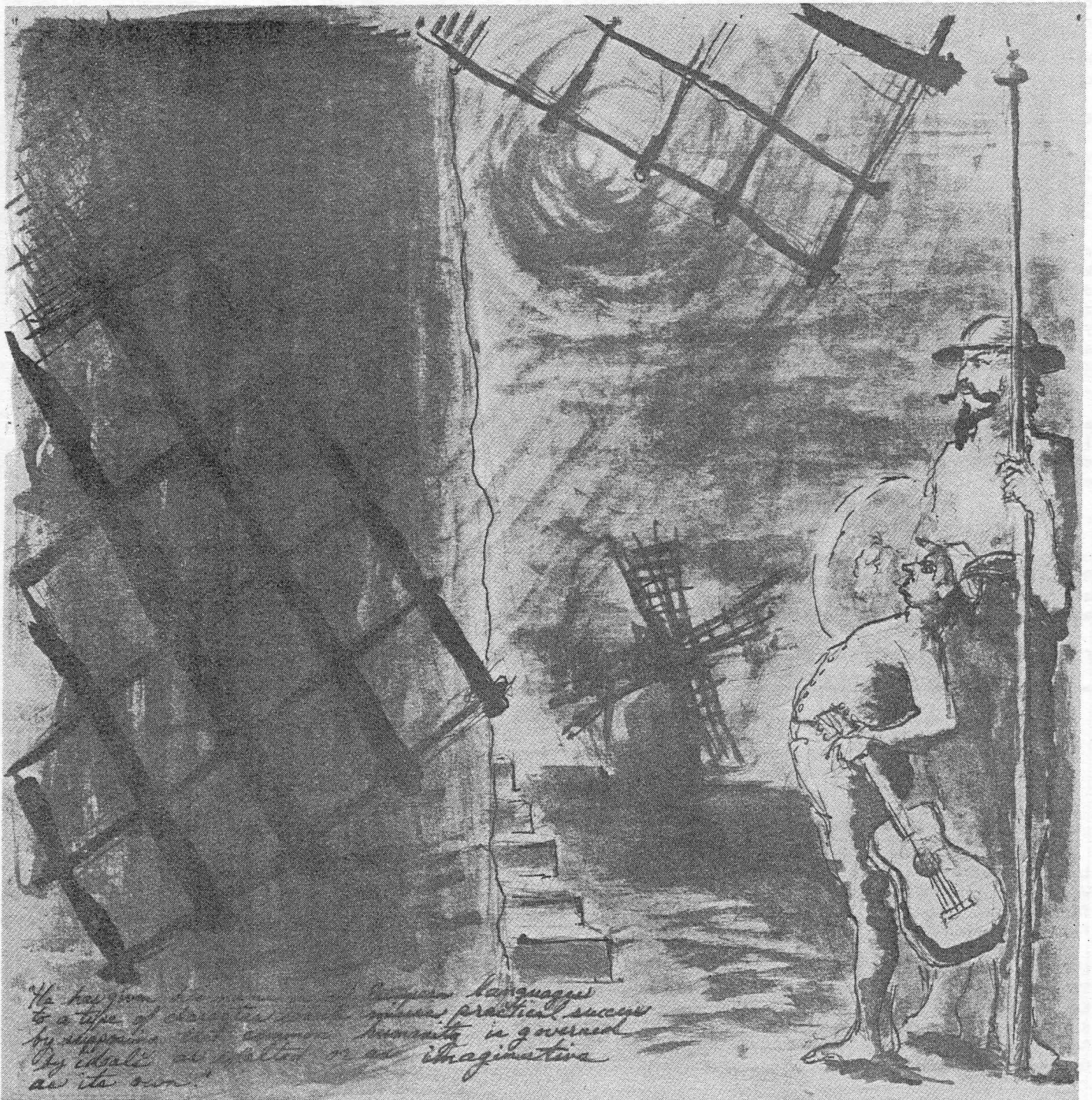


FAST FOLK

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

September 1984

VOL. 1, No. 7



*He has given the name of human languages
to a type of character which makes practical success
by appearing to be common. Humanity is governed
by ideals as well as by its imaginative
as its own.*

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: Nancy Talanian
Photography Editor: Alan Beck

Art & Photography Contributors:
Dennis Di Vincenzo, Dick Evans,
Barry Fingerhut, Chuck Hancock,
Charlie Hunter, Richard Meyer,
Germana Pucci, Jeff Tiedrich, Bob
Zaidman

Literary Contributors: Bonnie Jo
Blankinship, Gary Boehm, Jackson
Braider, Lydia Adams Davis, Roger
Deitz, Jean Freedman, Angela Page
Hardy, Paul Kaplan, Rod MacDonald,
Richard Meyer, Willie Nininger,
Randall Poe, Byrne Power, Brian
Rose, Sherwood Ross

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

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

Cover by Jill Burkee

LETTERS

Dear Jack,

Nearly two decades ago Pete Seeger toured Australia and advised us not to bother defining or redefining folk music. Perhaps it's just as well, because over the years we've been treated to visits from the poets and the prophets straight out of the old Greenwich Village scene--Paxton, Baez, Peter, Paul and Mary, Dylan, and, yeah, even poor Phil Ochs. Next week it's a trip down to Melbourne to catch Arlo.

Your musical magazine has given us an opportunity of keeping up with what's contemporary in New York City, and this is something which I'm proud to be able to present on my weekly folk programme throughout Central Victoria. Recently a regular listener (on her way to Ireland now) phoned in a request for "Dublin Farewell" by Jack Hardy (The Coop, June '83). So the lyrics of contemporary American song-writers may never make Tin Pan Alley, but many of them sing out loud and clear on FM radios through the Australian bush.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry McDonald
Castlemaine, Victoria
Australia

Dear Jack and Company:

I really have enjoyed the Bottom Line issue that I just received. While it is a truly excellent issue, I think that Helen and I were disappointed by the content. I look forward to hearing new performers and/or new songs. While the music was top calibre, the Bottom Line issue's table of musical contents reads like a "CooP Greatest Hits" disc. I urge you to return to the habit of not repeating songs from previous issues to make each issue a new and wonderful thing. I have to admit that I would like to hear more of the people on this month's album.

Regards,

Bob Withers
Peyton, Colorado

Fast Folk fully intends to continue introducing its subscribers to new songs and new artists. The Bottom Line (April '84) issue features live performances of a sampling of songs previously recorded on The Coop. We thought the album was worthy of producing, particularly for the majority of our subscribers, who did not subscribe to The Coop.

The Editors

To the editor:

One evening, after a major record-buying excursion to New York, a friend came to visit. "What's this!" he exclaimed, mystified. "Bruce Cockburn, Priscilla Herdman, Jack Hardy, Stan Rogers, Fast Folk--what is this stuff!"

I smiled smugly. "Why, folk music, of course," I explained.

"What can you do to that? What is music for if you can't dance to it?" he snorted, fingering the albums gingerly as if they were dynamite, which, of course, they were.

"Why, sir, this is Music to Think By," I sighed, a little impatient in my sense of superiority.

But this was a lonely triumph. A few days later, as my husband and I

(Continued on page 18)

CONTENTS

Letters.....	2
Where Have All the Groupies Gone?--by Roger Deitz.....	3
The Iron Horse--by Nancy Talanian.....	5
Folk Music and Politics: A Folklorist's Perspective --by Jackson Braider.....	7
Lyrics.....	9
Steve Goodman, A Remembrance--by Willie Nininger.....	14
Ernest Tubb, Texas Troubadour--by Randall Poe.....	15
Ray Korona in Concert--by Lydia Adams Davis.....	16
Record Reviews--by Byrne Power.....	17
On the Record.....	19

WHERE HAVE ALL THE GROUPIES GONE?

by Roger Deitz

I can tolerate just about any of all the drawbacks to being a folk performer. I have come to accept them, just as I have come to accept the touch of arthritis in my neck. After a few years, the ever present dull pain has become more a constant companion, and less so an annoyance. Sometimes, it even tells me when rain is on the way, thereby giving me warning, and time to put on my rainhat and slicker. One should always make the most of any situation.

I even get a kick out of causing my neck to crack in public. I can clear a room in ten seconds flat, which is about half the time it takes me to clear a room when I am singing. A good performer is always on stage, and if I have to suffer a bit to sing the blues, the public might as well suffer right along with me.

The blues I sing are self-imposed. I am not rich; but then again I never wanted to be rich. As a child, I would return the unspent portion of my weekly allowance to my father. Being a rather willowy lad, I knew well that there was danger in collecting too many nickels and pennies in my pockets. I learned about gravity, and embarrassment, long before I ever heard of Newton, and years before I ever stepped out upon a stage.

Amassing a fortune has always seemed to me to be more trouble than it was worth. I laugh at all my profession-weary friends whose lives are complicated by money market funds, tax shelters, and treasury bills. What a joy it is to awaken in the morning and not have to rush to call my stock broker to find out if the prime interest rate has gone up or down a quarter of a point. The time is better spent searching for two unholed socks that are mated in both style and color. If it were to come to pass that folk music would make me rich, then I think I would have to find something else to do. I would rather not be bothered.

I have also never said a prayer in the pursuit of fame. I fear that, given the good Lord's sense of humor and flair for irony, fame might take the form of a headline on the cover of the National Enquirer: "Nude Photos of Folkie Found--Philadelphia Folk Festival Cancels His Debut on Main Stage!" Just like the beggar who

squandered his three wishes rubbing the magic lamp, I know that most of us get what we ask for...rarely do we realize this, however.

The truth is that I don't like crowds. Being in a department store at Christmas makes me itch. I tend to do my holiday shopping in October so as to avoid being trampled by herds of reindeer-like shoppers stripping the retail tundra of clip-on ties, electric bun warmers, and the ultimate forage for ravenous consumers: Cabbage Patch dolls.



Charlie Hunter

It is just as well that I don't like crowds, for I rarely see any when I perform. That is why I am so comfortable in a folk club, where I can have a nice, intimate rapport with the several kind people who have ducked in

out of the rain. They are usually magnanimous enough to let me keep on playing--as long as I don't play too loudly, don't interfere with their conversations, and don't fail to mention drugs two or three times during my set. Please, blow some smoke over my way. What atmosphere. I quit smoking in 1971, but playing in bars has kept my lungs from being able to recognize that fact. Once, I even suggested to a burly club owner that he post a sign warning that the Surgeon General had determined that breathing in his club could be hazardous to a patron's health. As it turns out, making that suggestion was hazardous to my health.

