Di Vincenzo, Chuck Hancock,
Richard Meyer, Germana Pucci, Bob
Zaidman

Literary Contributors: Bonnie Jo
Blankinship, Gary Boehm, Roger Deitz,
Jean Freedman, Paul Kaplan, John Kruth,
Christin Lavin, Bill Neely, Sonny Ochs,
Angela Page, W. Randall Poe, Byrne
Power, Brian Rose, Sherwood Ross, Ned
Treanor

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

Production Staff: Steve Alexander,
Ruth Ann Brauser, Jay Byrd, Lynn Lopes,
Rudy Lopes, Richard Meyer, Angela
Page, Germana Pucci, Jay Rosen, Rob
Strachan

Cover illustration (The March Hare)
by E.T. Steadman

erratum

Vol. 1, No. 1 of Fast Folk included a
song by Baby Gramps, which for lack of
a better title we called "We Don't
Play No Andrews Sisters." We recently
learned that the song is entitled
"I No, You No, We No Ditty."

THE FOLK REVIVAL

Perhaps I first suspected that there really was a "folk revival" when people started arguing in print as to when and where it started and who started it. I myself trace the beginning of the revival to the original Song Project show at Folk City in February of 1978, when a group got together to do a show of twenty-four songs by twenty-four area songwriters.

This was the first event that drew attention to the depth and scope of the new writers and the fact that there were new writers. This was also the first mention of a "folk revival" in print, when The Village Voice begrudgingly wrote an article about the "folkies" that wasn't about the sixties. But then again, I would trace it to an event in which I was involved, as well as to an event that had a definite altruistic bent to it.

Recently I read an article that traced the inception of the folk revival to the formation of the Washington Squares and the birth of the revival to the recent "acoustic" benefit of new wave artists at CBGB's. This article lauded the fact that none of the big name folkies were there (Paxton, Van Ronk, etc.). However, the show drew an audience because of "big name" artists such as David Johansen, Elliot Murphy, Lenny Kaye, and Steve Forbert.

What they are talking about here is revival in the commercial interest in folk music. Some people are still trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. How soon they forget that by the time the sixties folk revival hit prime time it was in a format that no one with a vague interest in folk music could stand to watch (such as the television show, "Hootenanny"), not to mention the fact that the show banned half the people who had actually brought about the revival.

In reality there is no revival, as folk music has never fully died out. It plugs along at the same rate as it always has as a natural counterbalance to the commercial music industry. Musicians can help create "scenes;" the press can pick up on these scenes and help create "fads," and the industry swoops in for the payoff. Nostalgia also plays heavily into the commercial interests.

This phenomenon may take on a cyclical nature, but in the long run it is irrelevant to the songwriters who pursue their art and their craft. Michael Jackson's album with its McDonaldland "30 million sold" sign is important to the industry. Yet they never keep statistics on Ed McCurdy's "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream," which has been translated into dozens of languages and has been heard by probably ten times 30 million people. They are not interested in that because they cannot profit from it. The press is often an arm of the capitalistic interests in a capitalist country, much in the same way that it is the party propaganda voice in a communist country. In the long run, little truth is gleaned from either.

The good songwriters will always be caught between a rock and a hard place. In the same way that they will never be accepted by the traditionalist or the purist (who forget that all songs were once written), they will just as readily be passed by by the commercial interests once the ball gets rolling, as their places are usurped by those who know the business and whose interests are not at all altruistic. But this is healthy and good for the writing (even if it is not healthy and good for the writer). It keeps the writing lean and hungry and aligned with the underdogs of society, for it is their voice.

But all this bantering in the press is good in that it lets all those "closet folkies" know that they are not alone. The recent Fast Folk Concert at The Bottom Line, also a minor media event, was significant in that it relied on no "big name" performers to sell out a commercial show. (Folk events usually only work well in a "benefit" format." The show at CBGB was a benefit (for the Bowery bums, proving that the Lord works in wondrous ways). Some day they may attribute the beginning of the folk revival to this or that event, or to a dozen others. That is unimportant. What is important is that the folk revival is here and here to stay in that it has never left.

Jack Hardy

from the Appalachians to New York

JEAN RITCHIE

by Jean Freedman

When Jean Ritchie came to New York in 1947, few people outside of the Appalachian Mountains had seen an Appalachian dulcimer. Some might have heard of it; the word, which means "sweet sound," is quite old. Few, however, were aware of the variety the dulcimer has; of dulcimers with different shapes and sizes, with three or four or six strings, or with an extra fret to break up the old modal tuning.

There is even a double dulcimer, made of two dulcimers connected like Siamese twins and constructed so that a couple can sit facing each other and both can play. This is called a "courting dulcimer," and the idea was that if the sound of the dulcimer could be heard, the courting couple did not need a chaparon.

The dulcimer is supposedly one of the easiest instruments to play. Yet, like many folk instruments, it is easy to learn and hard to make interesting. Jean Ritchie made it interesting by the very simplicity of her playing; the dulcimer is a simple instrument, and she did nothing that did not need to be done. She describes her varied and successful career with the same simplicity: "I just do it for love. If you do things for love, you'll never be disappointed."

The youngest of fourteen children, Jean Ritchie was born on December 8, 1922, in Viper, Kentucky, a tiny town

in the Cumberland Mountains. She comes from a farming family that believed in hard work and discipline and music. In the summer, the Ritchie family would sit on the front porch, and in the winter, around the fire, and they'd sing. They'd tell stories, too, sometimes, or talk about crops and farming and exchange information with whatever relatives happened to be visiting at the time. But they'd always sing, and by the time young Jean was able to join in, she had heard hundreds of songs.

They had no radios in the mountains of Kentucky in those days, no record players, no movies; and the television had not yet been invented. Books were expensive. The family and the church were the main social units. Village schools were a recent innovation; all but the two youngest members of the Ritchie family had to leave home to get a high school education. And the schools they attended, the so-called settlement schools, were built when the eldest Ritchie children were ready to attend them.

So singing was a major form of entertainment. Human beings, whatever else their questionable attributes may be, seem to need music and will get it any way they can. To Jean Ritchie and her family and friends, the best way was to learn songs from other people. The Ritchies had settled in Kentucky in the mid-1700's, and they always seemed to be a family that loved to sing. They sang the songs they had

known in England and taught them to their children, who in turn taught them to their children, and so on down the line. Every folklorist is familiar with this process. It's the classic method of learning folk songs.

In fact, some will say that only songs learned in this process are actual folk songs. All other songs in the folk idiom are imitations; only these, the "traditional songs," are genuine folklore. This division of song into the traditional and the composed is often a useful one, but it has one big flaw--all songs are composed. The people in the Kentucky mountains didn't blindly pass on songs word-for-word and note-for-note. "Barbara Allen" would not have dozens of versions if they had. Some anonymous creative soul composed "Barbara Allen" one fine day, and others have loved it and changed it as they saw fit. During her recent concert at Speak-Easy in Greenwich Village, Jean Ritchie would often say, "This is how we sang the song in my family," and then would mention other people who sang the same song but in a completely different version.

This is not to say that anyone who says he or she is writing a folk song is actually doing so. Nor is it to deny the special quality that Jean Ritchie brings to the stage. Since she did grow up with many of the songs she sings, she has the confidence that comes from a long and intimate association that still brings pleasure. She is a part of what she sings; it is her heritage and her life that she brings to the stage.

She writes songs, too--beautiful songs --but they have the same cadences and the same language and the same sensibilities as the older songs she sings; only their subject matter is occasionally different. She has great knowledge of her music and great musicality, but she sings totally without artifice or pretension or self-consciousness, as though she were back in the mountains singing with her friends.

In Jean Ritchie, pride and humility have struck a remarkable balance. She is proud of her heritage, yet humble about her own part in it. She is proud of the dulcimer, which she

CONTENTS

The Folk Revival--by Jack Hardy.....2
 Jean Ritchie: From the Appalachians to New York--by Jean Freedman...3
 Robin Williamson and The Incredible String Band--by John Kruth.....5
 Festival Preview.....5
 Bluegrass: Folk Music in Overdrive--by W. Randall Poe.....6
 People's Music Network Weekend--by Sonny Ochs.....8
 Musician's Nightmares--by Christine Lavin.....9
 Lyrics.....10
 Record Review--by Byrne Power and Roger Deitz.....14
 All Together Again Alone--by Roger Deitz.....15
 My Nephew, the Mogul--by Bill Neely.....16
 On the Record.....18



Bob Yahn

Jean Ritchie at the Philadelphia Folk Festival

brought from the mountains and shared with the rest of the world, yet she is not interested in taking the credit for its popularization. She is glad that we can hear the songs she sings, for the songs are worth hearing. She enjoys singing for us. But it's the songs and not the singer that interest her, and, paradoxically, that is one of the things that make her such a fine singer.

She originally came to New York to be a social worker. She was a recent graduate (Phi Beta Kappa) of the University of Kentucky and had come to work in the Henry Street Settlement, where people discovered that she could sing and play the dulcimer. Since then she has made more than 25 albums and given concerts all over the world.

She is an accomplished author as well; among her works are The Dulcimer Book, which probably did more to popularize the dulcimer than any other single thing, and Singing Family of the Cumberlands, which tells the story of her childhood. She and her husband have also recently formed a record

company, Greenhays Recordings. And yet she still finds the time to sing.

