

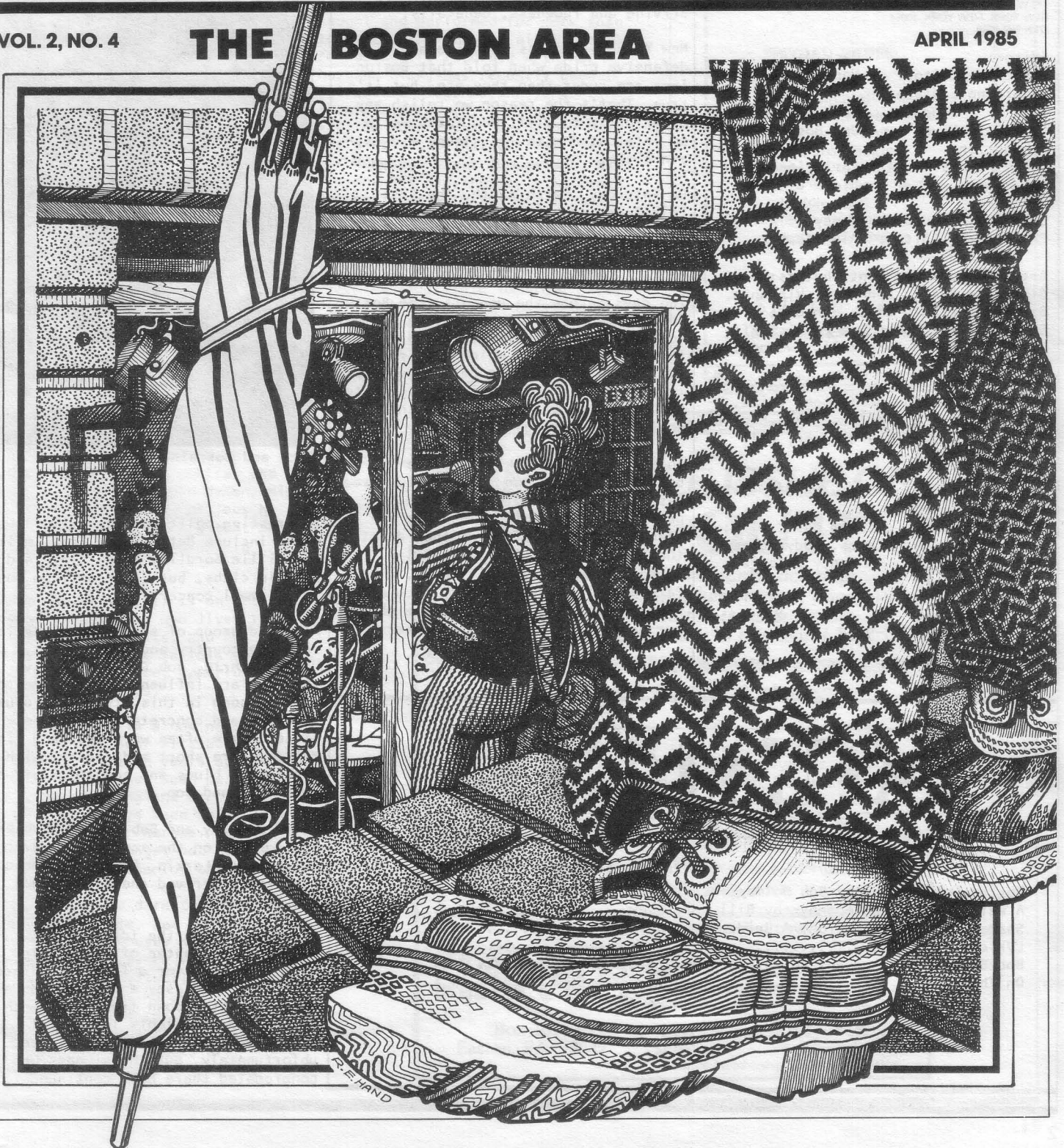
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BOSTON FOLK SCENE

by Bob Holmes

Boston is a funny town, as New England is a funny place. The people tend to be independent and aloof. In the street this takes the form of offensive driving and rudeness, generally.

New Yorkers express surprise and a defensive pride when told that Bostonians are ruder than they are, but it's true. That's the reason we relish any opportunity to visit New York. We're so infatuated with its sleepy midwestern charm.

On Saturday, March ninth, the Fast Folk Revue appeared in Arlington, Massachusetts. It was a hell of a show, and everyone in it should feel very gratified at its success.

Two days before the concert, the Boston folk scene began its own little journey to New York. On Thursday recording sessions were held, which have resulted in the all-Boston Fast Folk issue now in your hands. This article is just to help you understand the scene this collection of songs represents.