Notoriety could even be dangerous. Consider the damage done to a musician's hand when he is called upon to sign hundreds of autographs a week. It is a wonder some of my colleagues can still play at all. By not feeling obligated to sign my name, ever, I keep my hand in top condition. I am ready at a moment's notice to strum a tune, or thumb my nose at the less fortunate, claw-handed "stars" who pitifully have lost the ability to play any two notes simultaneously.

Then there is the matter of food. I try not to eat any. Most Americans eat too much, and then wonder why it is they are unable to survive an audit by the IRS. They look too well fed. When I am audited, I usually end up with a reduction of taxes, a few food stamps, and the auditor's personal check to help tide me over until more substantial assistance can be found. Folk music has helped me to maintain a svelte figure. I may write a book, as fad diet and self-help books are all the rage. I think I'll call it The Folk Music Diet, subtitled Starve Your Way to Stardom.

I try not to be preoccupied with the subject of eating. Do you know that Americans consumed 23,998 million pounds of beef in 1982? They also managed to ingest 69,680 million eggs. That's 77.3 pounds of beef and 224.4 eggs per American per year. Over all, the average American met 128 percent of their daily dietary requirement.

I am sure that beef and eggs are all right, but I myself prefer bouillon. Few people know that there are six power-packed calories in an inexpensive, tasty cup of bouillon. That's energy enough to fuel a lethargic gnat through his afternoon nap. Also,

a cup of soup is neat and easy to consume. Not so southern fried chicken, honey-dipped and done to a turn, crispy, golden brown, seasoned just right. What a bother to eat. No, I don't think about food much. I am too busy fainting. There is nothing like a good blackout to make one forget about being hungry.

But if money, fame, and food are not factors that motivate one to remain a folk artist (and let us not kid ourselves--no one I know is dumb enough to believe the "star system" exists for dulcimer players), then what keeps the folk musician going? What keeps a performer playing on the road, in smoky clubs, hungry and broke though he or she may be? I suspect it's force of habit. There is really little else I can think of...unless it's for the groupies.

In case you are unaware of the term, groupies are those servile social satellites of the upwardly mobile "artiste" who provide ego reinforcement and other essential services to the insecure, transparent, or otherwise morally bankrupt performer. Most dictionary entries state that a groupie is "a female fan of a rock group who usually follows the group around on concert tours."

There are a few things wrong with this definition. First, groupies come in both the female and the male variety. Usually they are of the opposite sex, but that is not a hard and fast rule. In addition, the true groupie, if given the right opportunity, will do more than "follow" the group around on its concert tour...unless follow is used euphemistically to substitute for another, more graphic term. Finally, groupies are as much a part of the folk music scene as they are of the rock scene; they just have a different set of values.

The term "groupie" probably derives from the word "grouper": a large, ugly, odd fish that likes to hang around other, more important fish. Historically, one can trace groupies back to the ancient Greeks. Aristotle was one of Plato's groupies, and in turn he had groupies of his own. One of Aristotle's groupies was reportedly not particularly fair of face, and was known to dialogue off key: hence the root "grue" or gruesome from groupie. There is also some suggestion that the etymological root of groupie is from the Latin verb "grope," as in I grope, he or she gropes, we both grope.

Rock stars have made the most of groupies by realizing that the size of one's entourage can be a plus when trying to impress a reporter from *Rolling Stone*. Rock groupies, in turn, have made the most of rock stars. Often a live-in groupie can clear a few million dollars in a court settlement. Folk groupies are rarely done as well in the money department, but that only indicates that they are pure groupies; they are truly committed to what they do.

Medical science isn't quite certain as to what causes one to become a groupie, but there is some indication that the din of loud music can have an effect on the central nervous system in genetically susceptible individuals, resulting in kind of a flattened EEG and what appears to be brain death in a few not so important areas of the brain. The "Groupie Syndrome," as it is termed medically, is identified by the following clinical signs: glazed eyes, an unalterable smile, and an uncontrollable desire on the part of the stricken to carry an instrument to a performer's motel room.

I have observed other performers collect groupies, but I have had limited success myself in acquiring any of my own. I like what I do, yet if I thought I could not someday find myself a groupie, I might drop folk music faster than U. S. Grant dropped juleps when he found that they were mixed drinks and did not contain the full complement of what he expected from a glass of spirits. True, I have had trouble in acquiring groupies, but I rationalize that the number of groupies one collects is probably directly proportional to the curb length of one's limousine.

I almost had my first groupie a couple of summers ago when, after singing at a folk festival, I was approached by a smiling, starry-eyed young lady. My first impulse was to purchase a carnation from her and make a donation to the South Korean reverend. She was most complimentary. She liked my singing, she liked my playing, she liked my tent. Perhaps it was my inexperience with such matters; perhaps it was my confusion over the provisions of the Mann Act, but I decided that she was under the limit, and I cast her back in the hope that I would be on safer legal ground after a year's time passed. I spent the next year reassuring myself that I had done the right thing, and hoping that I would get a chance again to do the wrong thing. The next year when we met again,

she was with a fellow performer, and she could not recall ever having met me.

She had a lot on her mind. It is not easy to be a good groupie. A good groupie has to know important catch phrases such as, "They just don't understand that you are one performer who doesn't make compromises on his craft," or "You could be the most sensitive songwriter since James Dean" (a groupie does not necessarily have to be bright, only charitable), and of course, "What do those no-talent bums know? You were really fantastic tonight!"

A good groupie should always be available to say those things to others that you would say had you been raised in a barn. Most groupies defend their charge vehemently. All this should begin to illustrate that a groupie is ultimately merely an extension of the artist's own ego, and own fantasies. What it really all comes down to, interestingly enough, is that those are the very things that the groupie needs the artist for. A perfect symbiosis; the perfect partnership.

To each, the other is a status symbol, like possessing a Louis Vuitton pocketbook or a Mercedes. What we find here is a substitute for the truth, the reality, and the love that the singer/songwriter writes about, tells everyone else he knows all about, and secretly fears he will never find. That's show-biz.

You ask me what is the toughest thing about being a folk performer? Is it the need for money, fame, or food? No, it's the need to have a groupie, or the need to be a groupie. I know what of I speak. You see, every now and then I feel as much a need to be one as I do to have one, and I guarantee you...there is no difference.

© 1984 by Roger Deitz. All rights reserved.

MUSIC YOU CAN'T HEAR ON THE RADIO, a radio show in Princeton, New Jersey, is looking for new or old songs about politicians or electoral politics in general for a special November 4 pre-Election Day show on WPRB (103.3-FM). If you have tapes or records to lend, please contact John Weingart at (609) 397-8030 or at R.D.1, Box 240, Stockton, New Jersey 08559.

THE IRON HORSE

by Nancy Talanian

If you find yourself in central Massachusetts with an irresistible urge to hear some good music, pay a visit to the Iron Horse Coffehouse at 20 Center Street in downtown Northampton.

In its five and a half years (it opened in February 1979), the club has become a highly regarded institution, both within the folk community and within its geographical community. Record companies that release folk records speak highly of it because of the calibre of performers who play there. Performers like it because of the respect they receive for their music. A readers poll conducted by the Valley Advocate, a local weekly newspaper, resulted in the Iron Horse's selection as "Best Nightclub" in the area.

But despite the high respect the club has received over the years, it is far from intimidating. On the contrary, it is a very comfortable, attractive room whose staff adds to its pleasant atmosphere.

Central to the club's success is its 30-year-old founder and owner, Jordi Herold. Prior to opening the club, Jordi was a high school history teacher. During trips to Europe, he began to envision having "a little place that served espresso and red wine and cheese and candlelight. And there'd be this guitarist over in the corner and people playing chess and reading the New York Review of Books." The club started out that way, quickly becoming what someone called a "folk bar." To this day, one can still get espresso, red wine, cheese, and candlelight.

But the Iron Horse soon became a far more ambitious undertaking for Jordi, who now books 363 nights of music per year and offers an extensive food and drink menu from 11 a.m. to midnight or so.

In the Iron Horse's earliest days, music was not necessarily the main event. But within its first year, the Pioneer Valley Folklore Society down the road began turning away some national acts who approached them, suggesting that they call Jordi. And Jordi decided to book some of them. The first few acts he booked--Dave Van Ronk, Mary McCaslin and Jim Ringer, Ellen McIlwaine, Martin Carthy,



Jordi Herold at The Iron Horse

and Happy Traum--were name enough to generate interest in the "agenting community," as Jordi calls it. People seemed to think, "Now, that's a real room!" As a result, for a long time, Jordi simply chose from among the people who called him.

It was at that time that the club established its Sunday night concert format. Sunday nights were slow for the Iron Horse and for the performers. On those nights, some performers could afford to play an out-of-the-way room for a little less than a club in New York or Boston. That format has continued to work well for the Iron Horse.

Since that time, music has clearly continued to be what the Iron Horse is noted for. For a small club, seating only 85 people in a concert setting and up to 100 at other times, it offers an exceptional selection of music. Recent calendars have included Eric Andersen, Willie Dixon, John Hammond, Lui Collins, Mary McCaslin and Jim Ringer, New Riders of the Purple Sage, Chris Smither, Garnet Rogers, Allan

Holdsworth, Mose Allison, Sparky Rucker, McCoy Tyner, Jim Post, Claudia Schmidt, David Mallett, and Cris Williamson.

Jordi's standards for booking his club are rather unusual but apparently work very well. "We cater to people who are into live music and are into performances that aren't just entertainment--that have some kind of artistic statement." To meet this objective, Jordi looks for "some kind of veracity--a real, true, intense personal statement, clarity. The person really means what they are doing, and it's coming from inside. This person isn't just putting on a show. There's some definite connection between this person and their art. Not just that they do what they do well, because that holds very little interest to me."

Jordi finds it exciting "to break people, to be in on someone who you sense is going places. Whether that's building someone like Stan Rogers from 80 seats to 600 seats in the course of eight months or whether that's building George Winston from 85 seats to 2,000

seats, it's nice to be part of that process, to try to judge when you're going to be right and when you're not."