She is passionate about singing the songs of her own heritage. Sadly, not too many folksingers do so anymore. She tells about the days when the radio became a permanent resident of her Kentucky home, how everybody heard slick new songs and began to wonder about the old ones. All of a sudden, you could learn a new song without listening to somebody else sing. You could hear the same songs that city people knew. People stopped singing the old songs for awhile; some stopped for good. After hearing what can be done with trained musicians and electronic intervention, they found the old songs too ragged and homespun--and embarrassing.

This embarrassment, this reticence to sing the songs of one's own heritage seems to affect an awful lot of people. Of course, in America it makes a certain amount of sense; if many of us were to sing the songs of our ancestors, we would sing in languages unintelligible to most of those around us. Also, most Americans are in con-

tact with people of many different backgrounds--as those in the mountains of Kentucky are not--and the desire to understand and love another's culture is certainly a desire to be encouraged.

But it is not just an American phenomenon. I met children in a secluded backwater of western Ireland who knew "Banks of the Ohio" but not "The Wearing of the Green." And in an Amsterdam folk club, I heard a young singer do an entire program of American and English folk songs. It was a weird evening--he introduced all his songs in Dutch and sang them all in English. Perhaps the impulse that impels them is the same one that makes us hush up the secrets in our own family and delight in the secrets of our friends' families. Folk songs are like elderly relatives; we can appreciate and enjoy them so long as they belong to other people. We're not so confident when they are our own.

Of course, there are many fine singers who use a skillful combination of old and new songs. There are singers who sing the songs of their ancestors and the songs of other people's ancestors and the songs of people who have yet to be ancestors. And for the most part, I applaud the heterogeneity of most folk musicians. I love that they will sing a song about Vietnam (which they have never seen), a song about Grenada (which they have likewise never seen), and a song about making moonshine (which they have never done). I love that they sing about problems that no longer exist (all those ballads about the girl whose life is ruined because she had an illegitimate baby) and about locales they have seen only on summer vacations or in traveling from one big city to another.

This humanism, this desire to embrace all cultures, is one of the things that brought most of us to folk music in the first place. It would be false for most of us to affect some sort of ethnic pose; we are better off as commenters and impassioned song collectors.

But I have rarely been so moved as I was by Jean Ritchie, who doesn't comment on a culture but exists within it. Perhaps such folksingers will soon be gone; people have predicted so for hundreds of years. But there is no need for mourning yet. Jean Ritchie is still around, and she is, thank God, a consummate artist and not a museum piece.

a brief history

ROBIN WILLIAMSON AND THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND

by John Kruth

Way back in the sixties, in Ediburgh, Scotland, Robin Williamson formed The Incredible String Band with Mike Heron and Clive Palmer. Among them they played about 18 instruments--guitar, mandolin, fiddle, banjo, dulcimer, bass, sitar, bazooki, gimbri, oud, piano, organ, flute, penny whistle, jew's harp, harmonica, and gong.

The group's first album, produced by Joe Boyd (who also brought us Fairport Convention, Geoff and Maria Muldaur, the McGarrigle Sisters, Richard and Linda Thompson, and many others), was aptly titled The Incredible String Band and included one of Robin's greatest songs, "October Song," a rambling ballad of joy and sorrow, filled with rich poetic imagery. After the first album, Clive Palmer ventured off to Afghanistan and was never heard from again.

Williamson's "The First Girl I Loved" appeared on the second album, The 5,000 Spirits or the Layers of the Onion. It was quickly covered by Judy Collins on her album, Who Knows Where the Time Goes. A beautiful lament for a lost love, the song chronicles Robin's early days of "rushing around Britain with a guitar, making love to people I didn't even like to see." This album also included several other whimsical tunes by Robin and Mike Heron worth remembering, such as "Painting Box" and "No Sleep Blues."

A pair of eccentrics, their wild vision blossomed with their third album, considered by many to be their best--The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter. Nowhere have I ever found music that even resembled this synthesis of poetry and sound. They used the most unusual combination of instruments to accent their mysterious lyrics. Kazoos and harpsichords, all kinds of flutes and Middle Eastern stringed instruments weave colors and textures throughout the songs, which are about minotaurs and Chinese emperors who "wear iron shoes with ease." Humorous and surreal, "Part magic and part bullshit," as Robert Christgau wrote in his record guide, the String Band was an original pioneer in the field of acoustic music, fusing exotic instruments from around the world into its compositions.

Some time in 1974, after a dozen albums, the Incredibles broke up. After having undergone a number of personnel changes, Mike and Robin called it quits.

Mike produced an R&B-flavored album called Smiling Men with Bad Reputations, which came as a surprise to his fans. The album included the Van Morrison-inspired "Call Me Diamond," complete with horns.

Robin produced an odd LP for Island Records called Myrrh, which quickly vanished into oblivion. Soon after, he moved to California from his native Scotland, formed The Merry Band, which included Celtic harpist Sylvia Woods, and started to produce his most magnificent music in years. The Merries



produced three albums for Flying Fish Records and split. Robin lost no time, he packed up his instruments, which included Gaelic harp, guitar, cittern (a guitar-mandolin hybrid), penny whistle, Scottish border pipes, and harmonium, and hit the road, touring America and the British Isles as a one-man band. He's also been known to tell a story or two on stage, and can

weave a tale that will have audiences spellbound for 30 minutes at a time.

With the arrival of Songs of Love and Parting, Williamson's vision has never been stronger. Anywhere you drop the needle on this album, you are sure to find beautiful and haunting ballads that evoke powerful images of Scotland. The same longing that made "October Song" and "The First Girl I Loved" classics is present again in Robin's voice. It is clearly Williamson's best effort to date. His harp playing is magnificent. His ability to master any instrument is exceptional. The harp has opened up a new avenue of expression for this modern-day bard, and more great music is sure to follow.

suggested listening

Robin Williamson, Songs of Love and Parting, Flying Fish Records, FF257

Robin Williamson and His Merry Band, American Stonehenge, Flying Fish Records, FF062

The Incredible String Band, The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter, Elektra Records, EKS74021

FESTIVAL PREVIEW

Previews of spring/summer/fall folk festivals will be printed in upcoming issues of Fast Folk. But here is a preview of a very early festival.

THE NEW ORLEANS JAZZ AND HERITAGE FESTIVAL, April 27 to May 6. This is the festival's 15th year. Some of its performers are Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis, Dr. John, Pete Fountain, Johnny Rivers, Ray Charles, Al Green, Rita Coolidge, Grandmaster Flash, The Manhattan, Bill Monroe, Sonny Rollins, Roy Orbison, John Lee Hooker, Jerry Butler, Bo Diddley, the Meters, Steel Pulse, James Cotton, Clifton Chenier, Gatemouth Brown, Linda Hopkins, Percy Humphrey, Kid Thomas, Danny and Blue Lu Barker, Tuts Washington--over 3,000 musicians in all will perform. The music is presented in conjunction with a crafts fair. Booths will offer a variety of Louisiana cuisine. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to P.O. Box 2530, New Orleans, LA 70176, or call (504) 522-4786.

bluegrass

FOLK MUSIC IN OVERDRIVE

by W. Randall Poe

A few months ago I was on a New York radio station mid-morning talk show. We had just listened to a recording of Doc Watson playing "Black Mountain Rag" and I was explaining to the host that, although Doc is not exclusively a bluegrass musician, he is the person responsible for making the lead guitar a viable ingredient in the instrumental make-up of bluegrass music.

The host's response was, "Well, that's fascinating! By the way, what is bluegrass music?"

It was then that I suddenly realized I was a long way from my home town of Florence, Alabama. I took a deep breath and thought back to the first bluegrass record I ever bought--"Foggy Mountain Banjo" by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. The phrase I was desperately trying to recall was in the liner notes of that album.

When it finally came to me, I cleared my throat, sat up in my chair, leaned into the microphone and said, "Bluegrass, simply defined, is 'folk music in overdrive.'" This seemed to please the host as he smiled and began a different topic of discussion. I made a mental note to thank him after the show for not asking me to define folk music.

bluegrass roots

In the late 1800's the Appalachian Mountains were sparsely populated. The handful of people who inhabited this region--which stretches from northern Pennsylvania to northern Alabama--were rugged individuals who scratched out the dirt on the least hilly territory they could find and planted corn, beans, and the other staples necessary to sustain life.

It was a tolerable existence at best, and entertainment was almost impossible to come by. However, in the fall of the year, when the corn was ripe, the neighbors would gather in a centrally located barn and participate in yet another form of labor: corn shucking.

We country folk know well that corn doesn't grow from the ground in a can with a large green man wearing a Tarzan suit on the label. First it comes out of the ground on stalks. It then has to be pulled off the stalks, gathered and de-husked. Although there are de-husking machines nowadays, in the late 1800's it was done by hand. And it takes a mighty tough pair of hands to spend all evening pulling the husks off of hundreds of ears of corn. A job like this is so mundane that the farmers had no option but to turn the whole process into a party. Thus, the corn shucking party and barn dance was born.

On a warm September evening the whole neighborhood would gather in a barn and shuck corn as the local banjo and fiddle players livened up the proceedings by playing hoe-downs, interspersing the occasional hymn or ballad song as the night wore on.