In my own mind I like to divide Boston's singer/songwriters into three basic groups according to where I perceive their roots to be. For instance, the kind of songs that denoted the '50's folk era, traditional-sounding and left, politically, like Pete Seeger, are still very much alive here. Rick and Lorraine Lee are about our best traditional-style writers.



Bob Yahn

Rick and Lorraine Lee

Interesting political songwriters might include Betsy Rose, Fred Small, and Willie Sordill. These singers do play in clubs, but you hear them mostly in small concerts.

A second group of songwriters has its roots in country and blues music. Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, and Dave Van Ronk are influences that come to mind. A song in this style will usually have few and concrete images. The subjects are often work and hard times. Melodies are short and catchy, with a feeling of blues and country music and even rock and pop.

Geoff Bartley and Bob Franke have been the longest on the scene here. Over the years Patty Larkin, George Gritzbach, and others arrived and established reputations.

A few years ago the Idler's Back Room was the center of this style. With this club for a focus, new faces like Bill Morrissey and Cormac McCarthy were attracted down from New Hampshire, and new local talents like Carol Goodman emerged. The Idler closed, unfortunately, but the singers who congregated there have continued to

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George Gritzbach

Bob Yahn

large concerts in the cities--such as Black Sheep and FolkTree series in Boston--and house concerts in small towns.

Some of the best around here are Bill Staines, Jeanie Stahl, Sally Rogers, Andy May, Lui Collins, and Kim Wallach. Their lyrics are characterized by the use of nature images and metaphors. Melodies tend to be long and sweet. They celebrate the common, smaller events of life and love.

The newer songwriters--like Elmer Hawkes and Bob Blue, and some established songwriters who don't play out as much--like Julie Snow, I don't categorize. I just listen. The Nameless Coffeehouse provides a showcase for these writers as it has for twenty years. It's been recently reorganized by Steve Baird, a distinguished local streetsinger and all-around good guy. Steve also has a hand in the Boston Folk Arts Network. This and the Black Sheep Review, run by Kari Estrin, have been helping to tie together a large and diverse folk scene.

I think I speak for all the Boston singers who took part in the Fast Folk recordings when I thank those involved. I hope this will bring our already cordial scenes even closer.

Bob Holmes is a local Boston area singer/songwriter, whose roots are in country and blues music.



Bill Morrissey

Nancy Talianian

be active and are regularly heard at Passim in Harvard Square.

Passim is in some ways the center of a third style of songwriting. This style is, I think, predominant on the folk scene. There is a lot of British Isles influence in it lately, but it comes from the late '60's songwriting boom: James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, John Denver. I sometimes call it suburban folk. The college students who liked this music fifteen years ago have kept it alive as they've gone on to careers and homes in the suburbs. It's a lively scene that includes



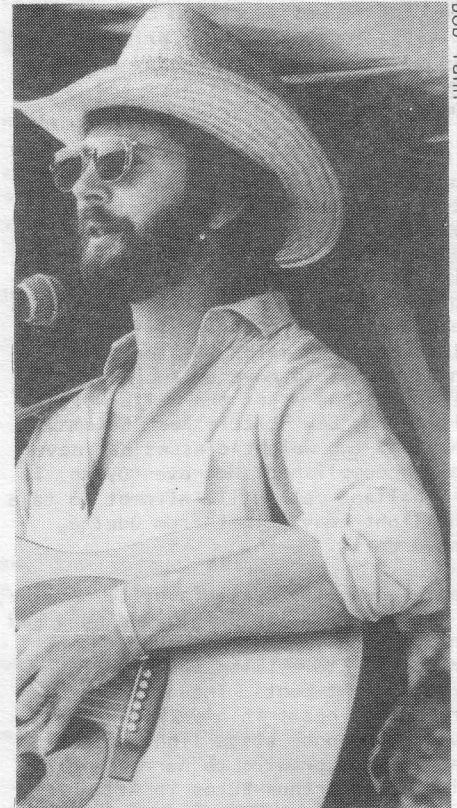
Lui Collins

John Kane



Sally Rogers

Bob Yahn



Bill Staines

Bob Yahn

A WELTERWEIGHT HOOTENANNY

by Bill Morrissey

With the interest in folk and acoustic music greatly on the rise, comparisons between the current scene and the folk-boom days of the early Sixties have become common. Today young folksingers in Harvard Square and Greenwich Village speak in hushed and wistful tones of the Golden Days of the Sixties, when lucrative record contracts were handed out like Rockefeller dimes to any kid with four chords under his command.

But there is no talk of the Dark Days--that period in the mid-Sixties when folk music was stung by the exposition of its ties to organized crime, when the only real money to be made was in the heavyweight division, and those gigs were played in high school gymnasiums in places like Lewiston, Maine. It was a time when the media called folk music "barbaric and gratuitously violent" and demanded its outright ban. And it was true, too many aging folkies, long past their prime, had signed on for one hootenanny too many and had been seriously hurt and humiliated.