Jordi also feels it's important "to book people who are important to the music. Sometimes it's a risky thing to work with people who will probably never draw the way they did before, but were so much a part of getting things started. There is a soft spot in me for things like that that aren't exactly hard business sense but are important to acknowledge, just like it's important to book people who are still making it really big, even though we're probably not going to make any money by having them. It's still important to have them in the room just for the sense of completion."

But any "soft spots" Jordi may have are balanced out by a realistic, businesslike approach to owning and running the club. Jordi has seen other clubs go under when their owners were too romantic, booking acts they liked but couldn't afford. Instead, Jordi tries to offer the best music available within the price range he can afford. The Sunday concerts, mentioned before, are one of the ways he manages to bring name acts to his small room.

In recognition of the size of the community from which the Iron Horse draws its audience, Jordi claims he is unable to offer purely folk music. "Northampton has a resident population of 24,000 people or so, and there are the hill towns, but it's not like a major metropolitan area where you can be the club that does a certain kind of thing." Consequently, the Iron Horse features folk and acoustic music about seven-eighths of the time; other shows feature Jordi's second love, jazz, "mainly ECM-type," a label that records Keith Jarrett and Chick Corea.

The extensive, eight-page menu, Jordi explains, is a necessity. On week-nights, when there are no formal concerts, 100 percent of the door money goes to the performer. And on concert nights, the club often just breaks even. "So we have to have an appealing menu: what we sell is what we get."

The Iron Horse's decor is attractive, featuring a high tin ceiling and a balcony over the kitchen and bar. On the stairs leading to the balcony are copies of Rolling Stone and the Village Voice, presumably for the patrons to read as they sip their espresso and red wine. Wooden booths fill one wall downstairs; tables and the small stage fill the rest of the room. On the walls in the front entrance area and toward

the back of the room, near the bar, are photos of some of the performers who have played in the club, a la Folk City in New York. However, as Jordi laughingly notes, the rogues' gallery at the Iron Horse features a much more eclectic selection, ranging from folk to jazz to celtic to new wave. Musical instruments hang from the walls.

The Iron Horse's atmosphere varies from that of a concert room to a gathering place. From five to eight times a month, concerts are offered: two shows a night, advance tickets, and usually an attentive audience. Jordi considers the other nights to be "informal evenings with..." On those nights, the first of two sets begins at about 9 p.m., and people come and go as they please all evening. A pitcher for donations is passed by Jordi or a staff member. Cards on the tables suggest a donation of \$3 for the performer and request that, out of respect for the rest of the audience, people be quiet during the music. Sometimes they are; sometimes they aren't.

Jordi recognizes that the noise level is a trade-off that results from the club's informal atmosphere. But unlike club owners who don't seem to care how noisy an audience is, as long as they keep the bar busy, Jordi is not above asking a particularly noisy table to keep it down. Performers appreciate that, and are also impressed that Jordi actually listens to their songs, to the point of remembering their repertoires and sometimes requesting a favorite song.

Jordi's respect for the musicians and their music seems to be shared by the club's staff, many of whom have stayed with the club for years. They somehow manage to get people served without running blenders or dishwashers during songs, or walking up and down at inappropriate moments. Jordi or another member of the staff is always assigned as the performer's contact person. Performers know at the outset who will pay them at the end of the night, tell them when to go on, get their drink, and take care of any problems or needs that come up.

How Jordi was introduced to folk music is an interesting story. His parents were involved in what Utah Phillips has coined the "folk scare" of the fifties. And before there was such a thing as a 'hootenanny,' the Herolds held a monthly 'folk sing' at their house in New York City from 1958 until 1967. Anywhere from 15 to 50 people would get together to swap songs and teach songs. The basic rule was that

two out of three songs had to have a singable chorus. Jordi attended these folk sings from the age of four until he was thirteen, and was exposed to a lot of folk music during those years. Later, as a student at Hampshire College in Amherst (near Northampton), Jordi's interest in folk music was rejuvenated. His understanding of and respect for the needs of musicians was no doubt heightened during those years, when he partially put himself through college playing in a rock and roll band.

Jordi's love of music and his interest in booking good performers are borne out by the fact that he never seems to stop, even during vacations. He recently went to Ireland for the third time, taking one of his long-time staff members with him. They listened to a lot of celtic music "to see how the music is viewed over there, who is breaking there versus the hype we get--to make sure we're not booking people who may be unknown in their own country." As a result of the trip, over the next several years, Jordi plans to book some celtic artists he'd heard who have never played in the United States.

Because the Iron Horse seems to be doing so well and Jordi obviously seems to enjoy running it, it comes as somewhat of a surprise that the business is for sale to the right person or people. Jordi explains, "In terms of innovation, I've done everything I can do. I've personally plateaued with this. I'm a project-oriented person, and, though I'm in no hurry to leave, I know it's time for me to find something that I can really sink my teeth into. I'm happy to be here. Until this year I was building things, but I've brought it as far as I know how to bring it. I don't want to let it get to the point where I'm just going through the motions."

Jordi doesn't have definite plans for his next career, but says he would still be involved in concert promotions for settings with from 250 to 2,200 seats. The Iron Horse, he feels, has given him a nice living and lifestyle, and would be a great opportunity for someone else.

a folklorist's perspective

FOLK MUSIC AND POLITICS

by Jackson Braider

It is 1984. Ronald Reagan is running for re-election. Things are going pretty much as we imagined they would. The years continue to roll by with comforting regularity. As for Reagan's re-election bid, no one seriously believed last January that Reagan would honestly consider not running again--just another bit of B drama to get our hopes up.

It is not, however, the whys and wherefores of Orwellian prognostication or the slovenliness of American politics that concern me here. Depending on your point of view, either, "Le plus ça change, le plus c'est la meme chose," or, "Le plus ça change, le plus ça change." (The more things change, the more they stay the same," or, "The more things change, the more things change.")

Reagan's policy of less big government has actually brought about an increase in the number of people on the federal payroll. A higher level of prosperity at home has given rise to a dramatic increase in American indebtedness overseas. Truly, more is less and less is more. A suitable subject for folkloristic consideration, but not in this article.

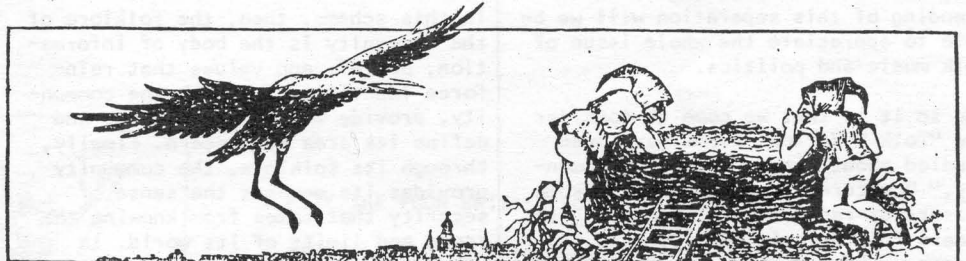
My interest here concerns the election issue of *Fast Folk* and the inevitable association it suggests between folk music and politics in the popular imagination. It is a matter of history and historical perspective and the curious problems that can arise as a result of how we--folklorists and folk musicians alike--identify ourselves.

Origins of Folklore and Folksinging

Though folklorists are by no means agreed on what is meant by the term "folk," there is at least some accord as to how their lore develops. It is largely a result of trial and error, and when something works, we keep it and pass on our new intelligence. Then others try it, and when they find that it works, they pass it. And so it goes from place to place and from generation to generation. This is the essence of "tradition," whether it pertains to story or legend, a way of preparing food, or singing a song. In the course of time and in the course of dissemi-

nation, this bit of intelligence will undergo some modification--sometimes great, sometimes small--but at heart, it is fundamentally the same thing we started out with.

Those of us who see themselves involved with the "folk"--whoever they are--in some way are the legatees of two separate yet related traditions. The folklorist can trace his lineage back to northern Europe and the British Isles into the eighteenth century, when the landed gentry and others of independent means began to inquire into the nature of peasant life.



Part of this interest was genuine enough, resulting from an honest admiration that the literate can sometimes have for the illiterate. But largely, the motivation seems to have come from a disaffection for the complexities of what was then contemporary life. Folklore study was--if the reader can believe a folklorist about this--the primary inspiration for the Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth century.

The modern folksinger can trace his origins, in the United States, back to the Homestead strikers of 1892, and from them to the Wobblies of the 1910's and on to the subsequent generations of Guthries, Seegers, Dylans, Ochs'es, and so on down to the present day.

Again the interest and the involvement were real, but they were also rather peripheral. As in the case of the early folklorists, the motivation propelling these so-called "folk" singers was largely one of disaffection with contemporary circumstances. The workers were being exploited and were seeking to improve their lot. Organizers would hold meetings and included music in part to entertain the crowd but also to provide them with a catchy means by which to focus their energy and their identity with

the group. (Similar cases are hymns and, ironically enough, the IBM songbook.) Though some of these singers came from the ranks of the membership, they were mainly brought in from the outside, as were many of the speakers who addressed these gatherings.

From these two little bits of history I would like to emphasize a pair of things that they both have in common. The first is that both the folklorist and the folksinger have generally not been members of the community to which they have attended. The second is that both the folklorist and the folksinger

have tended to be disaffected from their own cultural climes. In other words, they have wished things to be different, be it in terms of a fear of an oncoming technological revolution or an enhancement of the quality of life.

For example, we need go back only a generation in the contemporary folk scene to the Seeger brothers, Pete and Mike. Of the two, Pete has achieved the greater notoriety. A member of the Almanac Singers in the forties, Pete was blacklisted and later achieved fame with the Weavers in the mid- to late fifties. Mike, for his part, tended to be much more involved in the revival of traditional music in this country, as a solo performer, a member of the New Lost City Ramblers, and a folk song collector.

Were ours a traditional society, Pete and Mike would have been bearers of a particular body of lore passed on from singer to singer and modified and amended by each of them. They would have worked within the conventions of a particular style and generally established their respective trademarks in fairly subtle ways.