This process was still going on by the 1920's. In the area of Rosine,

Kentucky, the musicians for a corn shucking party would often consist of a black guitarist named Arnold Schultz, a fiddler named Pendleton Vandiver, and a boy not yet in his teens who strummed the mandolin. His name was Bill Monroe.

the Arnold Schultz phenomenon

Arnold Schultz was born in Ohio County, Kentucky, in 1886. By 1900, at the age of fourteen, he had developed a finger-picking style which was later made popular by Merle Travis and is known today as Travis-picking. If Arnold Schultz had been white, his finger-picking style would probably now be referred to as Schultz-picking. Unfortunately, before Mr. Travis gained popularity, Arnold Schultz's guitar playing technique was called by the much less complimentary name of "nigger-picking."

Arnold Schultz was a wandering guitarist and singer who performed on riverboats up and down the Mississippi. He settled in Rosine



Bill Monroe

Courtesy MCA Records

for awhile and became a regional star.

Luckily for bluegrass fans today, Mr. Schultz's color was not an issue to the white string bands in and around Rosine. They frequently fought over who would be able to play with him at square dances and parties. One of those string bands which Arnold played with was headed by Pendleton Vandiver, a fiddler known throughout western Kentucky.

Bill Monroe and his Uncle Penn

Pendleton Vandiver was the brother of Malissa Monroe. His repertoire of fiddle tunes was remarkable, and he taught those tunes to Malissa's son Bill, who learned to play the old folk melodies on his mandolin.

Bill practically worshipped his uncle and even moved in with him after his own father passed away. From that moment on he spent all of his spare time committing to memory the old fiddle tunes Pen played. Today, sixty years later, Bill Monroe says he still remembers "about 95 percent" of the melodies Uncle Pen sawed out on his fiddle.

developing a style

As the years passed, Bill, with his brother Charlie on guitar, began to perform on local radio stations. In the era of the mid-1930's the "brother" act was perhaps the most popular combination in country music. Others included the Delmores, the McGees, the Bailes, and the Bolicks.

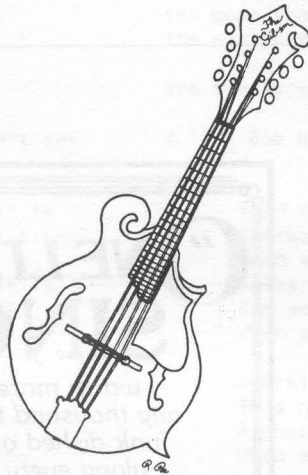
In 1936 the Monroe Brothers recorded a song on Victor Records called "What Would You Give in Exchange for Your Soul?" Their unique vocal style--a high lead with an even higher tenor harmony --brought them to immediate prominence. It was called the "high, lonesome sound" by Bill and became the backbone of bluegrass singing.

The Monroe Brothers recorded several sides for Victor Records before their personalities and musical tastes began to conflict. In 1938 they split up and Charlie went on to form Charlie Monroe's Kentucky Pardners, having much success as a commercial country music act.

Bill refused to use electric instruments, however, and instead put

together an acoustic string band consisting of Cleo Davis on guitar and vocals, Art Wooten on fiddle, and Amos Garin on string bass. Being from Kentucky, the Bluegrass State, he named his outfit Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys. And for the first time, Bill began to use his mandolin as more than a rhythm instrument. In the context of the new band, he was able to take improvisatory lead breaks just like the fiddler.

In October of 1939, Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys auditioned for the Grand Ole Opry. Bill was told by George D. Hay, the man who granted the audition, "If you ever leave the Opry, it'll be because you've fired yourself."



the great date debate

There are at least three different years which have been discussed by various folk music enthusiasts as the possible birth of bluegrass: 1936, 1940 and 1946.

On February 17, 1936, the Monroe Brothers recorded "What Would You Give in Exchange for Your Soul?" October 7, 1940, was the date of the first recording session held by Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys. At that session their unique version of "Mule Skinner Blues" was recorded with its high, lonesome sound and at breakneck speed, both of which are indigenous to bluegrass.

But on September 16, 1946, Bill's latest aggregation of Blue Grass Boys returned to the studio to record "Will You Be Lovin' Another Man?". The band consisted of Lester Flatt on guitar and vocals; Chubby Wise on fiddle; Howard Watts on string bass; and Earl Scruggs on banjo, whose three-finger picking

style added the final link to the bluegrass sound.

bluegrass defined

Bluegrass, then, is an extremely disciplined musical form. The vocal harmonies are of the high, lonesome style developed by Bill and Charlie Monroe. The tempo of the numbers is generally fast-paced and frequently includes improvisatory solos on the mandolin, fiddle, banjo, and, in more recent years (thanks to Doc Watson), the guitar.

So, the next time someone asks you to define bluegrass, tell them it's "folk music in overdrive." Better yet, have them listen to the early recordings of Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys.

© 1984 by W. Randall Poe. All rights reserved.

Announcing a New Release from the Great Divide Catalog:

**Jack Hardy
The Cauldron**

Available from:



178 West Houston Street, Suite 9
New York, New York 10017

\$8 ppd., \$10 ppd. outside the U.S.
(U.S. funds payable on a U.S. bank only).

PEOPLE'S MUSIC NETWORK WEEKEND

by Sonny Ochs

Charlie King, one of the founders of the group, says, "The People's Music Network of Songs of Freedom and Struggle has a membership list even longer than its name." The seven hundred and fifty member organization began its existence in 1977, and has rapidly grown to its present size.

What is the Network? It is a conglomeration of songwriters, political activists, radio people, promoters, coffee house operators, and anyone who has more than just a listening interest in political music. They meet twice a year to exchange music and ideas by attending workshops and an unbelievable songfest called the Round Robin, which is the highlight of the weekend on Saturday night (and into Sunday morning). The January weekends are held in different cities each year. The June weekends are held at a summer camp.

I have attended the last three weekends; the most recent was held in Boston on January 27-29. During that weekend more than two hundred people converged, bringing new songs, albums, tapes, books, and whatever. Some had to be turned away. People came from everywhere, including Vancouver, Toronto, Austin, Philadelphia, Birmingham, Chicago, Florida, and West Germany (and of course New York City and New England). Some of the people who participated were Marcie Boyd, Lydia Davis, Mike Glick, Judy Gorman-Jacobs, Charlie King, Betsy Rose, Pete Seeger, Serious Bizness, and Fred Small.

People attend these weekends for various reasons. My main reason is to gather new material for my radio show. There is such a wealth of talent at these weekends! The proceedings are taped by the New Song Library (an archive that tries to preserve folk music). The New Song Library sells tapes of all segments of the weekend--workshops and the Round Robin. New Song Library is located at P.O. Box 295, Northampton, MA 01061. Telephone (413) 586-9485.

If you are considering attending one of these extravaganzas, be prepared to be frustrated. The problem is that there are usually around five workshops going on simultaneously, and it is difficult to choose which

one to attend. Topics range from "Reaching the Media" to "Songs of Peace."

The Boston weekend opened on Friday night with a rousing Multi-Cultural Song Fest, and ended with a "Songs of Spirit" gathering on Sunday. One of the highlights of the Friday performance was a song written by Betsy Rose, which used the words said by Mel King during his mayoral campaign in Boston. He said, "We may have come here on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now." This song is the cover song for the March issue of Broadside magazine.

Attending an event such as a Network weekend makes you realize that folk and protest music are very much alive, and you are not alone in your frustration with the powers that be. If you are interested in being a part of the Network, it's easy. Just send your name, address, and telephone number, and a short musical autobiography, plus \$5.00 to: Charlie King, 158 Cliff Street, Norwich, CT 06360.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the next weekend, which will be held on June 8-10 at Camp Thoreau near New Paltz, New York.

"ONE LITTLE ISSUE OF SING OUT!

is worth more to this humanly race than any thousand tons of other dreamy, dopey junk dished out from the trees & forests along every Broadway in this world."

Woody Guthrie said that over 30 years ago, and we're still going strong!

We're now a quarterly. . . with at least 15 songs per issue, by people like Tom Paxton, Joe Heaney, Gil Scott-Heron, Holly Near, Malvina Reynolds, Jean Redpath, Peggy Seeger, Happy Traum, Doc Watson, & countless others. And regular columns - Pete Seeger's "Appleseds" and Bob Blackman's "Songfinder."

Special: mention **Fast Folk** with your subscription and receive a free SING OUT! song index.

Become a subscribing member now!

SING OUT!

THE FOLK SONG MAGAZINE

Box 1071
Easton, PA 18042

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____

Regular Subscription: \$11.00/1 yr., \$21.00/2 yrs.,
\$30.00/3 yrs.
Sustaining Membership: \$30, \$50, or \$100/yr.

Christine Lavin on **MUSICIANS' NIGHTMARES**

Many musicians are haunted by music-related nightmares during their sleeping hours (though Rod MacDonald claims only to be familiar with the waking-hour variety). For those of you with troubled sleep, this column will attempt to analyze, define, and alleviate your deepest fears.

All the dreams here are real. The names have been changed to protect the identities of the dreamers.

Dear Christine:

I own a Martin guitar that I keep in a blue Martin case. One night I dreamt that David Bromberg invented a radar device that looks like a ladies' alligator clutch purse. He mounted it on top of a Checker cab, and then drove the streets of Manhattan late at night. When the radar device spotted a blue Martin case, Bromberg snuck into that person's apartment, switched the Martin guitar with a toy "Mickey Mouse" guitar (one that plays a rinky-tink "Pop Goes the Weasel" when you crank the handle). In my dream, when I wake up I see my blue Martin case and I figure everything's OK. But later in the day, when I go to open it, I find the Mickey Mouse guitar and I don't know what happened! It's awful!