I witnessed my first live folk music bout at a small club on MacDougal Street in June of 1966 while visiting my uncle, a mandolin player of some renown in Greenwich Village at the time. My uncle had agreed to work as the corner man to help his friend, the reigning World Folk Association lightweight champion, Dexter Donnelly, in his quest to move up two weight divisions and wrest the welterweight title from Lev "Little Red" Goldman. The jump two weight classes had never been accomplished. Not even Dylan, in his gallant yet futile attempt to take the light-heavyweight from Odetta, could do it.

Dexter Donnelly was a favorite of mine, a finesse musician with blinding speed in his right hand. I'd never missed one of his television bouts on the Friday Night Hoots. Though he'd shown tremendous heart in his last outing, overcoming poor stage lighting and a faulty speaker wire to narrowly decision Blind Arthur Burns in Atlantic City, Donnelly was an 8-to-3 underdog going into the gig. If he was to stand a chance against the larger, hard-slugging Goldman, he would have to avoid going toe to toe with him and try to beat him on points.

Lev "Little Red" Goldman clearly owned the crowd on MacDougal Street. Since winning the Olympic gold in the junior-welterweight division in Rome in 1960, he'd turned pro, moved up a weight class, and racked up an impressive 37-0-0 record. When he retired in 1962 due to polyps, many a fan, aficionado, and music critic mourned the death of folk music, saying Goldman had brought style and more than a modicum of class to a dirty, corrupt business. A few of the more cynical members of the fourth estate, though, suggested he was simply using polyps as an excuse to duck the inevitable gig with junior-middleweight champion Tommy "Hit Man" Makem.

Then in September of 1963, with no warning and against the wishes of his vocal coach, Goldman returned to the stage with two tune-up gigs, then recaptured the welterweight title with a stunning first-set knockout of Libba

Cotton. He completely dominated the welterweight division after that. The talk at stageside was that Donnelly would not see the far side of intermission.

Scoring for the gig was on a ten-point-must system, and, in the case of a knockout, the mandatory encore rule was in effect.

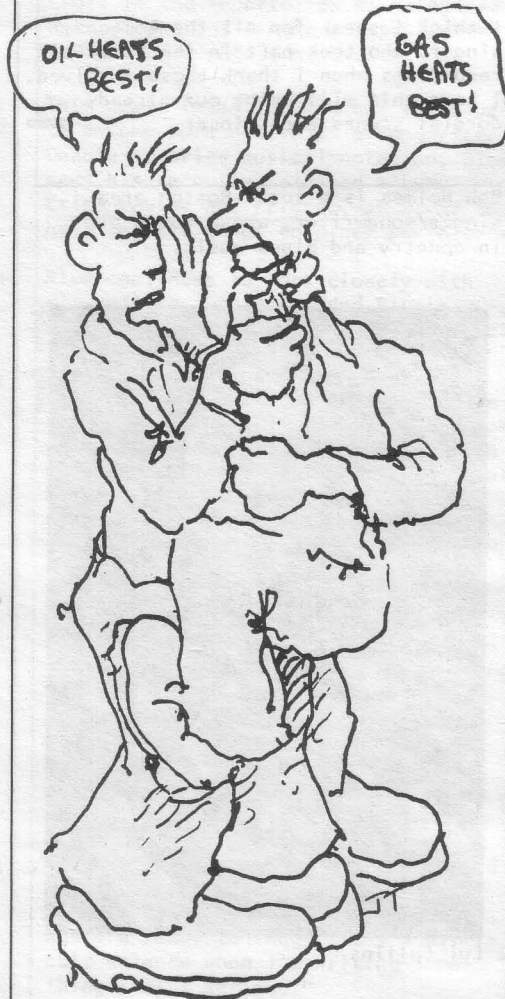
After the weigh-in my uncle and I walked Donnelly back to the dressing room where we joined the other seconds. Donnelly had put together an impressive corner: Along with my uncle, who had shared his seven-hundred song repertoire and was to act as prompter, Donnelly had hired Milt Okun away from the folk tag-team contenders, Peter, Paul and Mary. Okun, who arranged the songs, then in turn brought along Albert Grossman, perhaps the greatest cut-man in the history of folk music.

I stood off to the side, just happy to be in the same room with Dexter Donnelly, while the four men broke into a case of Miller and Okun rehashed the strategy for the evening's gig. Donnelly lit a filter cigarette and took tentative sips of beer as he listened. He was shorter than I'd expected and heavier than the pictures on his album covers. I knew he'd been training very hard, but the slight bulge around his middle made me think he might be a bit overtrained. As gig time neared he slipped on a wrinkled corduroy sport jacket, slung his guitar over his shoulder, drained his beer, lit another cigarette, and walked with his corner men to the stage wings.