But Mike and Pete were the sons of Charles Seeger, a celebrated ethno-

musicologist, and the son and stepson, respectively, of Mary Seeger, a classical composer of some merit. And their real exposure to folk music came, it seems, from their maid, a black woman named Elizabeth Cotten, who achieved recognition in the course of the folk revival in the late fifties and early sixties and who still tours from coast to coast.

The Community

I have been trying up to this point to stress the rather curious and ironic division that occurs between the "folk" and the people who, through their skill or art, choose to identify themselves with them--namely, the folklorist and the folksinger. For both, the focus of the effort is generally on a group or community of which they are not a part. I believe that only through an understanding of this separation will we be able to appreciate the whole issue of folk music and politics.

And so it is that we come to consider the "folk." Various terms have been bandied about here--"group," "community," "culture," "society"--with some measure of recklessness. According to modern folkloristic theory, each of these can be and, indeed, is a "folk." And the things the members of these various social structures have in common is their respective folklores--their traditions, if you will. Thus, we can define a "folk" in terms of anything that unifies its members--age, sex, religion, occupation, place of origin, political affiliation, sexual preference, and so on. There is even such a thing these days as a "family folklore" to go along with the likes of occupational folklore and foodways (the folklore of food preparation and consumption). And from this conceptual scheme we can draw two truths: without a community there is no folklore and without a folklore there is no community.

Now, communities--and I'm using the term here generically to describe any kind of group of people--have varying depths of commitment, depending largely on how isolated they are. The more isolated the community, the smaller the membership and the more profound the member's sense of identification. But the strength of the community and the measure of commitment it draws from its members may also depend on the nature of the challenges facing it. In times of war, for example, patriotism or love of country--one's identification with one's homeland--is more keenly felt than it is in times of peace.

Thus, workers being victimized and exploited by their employers are more likely to identify themselves and unionize than a group that is treated well. Similarly, families tend to band together more when a husband, wife, brother, or sister is ill than when no threat occurs.

What all this suggests is that the primary purpose of the community is to survive and perpetuate itself, provide help and support for its members, and draw from its members the cooperation necessary to carry on. Through its traditions, the community provides its membership the sum total of its experience and offers them the various acceptable options with which to deal with particular situations. One might call these accepted patterns of behavior.

In this scheme, then, the folklore of the community is the body of information, belief, and values that reinforce identification with the community, provide its *raison d'etre*, and define its area of concern. Finally, through its folklore, the community provides its members the sense of security that comes from knowing the scope and limits of its world. In other words, stay within those bounds and the community will provide its support.

There are three things that threaten the community. One is confrontation with the unknown; another, internal division; and the third, the external influence.

Folk Musician as Political Activist

Having defined terms in true academic fashion, we can now begin to see how the folk musician in the present day must certainly be in some measure a political activist. He or she functions as the external force that can, at least, disrupt the status quo of the community, by bringing a fresh eye and perspective to those things which people within the community come to take for granted: an injustice, an hypocrisy, the continuing abuse of one group of people at the hands of another.

But the problem we confront is twofold. As disruptors of the status quo, we are invariably seen as harbingers of pain, and in this era of immediate gratification and no apparent long-term sense of the consequences of actions, pain outmoded. Similarly, while we are aware of the need to contribute to the community and support its other members so they will in turn

support us, contemporary fashion and its individualistic tunnel vision pays little heed to social duty and obligation. We will, such thinking tells us, at least pretend to go it alone and do it on our own. Thus the second part of the folksinger's problem--the give-and-take of communal membership--is also outmoded.

And in the midst of all this, we must be aware that in this new-wave conservatism, "pragmatism" and "reality" are the cornerstones of a happy life. In the breakdown of modern social order and the growing inability to communicate stemming from the increased specialization of our labors (what better symbol of this than the Walkman?) the folksinger realizes that these two watchwords reflect a fundamental lack of caring and allow our fellow citizens merely to shrug apathetically at the thought that one-sixth of the nation lives below the poverty level. But what more can we expect from people who have everything they want and whose only concern is having more?

Well, as they say, "no pain, no gain."

But still, we in the world of folk survive in our own little community, maintaining our own values, systems of beliefs, and ideals. And during this time, when what we say is not fashionable, we can still hone our tools and be ready when the time comes to strike.

For there is no doubt that cracks are going to appear in the walls of indifference, even if they do come about as the result of a thrown brick or a petrol bomb. Four more years of Reagan will certainly do a great deal to rot the mortar, and for that, we still have to feel a rather perverse enjoyment. Such thinking is a part of our heritage: Having chosen to be outsiders in our land, we must wait to be asked in, like travelers on stand-by--an effort at anger, honesty, and gallows humor.

Until then, though, we must be aware of the ills of our society and seek out where we will be best able to address the needs of the people and bathe their wounds in salted water--not for neglecting us but for neglecting and endangering our world. Sad to say that in this sorry situation, we will both punish and heal.

Oh, God. It's no small wonder people don't ask us to dinner.

SIDE LYRICS ONE

MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO (THE BANANA SONG)

Well its 3 Million B.C., a quarter past two
The primates are hanging out with nothing to do
They haven't figured out how to stand and walk
They can't use tools and they sure can't talk
Two get in a tussle 'bout a piece of fruit
The rest join in and they all get to it
Fussing and fighting, scratching and biting
All around the tree the fur is flying
Raising a ruckus, for miles you can hear the sound
And when they're finally finished there is nothing
left to pass around

Chorus:
Monkey see, monkey do. I am a better monkey than you
Let's have a fight and when we're through
We'll see who gets the biggest banana
Monkey do, monkey see. Who's gonna climb to the top
of the tree
Come on, all you monkeys, and follow me
'Cause I've got the biggest banana

Now it's been a long time since those halcyon days
Man and Monkey have parted their ways
We've got culture and civilization
Therapists, lawyers and video dating
Yeah, but off in the distance there's something I hear
Could it be this is an election year
There's fussing and fighting, scratching and biting
All around the country the fur is flying
But they've spent twenty years abiding by the rules
of the game
So it's not surprising politicians sort of sound the same

Chorus:
Monkey see, monkey do. I am a better monkey than you
Let's have us an election and when we're through
We'll see who gets the biggest banana
Monkey do, monkey see. Who's gonna climb to the top of
the tree
Come on, all you monkeys and vote for me
'Cause I've got the biggest banana

Well the West is west and the East is east
And we're both sitting down to the same damn feast
Stuffing our faces with both of our hands
Sharpening knives as fast as we can
And money feeds the fires in a marathon dance
We both go broke giving generals chances
For fussing and fighting, scratching and biting
All around the world the fur'll be flying
Sooner or later someone's gonna make a hell of a sound
And when we're finally finished there'll be nothing left
to pass around

Chorus:
Monkey see, monkey do. I am a better monkey than you
Let's have ourselves a war and when we're through
We'll see who gets the biggest banana
Monkey do, monkey see. Who's gonna climb to the top of
the tree
Come on, all you monkeys, and fight for me
'Cause I've got the biggest banana

Come on, all you monkeys, it's World War III
And I've got the biggest banana

© 1984 by Josh Joffen

SHOESTRINGS

ramble through the briar and brush
grass stains and burrs
on my shoestrings
I am just a kid who played in trees
who climbs a rock and skins his knee
comes crying home with blood
on his shoestrings

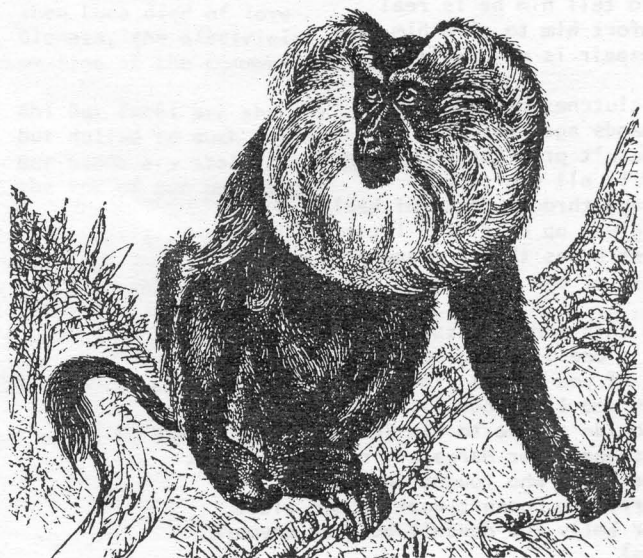
chorus:
ain't it funny how we come to hang on things
it seems we just get by on a shoestring

it seems that once we learn to tie
the tear should never leave the eye
though still I stumble, fall and cry
I don't believe that not supposed to be
in my shoe strings (chorus)

all well and grown the elder son
is always told that he's the one to fill the shoes
when daddy's gone but that race has already run
and he won't lose his soul for his shoestrings
(chorus)

so gamble down the years of age
the sky's afire and sunsets rage
still we gather and bind the page
sneakers from the wire
hang by their shoestrings (chorus)

© 1984 by Billy Jones



FOR MARGARET

The sterile white Florence Nightingale
Makes her way down the hall
To attend to her patients
Whom she never sees at all.
To her they're just faceless old folks
Too poor and weak to be out on their own
She doesn't see their pleading gaze
They don't want to die alone.

Margaret, silent Margaret
Hears voices in the hallway
Outside her bleak and barren room
Where she sits and stares all day.
But Margaret, lonely Margaret,
Just watches the world go by
And as the birds go by her window
She wishes she could fly.

Billy remembers fondly
Of his years spent in the infantry corps
And he's so proud of the medals he won
In the first world war.
Coming home victorious
And the welcome the doughboys received
But that was sixty-five years ago
Now he can't help but feel he's been deceived.

Chorus:
In their state institutions
With no hope of restitution
For the pride that was stolen
For the life that they once knew
No one ever comes to visit
No one even knows they're there
Trapped inside their empty souls
With the dreams they'd love to share.

Harry's face is twisted in pain
And his hands cover his ears
Because the screaming that haunts him so
Is the silence that nobody hears
He reaches out for anyone
Just to tell him he is real
To comfort him to give him love
But despair is all he feels.

Emily clutches her rosary
With hands aged and weak
She doesn't pray for forgiveness
Relief is all she seeks
She prays through force of habit
She's given up on divine intervention
She just hopes that someone will end
Her life of one dimension. (chorus)

I know this song's a sad one
But it's one I had to tell
'Cause if you do all right
The way you live your life
You shouldn't have to die in hell
So this one's for Margaret, silent Margaret
And for Billy who fought in the war
For Harry who doesn't want to die alone
And for Emily who doesn't believe anymore.
(chorus)

So won't you please listen
Won't you show you care?