This dream really frightens me. I met David Bromberg a couple weeks ago and couldn't look him in the eye on account of how bad I felt about what he did in my dream.

What does this mean?

Just sign me
"Frances"

Dear "Frances":

I could say that perhaps you feel that, compared to David Bromberg, your guitar playing is on a "Mickey Mouse" level. Or maybe all your songs have the artistic depth of a mechanical version of "Pop Goes the Weasel." I could propose that, rather than spending huge sums of money on psychiatric help (which you undoubtedly need), you find yourself a good guitar teacher and work your way out of this nightmare. But that's a bit obvious. Instead, my advice is to think about painting your guitar case

black so, next time Bromberg makes his rounds, his ladies' alligator clutch purse radar device misses you.

Dear Christine:

I have this awful dream in which a huge tidal wave breaks over the entire earth--covers everything--then quickly recedes. The whole earth is the way it was before the tidal wave, except when I go to open my guitar case and find that it is full of sea water--plus jellyfish and seaweed. I get real mad because my guitar is ruined, and then I wake up in a sweat.

Now some mornings on my way to work I get real nervous when the subway conductor says, "This is the D train to Coney Island," and I have also developed a fear of the water cooler in my office when it bubbles. Please help.

"No name" please

Dear "No Name":

Any Psych 101 student could tell you the significance of large bodies of water in dreams, and anyone who's ever seen a 1940's movie can tell you what waves breaking on the shore are all about, so I won't bother. I do know about jellyfish (fear of peanut brittle) and seaweed (fear of hairdressers), and to conquer the terror of the D train and the water cooler, I'd say move to Kansas. You will also be safe from tidal waves there.

Dear Christine:

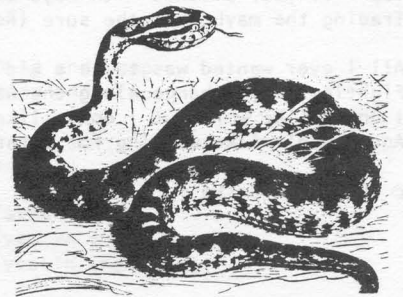
I am plagued by a recurrent nightmare that I am backstage, about to go on, and just as I'm about to open my guitar case, it pops open all by itself, and my guitar sits up on account of its neck is made of rubber and it's able to do this. Everything is all scary like in the "Thriller" video. Suddenly I hear my name announced, and as I go out on stage, everybody laughs at my rubber-necked guitar. So I kid around with them, telling the crowd it's related to Mark Dann's two-headed guitar. Then I start my first song when all of a sudden the rubber neck turns into a snake and all the guitar strings break. The audience gets real quiet and I run offstage.

It's so scary and real-feeling. What can I do?

Signed,
"Spooked"

Dear "Spooked":

If you're a man, this dream means one thing; if you're a woman, it means something else. I have taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to Dr. Joyce Brothers over at the New York Post. Please check her column for a reply. (Sorry. I think your problems are more than musical ones.)



Don't Miss Out!

Subscribe now to *The Fast Folk Musical Magazine*. Published ten times a year.

Rates

One-year (10 issues)*: \$40 in U.S.,
\$60 foreign**
Half-year (5 issues): \$25 in U.S.,
\$35 foreign**
Single issue: \$6 in U.S.,
\$8 foreign**

(Payment for a single issue may be put toward a one-year or half-year subscription.)

Send your order, along with a check or money order for full payment, to:

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

*For a limited time, we have Fast Folk T-shirts, and offer one free with each new one-year subscription or renewal. Specify size: Medium or Large.

**Subscribers outside the U.S. paying by check, please have payment converted to U.S. dollars, payable on a U.S. bank.

SIDE BY RYK SONE

THE LAND OF THE BOTTOM LINE

I couldn't bribe a wind on what I used to make
My fortune was as sure as the wind
But I was free to wonder and time was on my hands
It was mine to burn and to bend

Refrain:

Freedom for freedom
Call that an even scheme
Give me time to wonder and to dream
I'll take the money
They'll take the time
Down to the Land of the Bottom Line

Then there came a chance to make some steady dough
Bouncing up my alley to the door
You fill your clothes with keys and damned responsibility
Trading the maybe for the sure (Refrain)

All I ever wanted was to be a kid at play
Fighting every change along the way
I don't like work but I don't like waste
And I don't like waiting for a taste (Refrain)

© 1984 John Gorka

STREETS OF MONTREAL

You are a French-speaking truck driver's daughter.
I am a stumbler after all.
I have followed you so long it isn't funny,
Down the streets of Montreal.

We brushed the dirty snow off of the roses
Pinned to your white shawl.
We did the stations of the cross by moonlight
Down the streets of Montreal.

Down the streets of Montreal the children singing
Know your name but they won't tell me.
Perhaps I'll can you Beatrice.
After a town in Nebraska.

Until you sent me the ghost of Judy Garland
I didn't know you heard the call.
I see your shoulderblades before me in the lamplight
Down the streets of Montreal.

Down the streets of Montreal the bells are ringing
All their sailors back to sea.
Perhaps I'll call you Constance
After a famous silent film star.

by Peter Spencer © 1982 Weebahd Enterprises ASCAP



ALL MY EX-GIRLFRIENDS ARE MARRIED

I got home last night
and I went to check the mail
There was another invitation
to a party and a wedding veil
I guess each prince has finally come
for my lovers and my friends
Well I've been down memory lane before
But I've never been to the end

Chorus:

But now all my ex-girlfriends are married
I toss the rice and I wish 'em well
She's a good old gal
and I miss my pal
And the romantic thrust and parry
I toss the rice
I'll wish 'em well
Now that all my ex-girlfriends are married

I went to the church
It was an urban slick affair
The relatives we'd avoided
when we lived in sin were there
When the call came for objections
I stood up and I said "No!"
"But when it's time to toast the bride
There's a few things you should know"

I'm not bitter or lonely
or an angry malcontent
I fell in love myself
and I know I've got the best
I've got some sentimental pictures
and phone calls make me smile
Though we did not go the distance
We sure did go in style

© 1984 Richard Meyer

MYSTERY

Are you afraid you will find justice
In what you were running from?
Rocks of the river and the timeless drum
That only sing when the storm's rising.

Chorus:

Unchain this love and
Promise to return as someone you don't know.
Mys-te-ry

Are you afraid of forgiveness
In one who's soul may not be yours,
In a rain you can't hear singing,
Locked outside of silent doors?

Are you afraid of what you will find,
Turning of the tide,
Healing sorrows
That only show what you must hide?

Are you afraid of meaning,
Love you have denied,
By deceiving
The house of dreams you kept inside?

Are you afraid of the freedom
In a tree born out of the stone
Reaching into leaves and branches
No one knows how it has grown

© 1984 Jane Byaela

EVERYONE NEEDS RELIGION

Sam was howlin' the blues
like a dog out of tune
when Jane left a year ago
for three long months
he just got drunk
and let his sorrow show
took himself to the race track
lost everything he had
just about to snuff himself out when
something tapped him on the head, said

Chorus:

take these times like a lesson
learn from your mistakes
live your life like a Christian
and give them blues the shake
take the sign like a vision
get down on your knees and pray
everybody needs religion
religion is the only way

Jane, she was funky
you can't keep a funky girl down
running at night, tellin' men lies
waiting till the money ran down
then she had a situation with a wife
and a butcher knife
clean cut to a confrontation
with the man who saved her life, he said

Chorus:

take these times like a lesson
learn from your mistakes
live your life like a Christian
and give them blues the shake

30,000 MEN

30,000 men on the Bowery
30,000 men on the street
Can't help but roam
When you ain't got no home
Begging handouts for something to eat
Begging handouts for something to eat

30,000 men on the sidewalk
30,000 men in the town
Nowhere to go
When the wind starts to blow
Looking round for someplace to lay down
Looking round for someplace to lay down

30,000 men tired and dirty
30,000 men to be fed
Bussed out to Queens
For a chance to get clean
And a shot at some sleep in a bed
And a shot at some sleep in a bed

30,000 men in the armories
30,000 men down the block
Neighbors all shout
We don't want 'em about
Bus 'em back in the morning and stop
Bus 'em back in the morning and stop

30,000 men of depression
30,000 men 'neath a cloud
Jobs getting scarce
And they're cutting welfares
And we might find ourselves in the crowd
And we might find ourselves in the crowd

30,000 men in the city
30,000 men killing time
Helpless and cold
Some are young, some are old
Shabby clothes and some bottles of wine
Shabby clothes and some bottles of wine

by Steve Forbert © 1982 Rolling Tide
Music ASCAP

now the lesson of Sam and Janey
ain't easy to understand
people have been messin' with Satan
ever since the world began
the Lord just sit back waitin'
with outstretched lovin' hands
waitin' till the day you need him
and he'll take you back again

Chorus:

just cause you been forgiven
it don't mean that you've been saved
you got to live your life like a Christian
give them blues the shake
take the sign like a vision
get down on your knees and pray
everyone needs religion
religion is the only way

by Joey George © 1984 J.G. Blendingwell

SIDE YR ICSTWO

WHAT WOULD I DO

No you don't, no you won't go
I learned to read you a long time ago
And I know when you're teasin'
I know it ain't true
But ooh, what would I do