Former champions and current champions in other weight divisions were introduced to the enthusiastic crowd. Then referee Nat Hentoff called both singers center stage for final instructions. "All right, boys. You know the rules. I want a good clean gig--no bottle-necking, no pop tunes, no drop-thumb frailing. Are there any questions?"

Goldman crowded the microphone and pointed a finger at Donnelly. "You're going down," he said. His famous "ice pick" sneer crept across his face and the audience cheered wildly.

Donnelly said nothing. He turned and walked back to the wings to await the bell. The color drained from his face with each step. Though he tried to appear at ease, even giving me a little wink of confidence, I could



see he was cold and tight. There is always the danger of getting cold-cocked in the first few minutes of a gig if a singer doesn't warm up properly, and Donnelly hadn't warmed up at all.

Milt Okun grabbed him by the lapels and shook him. "Okay, kid, feel him out first set. Work him to the body with some metaphors, then stick him with the traditional stuff, then maybe a blues, then back to traditional. Keep moving and mix it up. You got it?"

Donnelly never got a chance to answer. The bell rang and Goldman charged out to center stage. He quickly staggered Donnelly with a blue yodel. Donnelly covered up. The crowd jumped to its feet.

"Get on your bicycle!" Albert Grossman shouted from the wings.

Donnelly began to back pedal. Goldman pursued him, viciously doubling up on the labor tunes. He cut off the stage and had Donnelly helpless in the corner. Donnelly in desperation wildly sung a Childe ballad and missed by a mile. Goldman stepped back and sneered. The showboating cost him as Donnelly saw a brief opening and side-stepped away from the corner. He clogged away from Goldman for the rest of the set, staying out of danger, buying time while his head cleared. When the bell finally sounded to end the first set, Goldman threw his hands up triumphantly while a groggy Donnelly stumbled into Albert Grossman's arms and was led back to the dressing room.

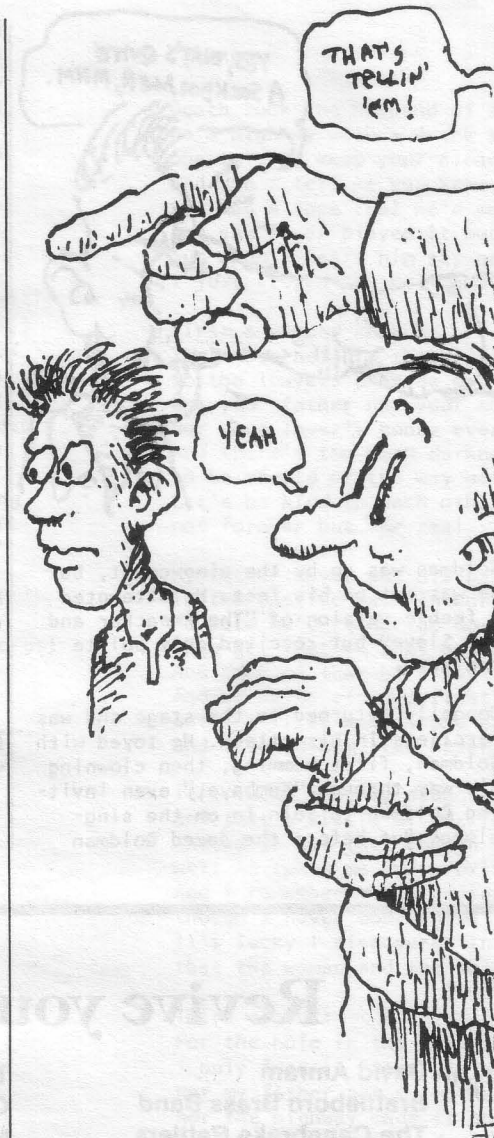
Okun and Grossman worked desperately on their singer during the ten minute intermission. There was doubt at stageside as to whether Donnelly could answer the bell for the second set. Referee Nat Hentoff called in a William Morris agent to examine him, and it was decided the gig could continue.

"You can't outpoint him now," Okun told Donnelly. "You've got to go for the knockout now."

Donnelly mumbled something about a turkey through the corn. His eyes were fixed on something far across the room.

"Pull out the stops," Grossman told Okun in a low, clinical whisper.

Okun wiped his face with his shirt sleeve. He nodded almost imperceptibly to show Grossman he understood which tack to take, then said to Donnelly,



"Relax, kid. After this is all over tonight we'll still be able to find you work up in New England. There must be fraternity parties at those state schools up there every week of the year. And, of course, here in the city there's always the basket houses."

"The basket houses?" Donnelly said.