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

Everybody let's have some fun
You only live but once and when you're dead you're done
Let the good times roll, let the good times roll
Don't care if you're young or old, Honey let the good times roll.

Listen everybody, don't you play me cheap
I've got fifty-seven babies I can't afford to keep
Let the good times roll, let the good times roll
Don't care if you're young or old, Honey let the good times roll.

Love is nice when it's understood
It's even better when you're feeling good
Let the good times roll, let the good times roll
Don't care if you're young or old, Honey let the good times roll.

You've got me flappin' like a flag on a pole
Come on baby let the good times roll
Let the good times roll, let the good times roll
Don't care if you're young or old, Honey let the good times roll.

Traditional

DANCE OF THE KNEE-JERK REACTIONARIES

We don't want another Bay of Pigs
Fellas, we ain't playin' in the minor leagues
This time we better do it right
Last time we didn't do it right
We don't want another Vietnam
Where they made a monkey out of Uncle Sam
This time we better do it right
Last time we didn't do it right
If we gotta do it, then we oughta do it right.

We don't want another desert one
Where our team got clobbered playin' bump and run
Next time we better do it right
Last time we didn't do it right
We don't want another Lebanon
Where our team got clobbered playin' cut and run
Next time we better do it right
Last time we didn't do it right
If we gotta do it, then we oughta do it right.

They got trouble in El Salvador
We'll go down and help them, that's what friends
are for
But this time we gotta do it right
This time we gotta do it right
If we gotta do it, then we oughta do it right.

© 1984 by W.D. Neely

A VEGLIA

Rimani a veglia, stasera
parleremo tra noi del piu' e del meno
accanto al fuoco non avrai freddo
togli le braccia da quella piastra di marmo

Questo paese e' come un vestito da sposa
cogli anni diventato sempre piu' stretto
disse Maria che mai si vesti' di bianco
ma che ne vide tanti, tanti al suo fianco

E quanti figli diede alla luce
alcuni nati e morti nell'ultima guerra
altri combattono tuttora la miseria
ed altri cadon giu', giu' a tarda sera

E' morto Pietro dal disonore
e' morto Nazareno d'amore
e' morto Gianni, lo zio di Battista
che nel '40 era un gran fascista

Ah! Gli studenti van come barche a vela
nei lunghi corridoi spazzati dal vento
e i nostri vecchi marciscono nell'ozio
mentre svaniscon con la luna nel pozzo

E' l'Italia e' un calzino di lana grigia
tenuto troppo a mollo nell'acqua salata
disse Vittorio* che mai si vesti' di nero
ma che ne vide tanti, tanti sul sentiero

E la liberta' degli operai
e' mantenere il vino sul tavolino
gli amici al bar ed una serva per moglie
ed una Maddalena per le loro voglie

E' morto Andrea di malattia
e' morto Luca poi di pazzia
e' morto Gionata, l'elettricista
sfilando ad un corteo comunista

Ah! Le nostre facce son scaltre di rughe
ma 'si' ignoranti nella fatica
le nostre mani son intinte di terra
l'inchiostro d'una qualsiasi grafica

Rimani a veglia, stasera
parleremo tra noi del piu' e del meno
accanto al fuoco non avrai freddo
togli le braccia da quella piastra di marmo
togli le braccia da quella piastra di marmo

© 1984 by Germana Pucci
Music by Germana Pucci; Lyrics by Germana
Pucci and Giancarlo Biagi

Translation:
EVENING GATHERING

Stay for awhile, tonight
we'll talk among ourselves of this and that
get close to the fire, you won't be cold
lift your arms off that marble table
and think:

"This country is like a wedding dress
that gets tighter with each passing year"
said Mary who never wore white
but had seen many, so many at her side

And she bore so many children
some were born and died during the last war
others still fight their misery
and others fall down in the evening

Pietro died of dishonor
Nazareno died of love
Gianni, the uncle of Battista, died
a great fascist in the forties

Ah! The students float like sailboats
through long corridors swept by the wind
and our folks rot in idleness
vanishing with the moon in the well

"Italy is a grey wool sock
soaked too long in salty water"
said Vittorio* who never wore black
but had seen many, so many along the road

And freedom for the laborer
is keeping wine on the table
friends at the bar, a slave for a wife
and a Magdalen for his desire

Andrea died of illness
then Luca died of love
Gionata, the electrician, died
on line at the communist parade

Ah! Our faces are sharply wrinkled
but dulled to such ignorance
our hands are stained by the earth
the ink of our own pages

Stay for awhile, tonight
we will talk among ourselves of this and that
get close to the fire, you won't be cold
lift your arms off that marble table
lift your arms off that marble table

*Italian king who abdicated in 1946

Translation by Sam Heath

SIDE LYRICS TWO

AMNESIA

Time can go so slowly in a barroom late at night,
Where the people move like ghosts through the smoky candlelight.
The band is playing something that's got distance, man, they're cool,
In the shadows of the back room, some old boys are playing pool.
And this blue light music's got me sinking into deep amnesia.

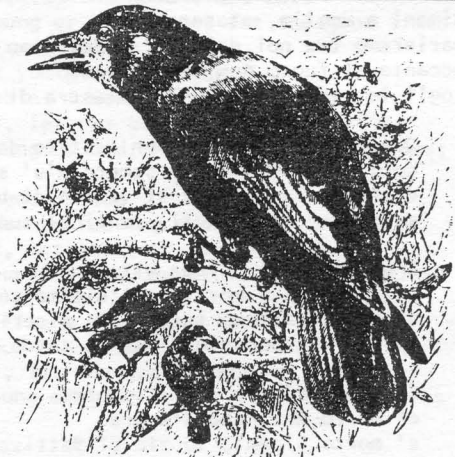
I get the funniest feeling, it must be deja vu...
I'll tell you something, brother, just one time through will do.
It all comes back so clearly, when I only stop to think.
And on that note I think I'll go and get myself another drink.
And this blue light music's got me sinking into deep amnesia.

Break:

There's a joke I'd like to tell you, but I'm not so good with jokes;
It seems there's always someone I'm offending.
My timing's off, and I cough, I smoke a bit,
And they say I always telegraph the ending.

So I guess I'll call it quits now, it doesn't make much sense.
I hang around to see you, but you keep me in suspense.
The chairs are on the table, and the band is getting paid,
And I'm still trying to hang on to those memories they played,
But this blue light music's got me sinking into deep amnesia

© 1984 by Bert Lee



I ALWAYS WORE THE COLORS OF MY COUNTRY

I wanted to be thankful to be hopeful sentimental
to be grateful and deep down satisfied
I felt like I was lucky born with freedom educated
a native in a country filled with pride
and I
always wore the colors of my country
I always wore the colors of my country

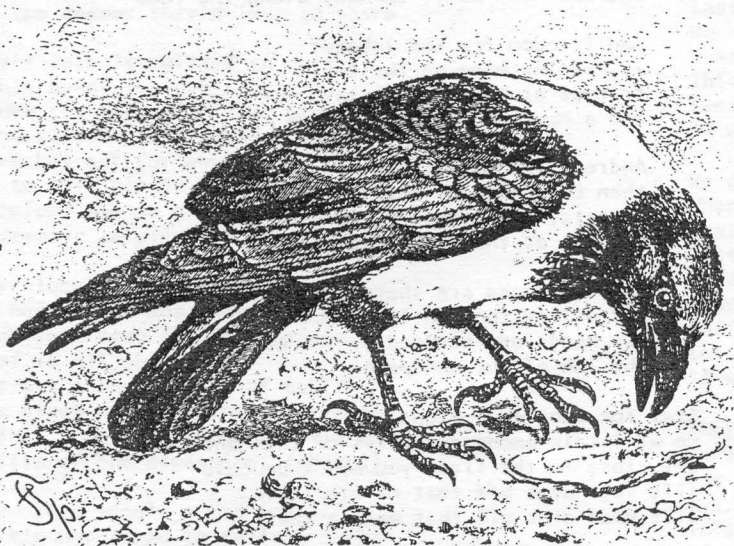
now the red white and blue
just doesn't do
doesn't say what it said in creation
the red doesn't glare and the white doesn't care
and the blue's just a wave
on the ocean

I heeded all the warnings looked both ways
used my head
and I weighed both sides of every question
I exercised my vote and I exercised my mind
and I exercised my wallet to exhaustion
and I
always wore the colors of my country
I always wore the colors of my country

now the red white and blue
just doesn't do
doesn't say what it said in creation
the red doesn't glare and the white doesn't care
and the blue's just a wave
on the ocean

just a wave...

© 1981 by Ned Andrew Solomon



Lyrics to "Hey Mack" (Peter Wilson), "Bluesman" (Susan Firing), and "The Nightmare Room" (Sherwood Ross) were not available at press time. We hope to publish them in a future issue.

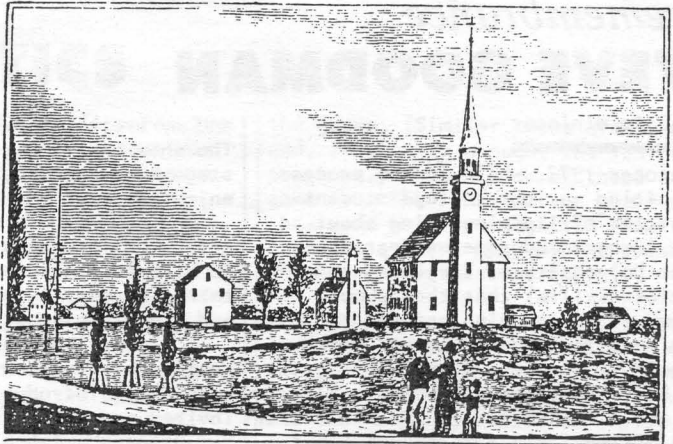
MY FATHER'S AMERICA

A rose pressed in a Bible
And a dream that he brought from the old country
That streets were paved with gold
In a land where men stood tall
So my father gave America to me.