Go on it don't bother me
I've been around I don't scare easily
And I know when you're foolin'
I know it ain't true
But ooh what would I do

What do you do when the hands of the clock
Point to the door
What do you do when you go to the river
And the river ain't there anymore

I know when you're foolin'
I know it ain't true
But ooh, what would I do

© 1980 W.D. Neely

KILLING GROUND

I saw a killing tonight on the playground
There was nothin' I could do
The dead boy was a friend of mine
The kid with the gun I only partly knew

Cool boy's run out of money
Got a fever in the streets paved with gold
Fortune's there for the taking
Jasper was fourteen years old

Dreamin' his dreams fantastic
Boy could be a fabulous star
White powder wrapped in plastic
Is a habit that you can't kick too far

Chorus:

It's a money trade run in hungry streets
Where the deals are made only in cash
Don't play games on the killing ground
Or your next deal could be your last

You know these pick-up games start friendly
"Hey brother, wanna go one on one?"
But look down any street where the dealers meet
And you know they ain't playin' for fun

The cops came and asked me "What happened?"
But you play the fool if the truth makes you wise
"I didn't see no fight, just heard a pop in the night--"
"Don't ask no questions and I'll tell you no lies."

Some get rich and some die young
Lookin' for a feelin' of ease
Some get hooked and some get hung
Tryin' to find a way to get free

Chorus

© 1983 Roger Rosen

CRY, LITTLE BOY

Last night I broke down an' cried.
Lyn' like a child in my sweet woman's care.
Holdin' me tenderly, she didn't say a word,
as my heart recalled the sorrows
I didn't know were still there.

It began with a fight we had.
An' it left me so tired, left me so low.
When it was over, somethin' said:
"It's time to cry."
An' lyin' in my woman's arms,
the man in me let go,
singin'

Refrain:

Cry, little boy.
Turn the pages in the book
where you hide the painful stories
that you've been through.
Let the tears fall
as you walk down memory lane.
Everything that grows needs to feel the rain
An' sometimes the best thing
a grown man can do is
cry like a little boy. Cry.

I didn't want the relief to stop.
I needed it so bad,
felt so good.
I wonder why it's so hard to cry.
I smile more than I want to,
an' cry less than I should.
Go on an' (Refrain)

Bridge:

Lyn' by my side,
my woman spoke to me.
Her hands on my face said everything:
"You can cry with me,
it's music to my ears,
makin' us stronger.
So, let your heart sing." (Refrain)

by Eric Bibb © 1984 Cataj Music ASCAP

MAZES

When ms. packman ate the first blue monster
double eyes ran wild in the mazes

TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Thirty miles out beyond the sound
black gold in the fishing grounds
across the plains it sends a light
burn-off gas jets shine all night
Storm and fire, the ancient fear
the heartlands lost in a single year
fields and forests sweet and green
but who will swear that the heart is clean

Chorus:

Tell no lies, you've got to tell it like it is
to the silent skies, you've got to tell it
like it is

Semis howl on the black highway
heliarc light turns night to day
border towns before daylight
dreaming through this American night
The passing years all take their toll
but light the landscape of the soul
brighter visions come to me
the heart must sense what the mind won't see

Chorus:

Tell no lies, you've got to tell it like it is
to the silent skies, you've got to tell it like
it is
Tell no lies, you've got to tell it like it is
to the northern skies, you've got to tell it
like it is

My demons never seem to tire
they howl like wolves just beyond my fire
thirty days out away from home
but there's life on the end of the telephone
And all the time we'll ever need
to raise our children deep as seas
the edge of love cuts like a knife
carving out the dreams of our lives

Repeat second chorus

© 1984 Geoff Bartley

When ms. packman ate the second blue monster
the jukebox was playing i know what boys like boys like
nathan was working late at the office
silent boxers with black faces and bloody gloves
loomed high above the barstools

When ms. packman ate the third blue monster
the empire state building turned from blue to green
a wino rolled over on the cold concrete
of seventh ave struggled to get up then went back to sleep
three plainclothesmen walked in through the door and the
jukebox wondered: should i stay or should i go?

When ms. pacman went for the fourth blue monster she
suddenly noticed that the flashing had stopped
the jukebox was silent
the boxers cried out
the moon shone full over manhattan
the empire state building shivered

She barely escaped in time

© 1984 Bob Norman

WHEN AN OLD FRIEND LAYS DOWN

Chorus:

When an old friend lays down
Makes you feel lonely unsure of your ground
Can you tell me now how the love of God sounds
When an old friend lays down.

Sparkle and shine run wild round the hall
This old guitar the strings wail and call
A ghost in the track a face on the wall
When an old friend lays down.

May day they scream distress flares the air
Storm seas are rising spray in the air
Seems there's no reason no justice no care
When an old friend lays down.

A seagull's lone cry will fade with the wind
Take me from Winter fly me to Spring
Lord it's so sad when the nightingale sings
When an old friend lays down.

by Dave Walters © 1982 Highway Music



RECORD REVIEWS

by Byrne Power and Roger Deitz

Figgy Duff, **After the Tempest**
Boot Records 7243

Figgy Duff, **Figgy Duff**
Dingles Records 326

June Tabor, **Abyssinians**
Shanachie 79038

The true test of a folk record is whether it moves you or not. I don't mean merely being moved emotionally. I mean literally. I discovered my first (and their first) Figgy Duff record about a year and a half ago. For some curious reason I can date my fascination with the Canadian province of Newfoundland from the same moment. I'd never given the place a passing glance on the map until I ran into the songs collected by this group from that province. Now I find myself drawn to this northeast region like a salmon swimming upriver. Don't take my word for it. Hunt one or both of these records down for yourself.

While the band plays a broad selection of celtic dance music in a style reminiscent of good Fairport Convention, the darkly textured vocals of Pamela Morgan are the haunting focal point of the group. With a voice that runs from light and feathery to deeply brooding she is ideal for conveying the frightening starkness of the Newfoundland fishing communities. You honestly hear the storms, the moonless nights, the tide against the boat, the foggy mornings, and especially the delicate balance of joy in the battle of lives lived hard at odds with the ocean in her now waiflike, now pristine voice.

Few songs have stirred my like her interpretation of "The Fisher Who Died in His Bed" from the Figgy Duff album. All in all she sings about 11 songs between the two albums. I couldn't tell you which one is better. The first is perhaps a bit more muscular sounding on the back-up and on the jigs. And the second is in some ways both more traditional sounding and less all at once. My suggestion: get both. Discover Newfoundland.

The next question: How obscure can one great performer be? The answer: Ask June Tabor. Your response: Who?

It's not that I want June Tabor to become a household name on a par with Kenny Rogers mind you. But damn, someone's got to know how great she is. I'm not just foaming at the mouth here. She's perhaps one of the few modern interpreters of British folk to whom the word 'great' truly applies. Her new album, *Abyssinians*, is one of her best, if not her best. I'm still partial to *Airs and Graces*, her first record on Topic in England, but *Abyssinians* is right up there. June's voice here is similar in some respects to Judy Collins's. But there is no saccharin here. The temper of her songs is much more in keeping with the wryness and passion of the English countryside. At times she even manages to reflect that haunted pain that is found in the Bronte novels. As songs go, most of them are excellent, with sparse accompaniment or none at all. She weaves a dark tapestry. At the moment my favorite song is "The Scarecrow," which has seeped into my imagination and forever affected it.

Both June Tabor and Pamela Morgan have the kind of conviction in their voices that challenges you to understand the bedrock of their respective folk traditions. There is courage here.-BP

By mail:
Dingles are available through Rounder Distribution, 186 Willow Avenue, Somerville, MA 02144.

Boot and Shanachie are distributed by Release Records Inc., 4257 Katonah Avenue, Bronx, NY 10470.

In New York City:
J&R Music World, 23 Park Row

Tower Records, 692 Broadway (at East 4th Street)

Geoff Bartley,
Blues Beneath the Surface
Magic Crow MCR 1001

Geoff Bartley has matured so rapidly as a folk/blues artist that he has arrived at the top of his profession just slightly ahead of his reputation, which should soon mean that he is the master of his genre. His newly re-

leased first album is a clean and clear example of what Geoff is all about. It shows him to be as technically proficient as he is engaging when he lends his treatment to such standards as Ray Charles's "Hallelujah, I Just Love Her So" and Chuck Berry's "Nadine."

More than half of the offerings are Geoff's own, and they too have the sound and feeling of being soon to become standards. His song, "Light on the Earth," will undoubtedly become a favorite among audiences and other folk singers. Geoff's voice has a velvety quality to it. It is never overtaxed, no matter how driving the guitar work gets. The contrast is most pleasing.-RD

Woody Guthrie, **Hard Travelin'**
Arloco Records ARL-284

This is a soundtrack album with a difference....It's about Woody; his life, his music, his friends, and his lesson to us that we are all of us important, and just a little bit better than the worst life and hard times can dish out. The record is taken from the soundtrack of a recently aired PBS special of the same name, which documents Arlo Guthrie's odyssey back to his father's Oklahoma roots, the purpose being to shed some light on Woody's early days and on Arlo's musical heritage, and to have a bit of fun in the process.