"Sure, you remember the basket houses, don't you?" Grossman said. "It wasn't that long ago. You must still remember all the words to 'Froggy Went A-Courtin'.'"

"Froggy?" Donnelly repeated softly. His slumped body suddenly jumped to its feet. His face stretched wild-eyed with terror. "Oh, God! Not Froggy, not again! Milt, Albert, please! Don't make me sing Froggy again!"

Okun shrugged and turned away. "It's up to you." He moved toward the case of warming beer. Donnelly lunged for his shoulders and spun him around.

"Milt, you've got to help me! Don't run out on me, Milt! You've got to show me what to do!"

"Well, are you ready to take this chump out?"

"Yeah!"

"Are you ready to cut him? To make him look like he works for Jack Linkletter?"

"Yeah!"

"That's what I want to hear," Okun said. "Now listen up. You're faster than he is, understand? You've got to use that speed to get inside and work him to the body with Travis picking. Now look, every time Goldman is about to do a sing-along he puts his left foot in the bucket. That's the time to get inside. And remember, it's medleys that win gigs, not single tunes. Oh sure, a single haymaker of a waltz will put him on the canvas, but the medleys set it up! The medleys will wear him down! Now, are you ready to sing?"

"Yeah!" Donnelly shouted.

"Who's going to administer the quietus to Goldman?"

"I am!"

"And who's going to be the next welterweight champ of the world?"

"I AM!" Donnelly shrieked.

Albert Grossman brushed the front of Donnelly's jacket. "It's time," he said. "Let's go."

The bell rang for the second set, and the two singers warily circled each other center stage. Goldman sneered as he tried to open the set with a lonesome, rambling lament, but he was too slow, and Donnelly quickly countered with a Major Seventh harmony to make it sound like a whimpering lounge ballad. A flicker of surprise crossed Goldman's eyes. Donnelly then stepped inside and followed with a combination of double-timed Irish drinking songs and finished off the flurry with a perky little waltz with socially relevant lyrics.

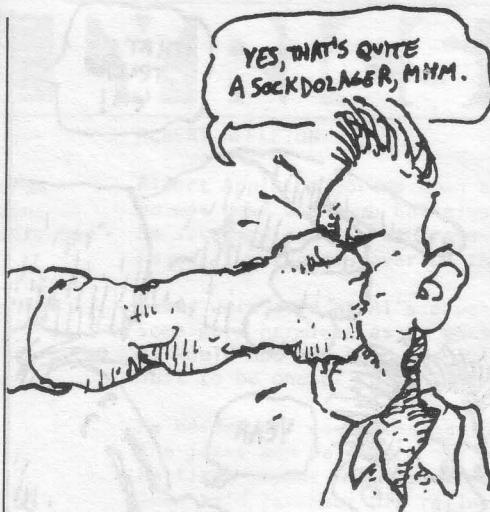
The waltz stunned Goldman, but his stage instincts remained intact, and

he tuned his guitar down to Open D tuning and ripped off a scorching Delta blues. The crowd roared its approval. The sneer crept back across his face. As he confidently brought his guitar back up to standard tuning his treble E string snapped in two. It dangled from the bridge of his guitar like a downed telephone wire. For the first time in the gig Goldman appeared to be in trouble.

"Sing-along, kid!" Milt Okun hollered from the wings. "Go for the special sing-along now!" Okun had seen gig films of Goldman and noticed that whenever Goldman broke a string he sang a long a cappella ballad while he restrung the guitar.

Goldman began to introduce "MacPherson's Lament," but Donnelly jumped in with the special sing-along he had arranged with Okun. Immediately the crowd was on its feet and singing, for it was not just any sing-along, it was Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land." Goldman's knees buckled.

Donnelly followed with a Mississippi John Hurt medley to the ribs, and Goldman went down. Nat Hentoff rushed in and ordered Donnelly to a neutral dressing room, then began the count.



Goldman was up by the nine count, but he was out on his feet. He attempted a feeble version of "The Preacher and the Slave" but received only polite applause.

Donnelly returned to the stage and was merciless in his attack. He toyed with Goldman, first humming, then clowning his way through "Kumbaya," even inviting Goldman to join in on the sing-along. But before the dazed Goldman

could open his mouth, Donnelly sent him reeling to the apron of the stage with a crashing overhand ragtime piano transcription.

Goldman dropped his pick and stared glassy-eyed at the audience. The crowd screamed, "Stop the gig! Stop the gig!" Finally Nat Hentoff jumped in between the singers and threw a protective arm around Goldman, and the gig was over.

At the post-gig interview the gracious Dexter Donnelly agreed to a rematch, but it was never to materialize, for two weeks later Goldman traded in his acoustic Martin guitar for a Fender Telecaster electric and a one-way ticket to California. At the bus station Goldman was heard to say, "Folk music is dead. Rock 'n roll is the life for me now. I've got to hear the beat. Dance music is the coming thing. Folk music is no good for dancing, and if you can't dance to it..."