I can see him waiting with anticipation
On a ship that he traveled 'cross the sea
And on a foggy night when he caught a glimpse of light
From the torch of Lady Liberty.

Chorus: Give me your poor, your huddled masses
Sail the land of the brave and free
But like a rose that's been crushed in a Bible
My father gave America to me.
Give me your poor your huddled masses
My father gave America to me (twice)
In words that my father could believe (three times)

© 1984 by Joe Virgo



I PITY THE POOR BRITISH SOLDIER

I pity the poor British soldier
Who must contain his nation's guilt
In the first and the last of an empire built
By not caring how much or whose blood must be spilled.
Yes, I pity the poor British soldier.

From those he protects he gets no support
Unless he has something good to report.
One more notch in his gun, one more life cut short.
Yes, I pity the poor British soldier.

He lives and he dies at the end of a gun,
And there's nothing to boast when his duty is done.
And the blood on both sides, once spilled, becomes one.
Yes, I pity the poor British soldier.

Plucked in his prime from a Liverpool street
A garbage can tips and his heart skips a beat.
"Oh, just two more weeks and my tour is complete."
Yes, I pity the poor British soldier.

I pity this man that I have in my sight.
The one who will drop when my shot shakes the night.
Though deep in my heart I know I am right,
Still, I pity the poor British soldier.

© 1983 by Kirk P. Kelly

a remembrance
STEVE GOODMAN

by Willie Nininger

In October 1977, while in the process of visiting various college student activities offices inquiring about gigs, I convinced some undergraduates at the University of Virginia (Charlottesville) that they should hire me as the opening act for their upcoming Gala Autumn Concert, which was going to feature Steve Goodman. They had hardly heard of him, but I had, and I walked out of the University Union office feeling as though I had pulled something over on them.

Like so many other young folksingers, I had already been influenced to a dangerous degree by Steve's unique solo show. I had also occasionally seen him performing with such singers as John Prine, John Hartford, and even Fred Holstein. Therefore, I had become a fan to the extent that I was glad Arlo Guthrie had recorded one of his songs, but I've always held a soft spot in my heart for Steve's original arrangement.

Once the deal was sealed, I convinced my entire family to drive down from New York to help me with this historic (for me) occasion.

We arrived early for our sound check at Old Cabell Hall, which was designed by Thomas Jefferson and was the closest thing I had yet seen to Carnegie Hall. As usual, we warmed up with "City of New Orleans," which under any other circumstances would have been our opening number.

Halfway through our run-through I looked up into the balcony. To my bewilderment and shock I saw Steve himself peering down, accompanied by the equally unique Jethro Burns.

"Oh my god," I thought, this guy thinks we're actually going to do his big number and that we're the biggest rubes in the universe."

Of course I was totally wrong. Steve came downstairs, cordially introduced Jethro and himself to us, and wished us the best of luck. But I still felt a bit uneasy and felt obliged to assure him that we were not going to perform his song.

We did our show: my father Eugene played his violin and my sister Annie

and my brother Jimmy sang with me. The show went fine, and we left the stage happy and ready to relax and enjoy the rest of the evening.

After the intermission, Steve did 45 hilarious minutes and then escalated things further by bringing out Jethro and his mandolin.

We thought the show was almost finished when Steve introduced us again and invited us onstage to do the "City of New Orleans" with him. We were slightly in shock, but we went on. He usually played the song in C major, but that night he did it in the key of D because he knew that's the key that we were used to playing it in. Then he did "Mama Don't Allow" and gave us all a solo. After that, he still kept us on and did a half hour more of I don't quite remember what, but I know that one of the songs was "My Girl" and that everybody sang along.

When the concert was finally over, Steve went backstage, but within a few minutes he was at it again. I don't think I will ever forget watching my father opening the dressing room door and being faced with the sight of Steve standing on a folding chair in the middle of a smoke-filled room, singing some old love song at the top of his lungs. Meanwhile the rest of us were sitting around and singing along, and Jethro was sipping a beer, seeming not to mind.

Eventually a road manager appeared with a watch and began to suggest in a progressively frantic manner that they should leave for a plane they were supposed to catch.

Steve still held out for a few more minutes and then mumbled, "Well, I guess it's about time to get back in the cage."

He was still singing as he shuffled out the door.

Ed. note: Steve Goodman died September 20, 1984, after a long illness.

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, Large, or Extra-Large.*



Enhance your spring and summer wardrobe with a Fast Folk Musical Magazine T-shirt!

Our 100% cotton T-shirts are black with a lilac logo. Sizes: Medium, Large, and Extra-Large (sorry, no Smalls).

T-shirts are \$7.50 postpaid, or free with a new one-year subscription or a renewal. (See subscription information in this issue.)

To order, send a check or money order made payable to The Fast Folk Musical Magazine to:

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

Texas troubador **ERNEST TUBB**

by Randall Poe

Ernest Tubb would have been a great folk singer. He had the perfect voice for it. The fact of the matter is that Ernest heard Jimmie Rodgers before he heard Woody Guthrie, and that was all there was to it.

Ernest Tubb, the Texas Troubador, was born on February 9, 1914, near Crisp, Texas. He died September 6, 1984, at Baptist Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. During the seventy years in between, he was responsible for more Country music "firsts" than any other artist.

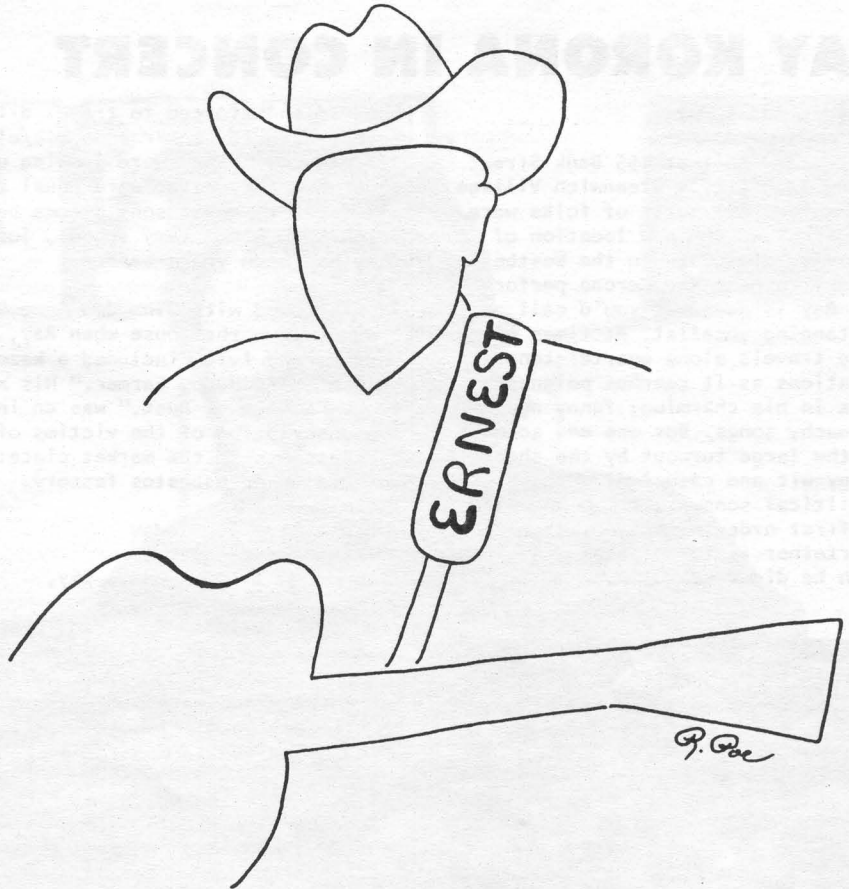
Tubb, along with Country singer Red Foley and Decca Records A&R man Paul Cohen, was responsible for the first recording sessions to take place in Nashville. He was the headliner of the first Country music show at Carnegie Hall on September 18, 1947. He was the first to play a form of Country music now called Honky-Tonk. He was one of the earliest members of the Grand Ole Opry to use electric instruments on that sacred stage. In fact, thanks to Ernest Tubb, the word "hillbilly" was dropped by Decca Records in the early forties and replaced with his suggested substitute--"Country."

Among Tubb's Country standards, many of which he wrote himself, the biggest hit was his 1941 recording of "Walking the Floor Over You," his theme song for the next forty-three years.

The story behind the song is a classic. In an effort to come up with new songs for his next recording session, Ernest was pacing back and forth in his rented room when the title popped into his head. He sat down and wrote "Walking the Floor Over You" in twenty minutes. Sometimes it's as simple as that. Tubb's other hits included "Waltz Across Texas," "Filipino Baby," "Thanks a Lot," "Sweet Thang" (with Loretta Lynn), and "Rainbow at Midnight."

In 1965, Ernest Tubb was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. He was preceded by only a handful of others, including his idol, Jimmie Rodgers.

In 1979, Pete Drake produced an album entitled Ernest Tubb: The Legend and the Legacy, Volume One. The record was



a series of duets and trios by Ernest and current top Country artists. The recording provided Tubb with a hit single when he teamed up with fellow Texan Willie Nelson on "Waltz Across Texas."

Tubb's health began to decline during the making of Legend and Legacy. Dates were frequently cancelled and rescheduled. Despite Pete Drake's optimistic title, volume two of the proposed series was never recorded.

Ernest Tubb was respected by almost everyone in the Country music industry. Kris Kristofferson once said he would walk from California to Nashville to get to sing with Tubb. When the movie E.T. was released in Hollywood, a single was almost immediately released in Nashville entitled "E.T. Still Means Ernest Tubb to Me."

Ernest Tubb always ended each concert with the line, "Be better to your neighbor, and you'll have better neighbors." Not a bad philosophy at all.

Ten years ago Cal Smith gave Tubb the best epitaph any man could ask for: "One thing I'm sure of, if Ernest Tubb doesn't go to heaven, then there just isn't a heaven." Amen.

Elliott Murphy Information Society



We publish a bi-monthly newsletter to keep you informed of Elliott's touring and recording plans. Plus we offer hard to get Elliott Murphy items; records, teeshirts, posters, songbooks, etc. For more information or membership, please write **THE ELLIOTT MURPHY INFORMATION SOCIETY** P.O. Box 209, Ludlow, VT. 05149, U.S.A.