The album is a sampler of Woody's best known songs performed by friends who knew and admired the great American folk singer. Most of the cuts are duets in which one of Woody's contemporaries sings a familiar tune along with Arlo, who provides unification to this album.

The most interesting album cut is the duet brought to us through the magic of electronics in which Arlo sings "This Land Is Your Land" along with Woody. Arlo adds previously unrecorded verses of the song taught to him in the hospital by his father to a 1940's Folkways recording of Woody.-RD

ALL TOGETHER AGAIN ALONE

by Roger Deitz

There is this fellow I know who owns and does the booking for a small coffeehouse in which folk music acts are regularly presented. His club is a cozy little place with the obligatory candlelit, checker-clothed cafe tables crowded together in a room where the air is always filled with the aroma of freshly percolated coffee. The coffee is peddled along with herbal teas, hot mulled cider, and two varieties of cake, one a heavenly carrot cake, the other a hideous carob cake. When I order cake at the coffeehouse, I am always careful to enunciate the word "carrot" since in the darkened room both cakes look alike.

The walls of the club are decorated with memorabilia including autographed publicity pictures and snapshots, and posters, now relics of great bygone folk events, still announcing "The Weavers at Carnegie Hall," "Joan Baez in concert at Forest Hills," and "The Kingston Trio, live at The Troubadour." In one corner of the room there is a small stage, carefully placed so as to afford the audience the most democratic view possible in a room with only two drawbacks--both of which are centrally located pillars. The club's expensive sound system has recently been paid for, but in a room blessed with good acoustic properties, electronic sound has never seemed necessary.

For over ten years now my friend has delighted in watching his club provide a stage and a paycheck for struggling folk performers. Although his coffeehouse, which is situated in an older section of this particular city, in the basement of a red brick industrial building, has barely survived for years by attracting less than full-house audiences, it has been sustained because it has been frequented by a small group of loyal regulars. Musicians, nonmusicians, listeners, singers, socializers, vegetarians, Unitarians, introverts, and extroverts, an unlikely congregation if not for their love of folk music, have been on hand weekly to listen and enjoy.

It is obvious to me that my friend has never made a great deal of money from this venture. To listen to his explanation, this was secondary to his purpose. He has kept himself together, and as impresario, part-time perform-

er, and full-time patriarch, he has done everything he could to make his family of friends happy. Things had not always gone so well for him. Once before he had owned a folk club, only to lose it after it had become very successful in the "folk boom" of the sixties. I don't know what happened; I just figured he wasn't a good businessman.

Lately my friend has been looking more and more worried. This is very puzzling because club attendance is growing each month as new listeners discover the joys of folk music. A couple of recent concerts were sold out. I am told people were turned away at the door, some of them long-time regulars. The strange thing is that the more people who come, the more money he makes, the more my friend broods.

One evening last week I asked him why it was that when, at the point at which his endeavor at long last has begun to resemble a successful business, he has taken on a sad look I had seen only once before, on the face of an uncle who years back had gotten a "great deal" on a truckload of lime green Nehru jackets, only to find himself the victim of an insidious fad and the proud owner for live of a truckload of lime green Nehru jackets. "Come on," I told him. "Cheer up. You've got a great crowd here tonight!" His reply was, to say the

least, well, odd. He said, and I'm quoting, "You wouldn't be so damned cheerful if you knew anything about algae."

Perhaps not. I admit to knowing very little about algae, and very little about being cheerful for that matter. Anyway, before I had time to analyze his curious statement, he had invited me to his office/storeroom for a drink. He took a bottle of Wild Turkey out of his file cabinet and poured some into each of two styrofoam cups from which he had just spilled out cold coffee. "There's a folk boom coming," he lamented. "I've been through this all before. The club might be full tonight, but it's only a matter of time until it will be empty for good."

"With each boom comes a bust, and no matter what form the boom takes, be it yoyos, 3-D comic books, miniskirts, or folk music, come the bust you can't give the stuff away."

"You see," he continued, "folk booms and busts are similar to natural events in the scientific world. There is kind of a 'folk ecosystem' if you will, just like the relationship of algae to its pond environment." It looked as if I was finally about to find out how algae figured into all this. Actually, the implication that there might be some scientific basis to recurring folk booms was intriguing.



ing. He said that he had gone to live at his brother's place in Woodstock after losing his first club. "I watched this slimy green pond on his property, and read up on pond biology. All living things need certain elements to survive. With people it's yoyos, 3-D movies, or folk music; with algae it's stuff like sulphur, phosphorous, hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon. Too little of any of these essential nutrients and the algae can't survive; too much will poison the algae. But there is a range between too little and too much where the algae thrives and overgrows."

"What happened was a revelation. People who lived along the stream that feeds into the pond were washing their laundry in detergents containing phosphates. The phosphates were dumped into the stream and pond along with shirt collar dirt, old mustard stains, and lint. The algae, not caring much for shirt collar dirt, old mustard stains, and lint, gorged itself on the phosphates and bloomed at such a rate that it completely consumed all of the other essential elements in the pond. It grew until in effect it killed itself--committed algicide--and killed everything else in the pond, which remained stagnant, dead, for years...just like my first folk club. Yes, there is a definite folk ecosystem. My club grows fuller every night. Soon it will be choked by the glut of newcomers who will chase the regulars away and eventually become overdosed and bored with it all themselves."

My friend was very perceptive. He was exhibiting true genius and I told him so. Perhaps I encouraged him too much, perhaps the booze was beginning to take effect, perhaps I didn't hear what I think I heard next. He said that he was not alone in his struggle to prevent folk booms. He confided in me that there was a scientist in California who had developed a model for relating coffeehouse attendance to the butterfat content of the milk of certain Pacific Ocean sperm whales. This gave me pause. How does one milk a sperm whale anyway? I surreptitiously moved my chair a few inches to the left in order to insure an unimpeded direct line of retreat if necessary. Mr. Wizard was beginning to sound a bit like Rod Serling.

He went on my relating folk booms to the number of agents at William Morris named Murray, to the electromagnetic resonance of the earth, to climatic changes and to sunspots. My friend presented various mathematical form-

ulae and the derivations thereof; he explained the Law of Diminishing Folk and the Big Boom Theory; he took out charts and graphs on which were painstakingly plotted matrixes of economic, psychologic, and sociologic test data. It was clear that my friend had given the subject a good deal of attention.

Then, just as he appeared to run out of steam, his eyes took on a glazed look, as if he saw beyond me into a future I had not as yet the power to see. He said he had seen it all clearly in his dreams. The major record companies were plotting to, I think he put it, "destroy folk music as we know it." His visions of folk music to come were disturbing enough. He saw Folk TV, Tom Paxton on American Bandstand, a folk chart in Billboard, Donna Summer as "The Folk Queen," Punk Folk, a seventy-five member electrified dulcimer band playing the hits of Irving Berlin, folk songs praising smog and river pollution, and, lastly, he saw folk clubs becoming the "in" places to be seen. As he spoke on this subject, he became more agitated. "The beautiful people, hockey players and models, will be flocking to folk night spots to engage in the new dance craze, clogging. I see clogging in dance halls, clogging

on instructional video cassettes, clogging in senior citizens retirement villages, clogging in the blasted streets!"

He worked up to a frenzy and then collapsed back into his seat. Now silent, pensive, he was no longer smiling. I think he was whimpering a little. Finally he spoke. "It's no use. I'm selling the club this time. I can't be a part of all that. The landlord's raising the rent because this group of investors with a liquor license wants to buy me out. I told them about the algae, but they don't care; they want to buy anyway."

As he slipped again into deep thought, I took the opportunity to leave. How could the possibility of a folk boom have troubled him so? I passed on through the packed club and out the front door. As I looked at the line of people waiting to get into the club for the second show, I took note of the many unfamiliar faces. I started thinking about algae, Tom Paxton on American Bandstand, and something Michael Cooney once said about folk booms. "Ban the Boom," he said. Ban the boom indeed.

© 1984 Roger Deitz. All rights reserved.

MY NEPHEW, THE MOGUL

by Bill Neely

My nephew, my sister's boy, was asking my advice; this was a first. I was flattered but tried to look avuncular. It didn't come easy.

"Uncle Bill, after a good deal of careful thought, I've decided to pursue a career in the music business. I wonder if I could draw on your experience and ask you a few questions."

Now I was surprised to hear this. I'm the only one in our family who has ever gone into this line of work; we are deep in engineers, not musicians. But I remained nonplussed. Nonplussing is a big part of projecting avuncularity I figured, and I was working hard to do that. So I wrinkled my brow, cracked my knuckles, and cleared my throat. "Shoot," said I, and he shot.

"I feel it's important for me to specialize, right from the start, so I can get a jump on the competition. I am looking for a career in music that

will provide me with deep personal satisfaction, without sacrificing financial security."

"Then you ought to consider entertainment law. It's almost impossible to do anything musical without lawyers. They are absolutely indispensable to the business of music."

"That sounds secure, but I wonder if it wouldn't become stifling after awhile. Always haggling over details: crossing t's and dotting i's. Doesn't seem very creative."

"An awful lot of creativity goes into some of these recording contracts, kid. And there's nothing stifling about a six-figure income, which is what your big barracuda--I mean, attorney--is pulling down these days. But maybe you ought to look into becoming an accountant. The accountants are the real power behind the throne in the music business; they know where all the bodies are buried. Very creative work."