Bill Morrissey is a singer/songwriter who lives in the Boston area.

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a guide

SHAMELESS SELF-PROMOTION

by Roger Deitz

It doesn't matter how good you are: If no one knows you exist, no one will ever go out of their way to see you perform.

Rather than getting into an esoteric discussion about self-worth and how important it is to be the ultimate judge of one's own talent, I'm going to assume that talent exists and just get down to the bottom line basics. If nobody knows about you, you won't be doing a great deal of playing out. You could be the hottest guitar picker this side of David Bromberg, and the only person who will know that fact will undoubtedly be doing something else for a living...not that doing something else for a living is such a bad idea.

Following my advice will not in itself make you a star. However, using your common sense, and maximizing your talent could help. Being honest with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses might be a good idea. The only comment I'll make here about your performing itself is that you had best be objective about the things you do and always try to do better. (There is always room for improvement.)

Find someone you can truly trust, ask them what they think, and listen to what they say. But be objective about yourself and about the advice you get, as most friends will tell you that you sing well, even if your voice approximates the dulcet sound made by a ruptured steer at breeding season. It is possible for some friends to let you go along for years without suggesting that you need voice coaching, when they could have started you long ago on the path to improvement.

My credentials? I am not the hottest guitar picker this side of David Bromberg...Heck, I'm not the hottest guitar picker this side of David Hartman. I am always in the process of learning how to make the most out of the talent I do have. Because I also do the booking for a coffeehouse and for a folk festival, I see things from another point of view, and it's a good idea to see things from another point of view.

I also credit my sense of humor for keeping me sane. If you haven't got a

sense of humor and you want to be a folksinger for a living, get one. It should help. One observation I have made is that many of my fellow folksingers don't have one. They can see humor in hundreds of subjects, and can laugh at the foibles of others, often writing and singing long narrative detailed treatises on everyone else's foibles, but rarely do they notice when they themselves are acting a bit batty --and rarely are they amused when someone points out their battyness.

Starting Out

What you probably need first is some sort of local reputation, a foundation on which to build. My suggestion is this: begin by hunting out house sings, hoots, or open stages in your area. They afford you a wonderful opportunity to get your feet wet. They are easily accessible to the newcomer and provide a ready-made audience. At these things, the deck is actually stacked in favor of the newcomer, as the groups are usually quite tired of listening to the regulars and their repeated material. Something new is welcome, something new and good can make quite a hit, and even get you a few coffeehouse bookings to boot.

My guess is that all folk groups have house sings, and all coffeehouses have open stages. These places are of great value even to the experienced performer. A house sing can help one expand into a new territory. I have introduced "new" performers to my group by having them play a few tunes at a sing prior to their initial coffeehouse booking. By the time they came to play the coffeehouse, these people were no longer strangers. A built-in audience recognized talent and wanted to hear more.

Also, sings and open stages are great places to experiment with a new song or such. You can tell how well something will go over, and you get some pretty direct feedback. Some performers shun open stages and the like because of the stigma they say it gives them. "Once people think of you at the open stage or a sing," they say, "it's hard for you to be considered a serious performer."

I disagree. I think it brings any performer closer to the audience and helps develop a good rapport and following. Take for example Sally Rogers. The fact

that she is friendly, that she will sing into the night with others at a house sing does not diminish the appeal of this personable, very talented performer. People are more apt to want to see her the next time she passes through town, not only because they know her music, but because they know Sally as well.

Getting the Gigs

You probably have no trouble getting bookings in your own regional sphere of influence, places you've played, or where your reputation is known. What about branching out beyond to places where sings aren't as easily accessible?

First you must identify the locations and names of the coffeehouses you wish to contact. This is not as simple a matter as it might seem, particularly when you are from New York, and you are interested in a few gigs in Ohio. I am always amazed to find, for example, New York City performers who have absolutely no knowledge whatsoever of the dozen or so coffeehouses across the Hudson River in northern New Jersey.

I suggest starting a listing by state or region of the coffeehouses you know about, or can learn about by word of mouth. Keep a file of club names and locations, the names of contact people, dates played, amount made, size of crowd, and notes on the night for the places you do play. You don't want to trust to memory that "some guy" called you and asked you to play, or strain to remember if that was the church group coffeehouse where your funny song about the Pope was not appreciated.

There are club resource lists available, but you probably should not use any one as gospel. (I haven't seen any yet that were complete or without error.) Use these lists to build your own. Sol Weber of New York City's Pinewoods Folk Club publishes a list, which he sells for \$2. Hey Rube has a list. The Black Sheep Review publishes a list. Even The Library of Congress keeps lists of folk music activities. It's best to share information with other performers who are actually out there at these places, and are updating their lists. Networking will keep you current: you help others, they help you.