RAY KORONA IN CONCERT

by Lydia Adams Davis

The concert hall at 155 Bank Street in New York City's Greenwich Village was packed. All sorts of folks were crowding into the new location of The People's Voice Cafe in the Westbeth Gallery to hear Ray Korona perform. Now, Ray is not what you'd call an outstanding vocalist. At times his voice travels along quarter-tone variations as it reaches poignant notes in his charming, funny and unpreachy songs. But one can account for the large turnout by the sheer energy-wit and casual directness of a political songwriter who knows that the first order of business for an entertainer is to entertain the folks, which he did very well.



Alan Beck

Ray Korona

Ray presented a well rehearsed, balanced program of his original songs. I had never seen Ray perform before, so the experience was refreshingly new, as was his staged presentation of several of the numbers. For example, his opening song, "The Office Song," featured Ivce playing percussion on an old typewriter! The theme of working carried them to "Factory" by Bruce Springsteen, which had the enthusiastic crowd singing along. The next song asked, "Where does it all go wrong? Where do all the lovers go?" Each sees each in the past tense.

Ray's inter-song comments were wonderfully perceptive and funny. In introducing "Johnny and Jimmy," he brought up the disparity between what one is taught to expect in childhood and what one actually encounters in the teen and young adult years. The song itself is about the irony of two boy-

hood friends forced to travel different paths by their economic/class differences. "They were growing up equal but they never were equal at all." Later, their sons become best friends in elementary school, just as they had been years before.

Ray followed with "The Job Song," which brought down the house when Ray, Steve Snyder, and Ivce included a kazoo trio of "The Happy Farmer." His next song, "Houses of Dust," was an incisive description of the victims of carelessness in the market place: the workers in an asbestos factory.

Don't live for today
In houses of dust
Tomorrow's too soon to pay,

the song cautions. But then, people must eat.

Ray had the audience singing with him on his next song, "I Hear You Singing," which he calls his "cheering up song":

I hear you singing the night away
And soon I'm singing along
Of love and loss and days gone by
Let's sing one more song.

In "What Can You Say to the Rain," Ivce contributed strong duet harmony with Ray. Both sang well and blended excellently, particularly on the ending. But their rendition was unsettled

by a flat flute solo, and I really had to squirm during the mercifully short break the flute player took. Earlier penny whistle accompaniment had been adequate, so one suspects that the flute may have been a last-minute, unrehearsed addition.

The set ending featured outstanding special effects: African thumb instrument plus mallets on an autoharp.

"E.S.P." left the audience eager for the second part of the program, which followed after a guest appearance by Womansong.

The second set was good too. Ray did an R&R a la Dylan tune called "They're Trimming the Fat Right Off the Budget." The audience roared. He led the audience in singing "Come Fare Away" by Jean Ritchie. Ivce played the dulcimer beautifully. Barry's bass was warm and solid. This was a gentle and sincere rendition.

The set flew by with serio-humor, sing-alongs, and listens, which included "Strange Food," a small-town toxic nightmare; "Song for a Potter," a solo in which Ivce sang with a clear, boy-soprano voice that well expressed Ray's song, and the rousing "Paper," which I thoroughly enjoyed:

You can scream, you can plead,
You can argue all night.
They may be wrong, you may be right.
You can have what you need,
You can get what you want,
If you've got the right amount of paper.



SPECIAL OFFER
ON COMPLETE VOLUMES
OF FOLKSCENE
NOW \$10 PER VOLUME
(\$12 OUTSIDE U.S.)
ALL ISSUES IN ALL 10
VOLUMES AVAILABLE
(1973-1982)

- a real collector's item
- a unique gift
- invaluable folk resource

send SASE for detailed list of volumes
FOLKSCENE, P.O. BOX 64545
LOS ANGELES, CA 90064



England's top folk quarterly, (southern-born, now national in coverage) getting to grips with the best in new and old roots music from Britain & abroad. At least 60 A4 pages full of interviews, features, letters, news, the most comprehensive album review coverage and most effective folk advertising. Over 12,000 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). Add £1 before conversion if paying in \$ cheques/I.M.O.s. Send to Southern Rag, 2 Eastdale, East Street, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7TB, England.

RECORD REVIEWS

by Byrne Power

The Nee Ningy Band, Get Nung

The Nee Ningy Band's *Get Nung* album is not new, really. It's just been ignored. Maybe it's their record label Biograph, which is not known for folk artists to the degree that Rounder, Flying Fish, and Philo are. But this group and this record are perhaps among the most important (not to mention the most fun) events to happen in folk in the eighties.

It's not that I feel folk is dormant. Quite the reverse: traditional music has enjoyed an unprecedented comeback in the last ten years. (I'm referring strictly to traditional forms, not protest songs and the like.) And it shows no signs of falling off in the near future.

Yet, even considering that, the 1981 release of *Get Nung* has laid a challenge down to folk artists caught in the progressive/sensitive web. This is not new-age music, nor jazzy bluegrass in the Grisman vein. It is not protest music, nor is it strictly traditional. And yet its traditional roots hang out like threads of yarn behind a tapestry.

Imagine this scenario: Some group wanted to play heavy bar band rhythm and blues but felt a strong tug towards odd ethnic strains (Cajun, African, Irish, etc.). They couldn't scrape the money together for electric guitars and electric amplification so they decided to go acoustic. Or consider this: What will rock musicians be doing after some catastrophe (oil shortage, water shortage, general economic breakdown) robs us of our electricity? When you listen to Nee Ningy's "Annie Had a Baby," "Bona-partie's Retreat," or "The Yellow Rose of Texas" (?), you find the answer.

It's something like acoustic rock and roll. And boy does this get fun. I mean, "Annie Had a Baby" done here rivals the original by Hank Ballard for sheer audacity and spirit. "Bamako Bop" is an African fiddle tune that snakes about with more curves than the grand prix. And "Have a Good Time" is great judgment day blues. This album should satisfy anyone whose idea of

great music is Chuck Berry, Planxty, or the Balfa Brothers. More than that, in a serious way, this album points the way out of the dilemma of bombast, overamplification, and pretentiousness that weakens modern music at so many turns. Now, if only these geniuses would tour....

Barrence Whitfield and the Savages

Yes, I'm sorry, Mister Whitfield. I know you guys aren't folkies or anything. I didn't mean to insinuate.... Could you put the gun away, please? Now, I just want to review your record on Mamou for this little magazine called *Fast Folk*. Put that gun down! You guys are the fastest folks doing old fifties style rhythm and blues in town, aren't you? I thought you'd like to hear that. So why do you care if I write about it for a bunch of bleeding heart folkies? It's exposure, isn't it?

Seriously, I think the way you guys do your thing is probably more traditional than half the folk acts in town. Take "Fat Mama" for instance. Now that's a phrase I haven't heard in music for ages. I mean, everyone's got to be either anorexic or muscle bound these days. But, gee, to get me cheerful gurgling along with you on a slobby chorus of "Big Fat Mama," well, that's quite an accomplishment.

Or who else these days dedicates a song to one of America's great folk heroes, King Kong? And what can I say about "Go Ahead and Burn"? This revival of an archaic American dance step is worthy of inclusion in the Smithsonian's American music archive. I mean, you savages sure put down some wild old fashioned dance grooves. I really go ape over "Walk Out" and "Savage Sax." This stuff cooks with that fifties flavor in overdrive.

By the way, did you ever listen to any hard-core punk groups? Sorry.... Sorry I mentioned it. Just take your hand off the trigger. Uh....Uh....Did I tell you that I felt this was probably going to be one of the ten best records of the year? I thought you'd like that. Well, I've got to get going now. I appreciated the time. You guys are cool. I mean, anyone who calls a dance tune the "Georgia Slop" ranks pretty high in my book. Well, goodbye now....(Bang!!!!)

Robin and Linda Williams, Close As We Can Get

Robin and Linda Williams (on their new *Flying Fish* album) return to the same late fifties/early sixties period, but not for rhythm and blues. Instead, they take the unfettered sounds of country at its purest as their prime inspiration.

Linda's voice is gutsy. She could be a great bluesy balladeer if her voice weren't so good singin' down-home country. She sings with the roadwise intelligence of an all night truck stop waitress serving her last coffee on the graveyard shift. She gives her solo turns an authenticity that comes natural. Her rendition of "Train Whistle Blues" is more than acceptable in the Jimmie Rodgers canon; uptempo numbers like "Fifties Country" and "Pan American Boogie" are given rollicking performances that clearly demonstrate her love for the music.

Robin, on the other hand, has an earthy solidity, similar in some respects to Ian Tyson's recent western albums, though more southern and more roadhouse than cowboy. Robin takes the lead on many of the more emotional ballads. His "Hillybilly Hell" is a serious yet loving tribute to Tex Ritter's "Hillbilly Heaven." And "Poor Red Georgia Dirt" is interpreted with the real feeling of one who understands the nobility of the hard life of the tired, financially burdened farm family.

Finally, let me point out the closing song on this album, "Don't Let Me Come Home a Stranger." This is one of the more moving songs I've heard this year in any genre. It hits me where I live--in New York City, in a place where the loneliness of alienation runs deep--ruts into the pavement. A rut, they say, is a grave with both ends knocked out. *Time* magazine articles aside, the American way of life is nearly homeless (plenty of houses, mind you). Our houses are filled with strangers. And in the middle of such pain, a song like this one comes as a plea from the heart. And when they sing, you feel the depth of it.

Will there come a time when the memories fade
And pass on with the long, long years
When the ties no longer bind?
Lord save me from this darkest fear.■

(Continued from page 2)

traveled to a concert at SpeakEasy in New York City, he remarked, "You know, you're a throwback. No one listens to folk music any more."

"I don't care. I'm not faddish, anyway," I defended.

He smiled affectionately and squeezed my hand.

But I did care, I realized with a shiver. When record stores, restaurants, and radio, cable television, and bars all resounded with monosyllabic grunts, beeps, thumping and humping, who, honestly, was the throwback? Had not this new "music" returned to the Neanderthal era?