"What about the technical side, uncle? Maybe I could become a recording engineer or something along those lines. That must be secure."

"You can't go wrong with technology; not in America. Our people will never outgrow their need for gadgets, and gadgets constantly need updating. Technocrats are in the driver's seat, which is a good place for them. Cal Tech is more important to the music business than all our conservatories combined."

"Even more important than Juilliard?"

"Juilliard is important if you want to get into Juilliard's graduate

program--but why would you want to do that?"

"Then you're not recommending the academic life? Surely there is nothing more secure than tenure?"

"And surely there is nothing more tedious than teaching Theory I to thirty years' worth of tone-deaf undergraduates. It could come to that."

"Tell me something about your line of work, uncle. What about songwriting?"

"What about it?" I tried not to sound defensive, but maintaining avuncularity during all of this was beginning to take its toll.

"I suppose songwriting must be very satisfying work, but how's the money?"

"The money was fine, last time I saw it. Must have been 1973, if I remember right. I got eight hundred dollars for a half-hour piece of music. Of course, eight hundred dollars was a lot of money in those days. And a half-hour wasn't nearly as long as it is now."

"But it's not a lot of money when you spread it out over eleven years. Don't songwriters get regular royalty checks?"

"Some songwriters get royalty checks, but only the ones who write hits. Not all songs are hits. Not all hits are songs, for that matter."

"So you don't recommend songwriting, either?"

"I have a feeling your folks would be mad at me if I pointed you in that direction. You'll be much better off if you avoid the high-risk, low return areas of the music business."

"Does that include performing, too? Can you make any money doing that?"

"Sure, some people can. But you have to be willing to live the life of the traveling salesman, and that's not for everyone. You could end up like Willie Loman."

"Wasn't he one of the original Yardbirds?"

"No, you have him confused with someone else. What I'm saying is that performing for a living is more demanding and less rewarding than it looks. And generally speaking, supply and demand are way out of kilter--something else to contend with."

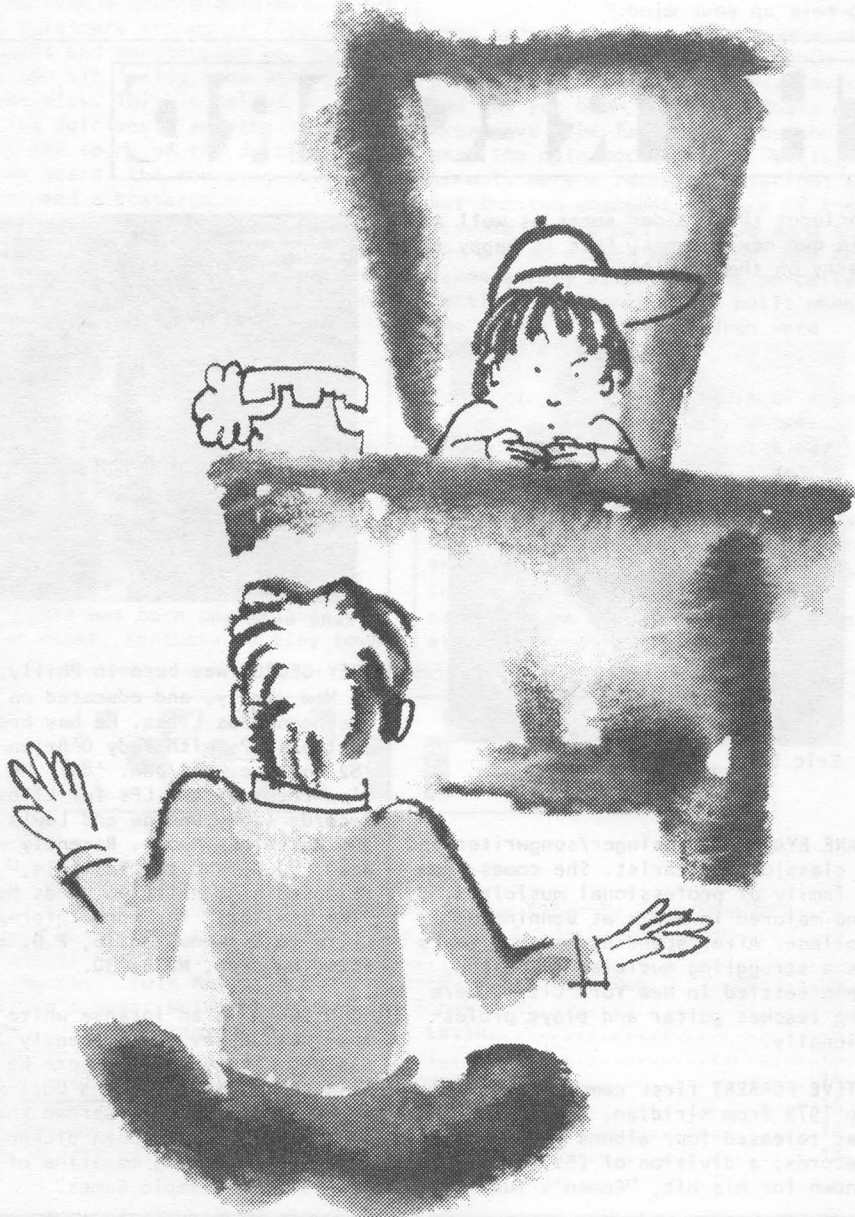
"But there always seems to be a demand for new rock stars."

"Not a very great demand, nephew, compared to the unending supply of candidates. Besides, you don't want to be a rock star--think of all that heavy equipment they have to drag around."

"They have roadies to do that. Rock stars don't carry their own amplifiers."

"They do for the first six months or so. The roadies come later, after the groupies and the barracudas--I mean, attorneys."

"You keep coming back to lawyers."



Dennis Di Vincenzo

"Yes, too bad. Can't be helped. The point is there are certain skills that are indispensable to the music business, and certain skills that are marginal, at best. Like musical skills."

"But what would the music business be without musicians? What would the music sound like?"

"Oh, pretty much the way it sounds now. The people who call the shots discovered a long time ago that things run a lot smoother without them, so musicians are gradually being phased out. Who needs them? These robots on MTV look and sound like the real thing to your average laymen. And genetic engineering is the wave of the future--look at all the clones who make it big."

"You can't be happy about this situation, uncle, but you don't seem bitter. If you had your career choice to make over again, what would you have done for a living?"

"Something like arc welding, maybe. Useful work. Steady pay. Peer approval. But never mind: sumus quid sumus."

At this point in the discussion, we were interrupted by my sister. It was time for the boy's nap.

"Thanks for your help, Uncle Bill. You've given me an awful lot to think about and I'll carefully consider everything you've told me when I make my decision."

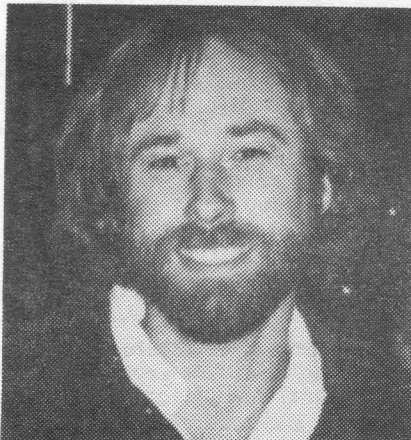
"Well, at least you have a lot of time to make up your mind."

"Not really. I'm going into kindergarten in the fall, and I've been taking a long hard look at some of the afternoon electives. After talking to you, I think I'll skip the Suzuki instrumental program they're offering. Maybe I can get some extra time on the computer terminal instead."

"That's the only keyboard you'll ever need, nephew. Good luck to you."

My sister's boy is a bright kid; the kind who will do well in whatever walk of life he chooses. Someday, when he's president of CBS Records, I hope he'll still remember his old uncle, who steered him straight. ■

ON THE RECORD



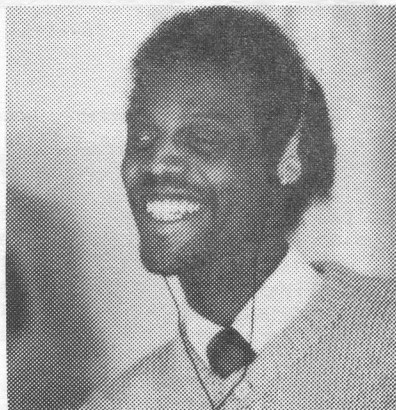
Alan Beck

Geoff Bartley

Distinctive guitar work and soulful singing are GEOFF BARTLEY'S trademarks. Blues harmonica breaks and evocative narrative poetry add a special touch to his live performances. His first album, *Blues Beneath the Surface*, was recently released and is available from Rounder Records Distribution or directly from the artist at 3 Salem Street, Cambridge, MA 02139 for \$8.50 postpaid.

ERIC BIBB was born and raised in New York City. As a member of a musical family, he grew up listening to folk music from many countries, as well as classical and jazz artists and recordings. His father, Leon Bibb, introduced Eric to traditional Afro-American song styles, and with a repertoire that

includes these older songs as well as his own newer songs, Eric is happy to carry on the tradition.



Andrew French

Eric Bibb

JANE BYAELA is a singer/songwriter and a classical guitarist. She comes from a family of professional musicians, and majored in music at Bennington College. After spending several years as a struggling musician in Boston, Jane settled in New York City, where she teaches guitar and plays professionally.