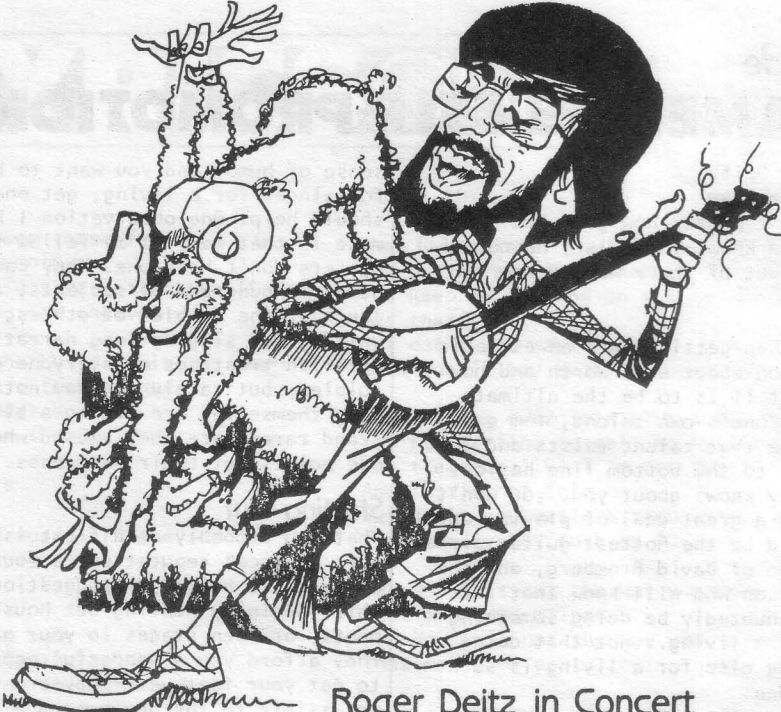
Next you will need to identify the name of the booking person for each organization you wish to contact. The organization name is just not enough. Don't send your material to a folk group's post office box. You will soon learn that press kits, records, and such very often get waylaid or misplaced before reaching the booking chairperson. Personal contact in the form of a letter or a phone call at least insures that the person in authority knows about you.

I spoke with Joel Mabus the other day. He is a hot performer from Michigan, now branching out from the Midwest, and judging from the list of places he played on his last tour, doing so rather successfully. He insists that an initial phone call to a booking person asking if he/she can send some material about him/herself works well, and I agree. I think it's classy, and it prepares the booking person for the package, while serving as a reminder that a human being, one that he/she already knows, sent the material.

What to Send

I have seen hundreds of press kits. They have a lot in common. They tell you how good the performer is. They have slick folders, they list the clubs the performer has played, and they excerpt glowing review blurbs. Often the folder contains a clever 8x10 photo of the artist. All well and good that this is one area where the local performer can make himself/herself look as good as the true pro, but most booking people know this. I don't care that the Central Kentucky Advance calls performer X a "rising star in the folk firmament," particularly if X is a local resident and the paper reviewer also does the combination Helpful Household Hints and Obituary page. But I also don't care if the paper is The New York Times (don't they do great folk reviews?) or even one of the Folk Magazines. I want to hear something, I want to hear the performer. After all, I am booking an act.

Many performers do realize that a tape or record is important, and they send one. Yet there are some things they fail to recognize. First, I don't care if the demo is a tape or a record. Your best shot better be track one, and you should come out of the blocks with your strongest material if you want me to continue listening. I get a lot of tapes, and there just isn't time to search through an entire program to find something I might happen to like. Besides, if what I hear first is not quite so hot, I might shut off my



Roger Deitz in Concert

SHEEP THRILLS TONITE

The author's poster and T-shirt design: an example of 'shameless self-promotion.'

machine long before your magnificent track two to which you are building.

Remember, this is an audition, not a historical retrospective of your greatest hits. Make believe that I am only going to listen to song one. By that token, since first impressions are so important, make what I hear in the first few seconds grab me. Believe me, I try to be patient, fair, and impartial...but human nature being what it is, on any given day, I might not be such a sweetheart.

In addition, a tape or record may not in itself be enough. A multitrack studio recording with overdubbing and equalization may make for a nifty recording, but it says little to the booking person about your performing, about your stage presence, and your rapport with an audience. These things are very important to me, and if you have a good stage presence, and fail to convey this to me as a booking person, you are doing yourself a disservice.

Mike Agranoff, who does the booking for the Minstrel Show Coffeehouse in Basking Ridge, New Jersey (one of the most successful folk clubs I have seen) will only book a performer after either traveling to see the performer in

concert, or from a live performance tape at the very least. Everyone has their own standards for booking, but Mike puts great importance on a performer's ability to reach an audience, and I agree that this is, in addition to other considerations, very important.