As a child during the fifties, when my friends girated and screamed to early rock and roll, I crept into the world of my imagination via my mother's classical record collection. I made up childish stories and danced a primitive ballet to Chopin or Tchaikowski. Belatedly, in the early sixties, I grew to appreciate the maturing rock and roll genre, then discovered Dylan, Joan Baez, Donovan, Buffy St. Marie, Gordon Lightfoot, and the other seekers after truth and human beauty. By 1970, when I graduated from college, I had a sizeable record collection--mostly folk--and thrilled to live performances, even in Michigan, of some of these artists. Even Joni Mitchell played to coffee houses in those days, singing of silver summer pipers and ghostly galleons, of fallen maidens and lonely beggars. Alas, those days are history.

A divorce and two disastrous moves--including a colorful stay in Berkeley, California--completed the near destruction of that record collection, but the dream of brotherhood, though tarnished and shaken, lived on. My perception of the New York folk music scene was fleeting, at best, limited as it was during the ensuing years to a fading broadcast signal of WQXR-AM, reaching me blurrily through static and Ohio country music twang, from my incredible Grundig receiver in Michigan. Only some of the Canadian artists were readily available from the less commercial of the balladeers.

There is a cyclical view of history: many poor or divided nations were once rich or powerful, while the superstates of today will someday be laid low. In the vast international plan of centuries, relativity rules. Only God, in his infinite silence, knows whether

those people who once conquered vast lands but who are now subjects of a new master, may rise again to another glory.

On a lesser scale, the generation of the eighties, complacent and self-seeking, was spawned by the generation of the fearful and apathetic fifties. The old liberals of the thirties taught the activist youth of the sixties their faith and courage. May we hope that the anti-war and civil rights fighters of the sixties may hearten the children of the nineties to try again?

I knew my lucky leprochaun as a disembodied voice, not echoing through a windy moor or laughing down a fairy glen, but courtesy of the U.S. mail and Ma Bell. He was my knight in tarnished armor. He had marched against the war, as I had made my pilgrimage to Washington for peace. Now we were both Federal employees, the ultimate "cop-out" in the days of our idealistic youth. But reality showed that blind unemployed had few honorable choices for job

security. All men were still brothers, but Cain was a brother, too. After the euphoria of the Cause for freedom and equality for all, an individual could still attack or rob.

I married my quixotic knight, and we both continue the uncertain quest. A note of cynicism has entered the folk music we both love now, for we are all wiser and sadder. But we treasure that rare beauty of poetry and song and the courage of the young and old who remain articulate in the common babel, and who do not fear the censor in this age of reactionary backlash.

May the Fast Folk Musical Magazine, The Coop, and all who love artistic integrity and freedom of opportunity continue to live and grow. And just maybe, if we are not all destroyed, the children of the nineties will reverse the real backward slide into decadence. We can be there to light the way, forward.

Donna Ring

"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 "Appleseeds" 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

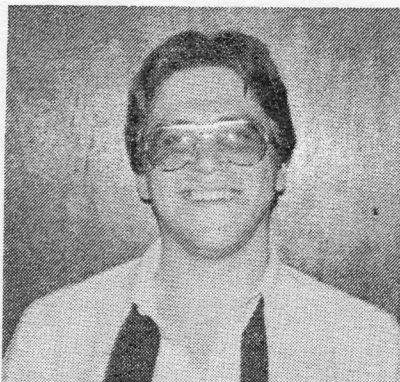
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____

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

ON THE RECORD

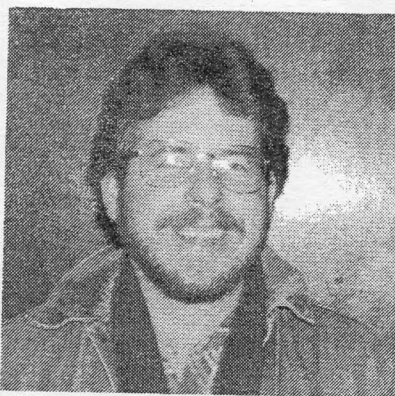
JOSH JOFFEN is a prodigal son of Brooklyn, New York. He's spending the autumn dreaming of skiing and playing at colleges and clubs throughout the Northeast with singer-songwriter David Roth and Mark Dann.

BILLY JONES, a lifelong resident of Edgewater, New Jersey, is currently working with elderly and handicapped people in Bergen County, New Jersey, and teaching guitar part-time. He is 29 years old.



Alan Beck

Josh Joffen

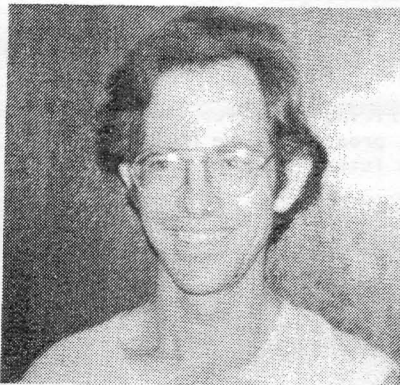


Alan Beck

Billy Jones

KIRK KELLY is a folk music enthusiast from Alphabetland, New York City. He has attended the finest schools and knows many important people. Before moving to New York, he spent time as a janitor, a dishwasher, a short-order cook, a telephone solicitor, a messenger, a clerk, a lineman, a newspaper reporter, a fundraiser, and a farm worker.

BERT LEE was born in Mexico City and raised all over the world, which probably explains his love for all different sorts of music. Since he came to the village in 1967, he has been in



Alan Beck

Bert Lee

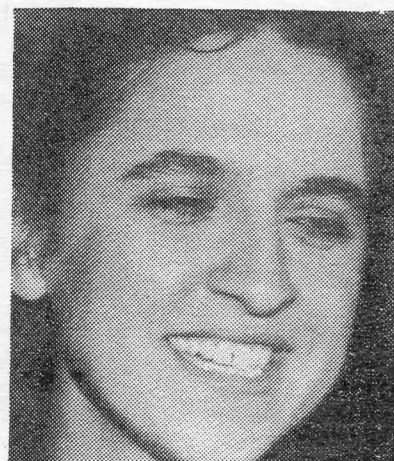
three bands, most recently The Central Park Sheiks, whose album, Honeysuckle Rose, is available on Flying Fish Records. These days he plays solo in the summers, and splits his creative time between performing magic, and writing and singing songs. During the winter he can be found in Key West, Florida, playing with a swing band called the Striders, and doing occasion stints on the road, where he earns his living as stage manager for a professional stage magician.

LEFT FIELD is Elizabeth Emmert, Deborah Griffin, Bill Bly, and Bill Neely. They have sung together in different combinations over the last several years. Emmert and Griffin are from the New York area; Bly and Neely are western Pennsylvanians-in-exile. Despite the name, none are leftists; all four are dyed-in-the-wool, hardline, card-carrying, rabid moderates.

NED MASSEY, a byproduct of the Midwest, first became interested in music through the albums of heavy metal bands. His interest extended after he was introduced to the then-nascent "outlaw" country music of Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, and others, which then led to his discovery of bluegrass and folk. Then in 1975, Ned heard the triumphal opening chords to Bruce Springsteen's "Born to Run," and became knight errant to the rock and roll Holy Grail. His quest has led him through such meccas as Chicago and L.A. He's currently searching in New York.

DAVE PEABODY, from London, has for 20 years performed blues in a variety of situations and styles and in many countries around the globe. He's recorded five albums under his own name,

two with his earlier jug band, Tight Like That, and two with his long-standing, piano playing partner, Bob Hall. Dave and Bob traveled to the U.S. this year to play at the Philadelphia Folk and San Francisco Blues festivals. RON KAVANA is well-known on the London rhythm and blues scene for his lead guitar work in the band Juice On the Loose. Ron has recently moved to the New York area.



Bob Zaidman

Germana Pucci

GERMANA PUCCI was born in Italy to a family of singers and farmers who lead singing in the fields and are hired to sing the Maggio (peasant's opera) after the harvest. Germana moved to New York City in 1977. She loves to cook.

SHERWOOD ROSS is a nationally recognized mental defective.

NED ANDREW SOLOMON lives in Baltimore with his wife, Kelly. He currently has no records in the stores, has never published a book, and has never been in a movie. However, he does try hard.

JOE VIRGO is an up-and-coming Brooklyn born songwriter who considers his style to be "folk-pop."

Continued



Alan Beck

Joe Virgo

PETER WILSON is from North Carolina, Vermont, and California, among other places. After releasing his first album, *Folk Music*, two years ago on Bennett House Records, Peter has been touring. Peter's phone number is (916) 265-6014.

(Susan Firing's biography was unavailable at press time. We hope to publish it in a future issue of Fast Folk.)



Alan Beck

Susan Firing

SIDE ONE CREDITS SIDE TWO

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Monkey See, Monkey Do (Josh Joffen)
Josh Joffen/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass</p> <p>2. Shoestrings (Billy Jones)
Billy Jones/Vocal & Guitar</p> <p>3. For Margaret (Ned Massey)
Ned Massey/Vocal & Guitar</p> <p>4. A Veglia (Germana Pucci/Giancarlo Biagi)
Germana Pucci/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass & 12-String
Jill Burkee/Banjo</p> <p>5. Let the Good Times Roll (Traditional)
Dave Peabody/Vocal, Guitar & Harmonica
Mark Dann/Bass & Drums
Ron Kavana/Mandolin</p> <p>6. Dance of the Knee-Jerk Reactionaries (W.D. Neely)
Left Field:
Elizabeth Emmert/Vocal & Vibra-slap
Deborah Griffin/Vocal, Kalimba & Kazoo
Bill Bly/Vocal & Mandolin
Bill Neely/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Electric Bass</p> | <p>1. Hey Mack (Peter Wilson)
Peter Wilson/Vocal & Guitar</p> <p>2. Amnesia (Bert Lee)
Bert Lee/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/String Bass & Percussion</p> <p>3. I Always Wore the Colors of My Country (Ned Solomon)
Ned Solomon/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass</p> <p>4. Bluesman (Susan Firing)
Susan Firing/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass</p> <p>5. My Father's America (Joe Virgo)
Joe Virgo/Vocals & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass & Keyboards</p> <p>6. I Pity the Poor British Soldier (Kirk Kelly)
Kirk Kelly/Vocal & Guitar</p> <p>7. The Nightmare Room (Sherwood Ross)
Sherwood Ross/Vocal & Guitar
John Kruth/Mandolin
David Berkowitz/Drums
John Hinckley/Drums
Rasputin/Bass</p> |
|--|---|