STEVE FORBERT first came to the Village in 1975 from Miridian, Mississippi. He has released four albums for Nempereor Records, a division of CBS, and is best known for his hit, "Romeo's Tune."

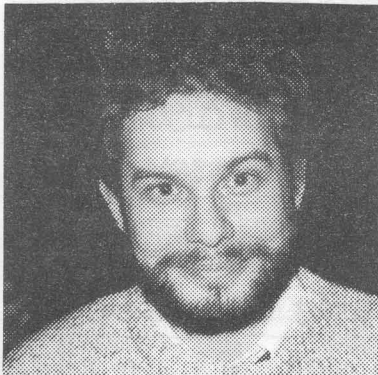


Alan Beck

Jane Byaela

JOEY GEORGE was born in Philly, raised in New Jersey, and educated on the Greyhound Bus Lines. He has been heard on two *CooPs* with Judy O'Brien (March '82 and Dec. '82/Jan. '83). He has also recorded two LPs for Lifesong Records (Joey George and Lewis McGehee and *Marvelous Moon*). Recently with his band, "J.G. and the Initials," he has released a 45 entitled "Dads Money"/"The Visitor." For more information, write to Gorgeous Music, P.O. Box 6026, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

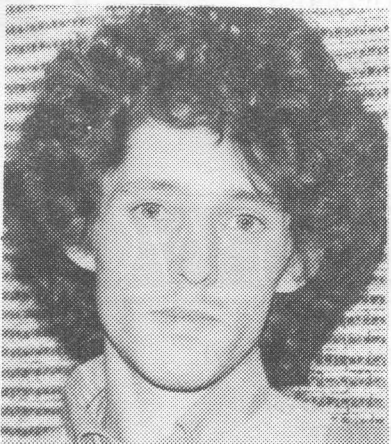
JOHN GORKA is an intense white guy from New Jersey who currently lives in Easton, Pennsylvania, where he is the Assistant Editor of *Sing Out!* magazine. John wishes to spread the word that *Sing Out!* has been picked as the official folk song magazine of the 1984 Summer Olympic Games.



Alan Beck

John Gorka

LEFT FIELD is ELIZABETH EMMERT, THOM WEAVER, BILL NEELY, and GORDON SWIFT. Weaver and Neely started working together in western Pennsylvania in 1972; they began singing with Emmert in New York in the mid-seventies. Left Field was born during the 1981 baseball strike, and Swift joined the team about a year later.



Bob Zaidman

Richard Meyer

RICHARD MEYER is a songwriter, painter, and designer for the theatre. He has found an apartment in New York since his last bio. He is in the book and looking for gigs.

THE NEW ENGLAND EXPRESS is ROB and JOHN STRACHAN. They are originally from a country town in Connecticut and now live in Greenwich Village. Adjusted to city life they say they are well on their way to becoming utterly depraved.

BOB NORMAN is from New London, Connecticut, and has lived half his life in New York City. From 1970 to 1977 he was editor of Sing Out! magazine. His songs have appeared in Sing Out!, Broadside, and The People's Songletter. He's very pleased that Pete Seeger has been singing one of his songs in recent concerts.



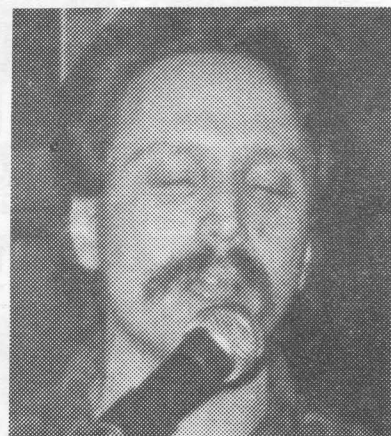
Rob Strachan

John Strachan

ROGER ROSEN and LAURA BURNS are based in Boston. Roger performed as a street singer for three years, and Laura began her musical career playing drums in a rock and roll band. They first played together in a six-person political string band called Countrydiction. They have been working as a duo for four years. Roger plays six and twelve string guitar; Laura plays electric bass and six string guitar.

PETER SPENCER was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, in 1951. He and his wife live in New York City. Peter's LP, Paridise Loft, is on Original Regular Records and is available through the Up for Grabs Catalog.

DAVE WALTERS first started singing in South Wales. On moving to London he began his professional music career within the burgeoning folk scene of the mid-seventies. He has three records, the latest of which is Kites on Highway Records.



Alan Beck

Bob Norman



Dave Walters

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*, which contains 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

*Outside the U.S. paying by check, please have payment converted to U.S. dollars, payable on a U.S. bank.



Want to know what's happening? England's top national folk quarterly is crammed with interviews, features, letters, news, opinion, the most comprehensive folk album review coverage, and the most effective folk advertising. Over 10,000 readers world-wide; supported by the Arts Council Of Great Britain.

One year U.S.A./Canada surface mail subscription only £3.60 (Air £7.40). £ Sterling cheques/I.M.O.s only please, to: *Southern Rag*, 2'Eastdale, East Street, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7TB, England.

SPEAK EASY

107 Macdougall Street
New York, New York
212-598-9670

APRIL 1984 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Folk Music Nightly

ALL SHOWS START AT 9:00 PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

SONDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 THE HOLLYWOOD DICK DOLL REVUE AXMAN HOROWITZ	2 every Monday night YOUR TURN TO ENTERTAIN US	3 MARGY BOYD WILLIE SORDILL	4 JACK HAY ANDREW CALHOUN THE FAST FOLK MUSICAL MAGAZINE WILL BE ON SALE!!	5 8:00 PM • \$2.00 LIVE!! OSCAR BRAND'S RADIO SHOW 10:00 PM ERIK FRANDSEN MINDIE • THE MAN	6 DAVE VAN RENT Bill Morrissey	7
8 BOB NORMAN PAUL KAPLAN	13 ROBIN & LINDA WILLIAMS SPENCER LEWIS	10 THE ROCKATONICS THE BLUEGRASS WORKERS OF AMERICA	11 nick plakias NEW ENGLAND EXPRESS	12 FROM PARIS DENIS GASSER JOHN KRUTH	13 SUZANNE VEGA Cindy Mangsen	14
15	16 open mike SIGN UP 7:30 PM	17 ONE BUCK GETS YOU DOLLAR NIGHT HOST: HUGH BLUMENFELD	18 THE ULTERIOR MOTIVES CAROLYN McCOMBS MARY JO ANDERSON	19 Susan Firing DENNIS FRISCIA	20 Rod Macdonald MICHAEL SOLOWAY	21
22 Horse Ban LAURA WETZLER CHRIS ELLIOTT	23 EMCEE FOR APRIL SUSAN FIRING SIGN UP 7:30 PM	24 ALAN ATKISSON WALTER RAUBICHECK JEFF BRAGMAN	25 SAL BERNARDI OF THE "PIRATES" TOUR IRVING LATTIN WINDY SLATER	26 SCOTT JARRETT PETE GARDNER	27 BAUN MCKINNON JOHN JOFFEN & DAVID ROTH	28
29 Bob Miles KENNEY AND TZIFORA	30 NOTE: EVERY MONDAY THE SPEAKEASY COLLECTIVE NOW MEETS AT 6:30 PM	MAY 1 MANDAY FESTIVAL BENEFIT FOR THE FAST FOLK MUSICAL MAGAZINE THE F.F.M.M. WILL BE ON SALE	MAY 2 IERIC IBIBIB CARRIE	MAY 3 Ken Perlman DAKOTA DAVE HULL SEAN BLACKBURN	MAY 4 ROSALIE SORRELS RICHARD NARDIN	ALSO COMING IN MAY: JAY UNGER AND LYNN HARDY

Poetry Readings: Wednesdays 7PM

SIDE ONE CREDITS SIDE TWO

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Land of the Bottom Line (John Gorka)
John Gorka/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass & Drums Streets of Montreal (Peter Spencer)
New England Express:
Rob Strachan/Vocal & Guitar
John Strachan/Vocal & Guitar
John Kruth/Mandolin
Mark Dann/Keyboard Bass All My Ex-Girlfriends Are Married (Richard Meyer)
Richard Meyer/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass, Drums & Telecaster Mystery (Jane Byaela)
Jane Byaela/Vocal & Guitar Everyone Needs Religion (Joey George)
Joey George/Vocal & Guitars
Mark Dann/Bass & Drums 30,000 Men (Steve Forbert)
Steve Forbert/Vocal & Guitar
Frank Christian/Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass
Jack Hardy/Mandolin | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What Would I Do (W. D. Neely)
Left Field:
Elizabeth Emmert/Vocal
Thom Weaver/Vocal
Bill Neely/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Electric Guitar Killing Ground (Roger Rosen)
Roger Rosen/Vocal & Guitar
Laura Burns/Vocal & Guitar Cry, Little Boy (Eric Bibb)
Eric Bibb/Vocal & Guitar Tell It Like It Is (Geoff Bartley)
Geoff Bartley/Vocal, Guitar & Harmonica Mazes (Bob Norman)
Bob Norman/Vocal & Guitars
Paul Kaplan/Harmonica
Mark Dann/Bass & Drums When an Old Friend Lays Down (Dave Walters)
Dave Walters/Vocal & Guitar |
|--|---|