Eye catching business cards help too. They should make some statement about you. Don't forget to carry some with you at all times, so that you can spring them on the immediate world. Just the other day I had a last minute cancellation at my Closing Circle coffeehouse. In my haste to replace the person, I started by flipping through a stack of cards and came upon one that almost popped out at me. I remembered the artist only then, and called her to ask if she wanted a gig.

To record, or not to record This is a question. I have for some time resisted making a record for a number of very good reasons. Primarily I live in morbid fear of having a bad record out there, and upon realizing this fact not being able to take them all back. I also have this nightmare wherein I keep flipping through the 49-cent bargain record bin at Sam Goody's, and all of the record jackets have my face on them. I will be pa-

tient and put off my record project for a while.

It is true, however, that a record does legitimize a performer. It sends thousands of emissaries out there for others to hear. It makes air play easily possible. The drawback is that making a record costs a small fortune, and making records to make money just doesn't make sense. Besides, producing a good product isn't easy, even for the most talented of performers.

If the few thousand dollars (perhaps up to ten thousand if you make the overproduced type of folk album) it takes to make a record seems a bit beyond you, try making cassette recordings. Cassette tapes are less expensive, and you can invest in producing small quantities at a time. A live recording of a very good gig makes a dynamite tape. It's inexpensive to do, and it might fill the bill as the perfect demo. Dave Van Ronk advises never to make a record with your own money. The law of supply and demand for folk music recordings being what it is, Dave might have a point.

My big investment has been in T-shirts that I sell at gigs, and my own posters that I provide to coffeehouses to help aid the publicity effort. Both have worked well for me, although I must admit, the major motivation for the T-shirts was to have a bit of fun, and spoof folk music, but that's what I do on stage anyway.

Who's on First...

The next point to ponder is the relative merit of opening set versus main set bookings. Many performers only want main sets, and refuse to do openers. I think they are in error. If you are on the way up, you want to establish yourself as a good performer. At a time when you may not have two long, forty-five minute sets of good material (remember--be objective!), you might do damage to yourself. Doing two good twenty-minute sets is a lot easier, and will make a better impression.

There is more to it than that, however. At a time when your name is not a household word, you will probably not be drawing well. Doing a main set in a new club and playing to an empty house will not impress the booking person. Opening for acts who are well known, and who already have drawing power, will give you exposure to new, fair-sized audiences. Doing the shorter set will leave them wanting more.

If you are patient, and as good as we both know you are, the better spots will come.

To whom it may concern... Many performers rely on mailing lists to help bring people in to see them perform. These lists usually start as sign-up sheets laid out at gigs. Later the artist uses these sheets to inform interested parties about subsequent appearances. While it looks good on the drawing board, mailing lists can get out of hand. They can grow to ungainly lengths in no time. Each card sent out costs small change, but multiplied by the hundreds of people on the list, you could be bankrupt in no time. If you don't have a home computer, it takes a great deal of time to tend your list and write out all those names.

The general consensus among performers is that even though the lists themselves don't work very well, it's good to keep in touch with the audience. Perhaps for reinforcement, or to have a list of interested parties to inform when the new record comes out. I know of one well-known performer who sent out over four hundred cards to announce a recent New York performance. A check of the audience showed that only one of the patrons came because of the mailing list.

One would think that most of the people on such a list would have access to folk events listings, or be the type of person who would check to see who was playing that week. Anyway, if it's a club that doesn't do a good publicity job, and they're not telling people that you are there, things are not going to go well, mailing list or not.

You might want to have a little card typed up that can serve as your introduction when you are ready to be announced at your gig. In the frenzy of sound checks and performance madness, emcees usually ask the performer, "What do you want me to say about you?" Invariably a hastily scribbled few lines misses the mark and gets botched up by the announcer. Give him/her a prepared card to read. At least he/she might get your name right.

Well, you're on your own now. I've tried to be gentle. The point of all this ranting is that if you use common sense, at least the nonperforming stuff shouldn't defeat you. You can make it or not based on your performing ability. We'll talk about that some other time.

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SIDE BY SIDE SONGS

THE DOLLMAKER'S SECRET

I've got to wash these windows, I've got to sweep these floors
You can't tell between lettering and shadow anymore
The sunshine fights its way through dust, in old-time letters spills
"Dollmaker" on the wall past all the dolls upon the shelves

There's been no one here since Christmas but the children in the town
They know I give them licorice while they take a look around
The young girls like the dresses women don't wear anymore
The little boys like soldier dolls dressed from the Civil War

And the red-haired girl with freckles, pigtails
And chocolate on her face
Wants to know why all the girl dolls' eyes and noses are the same
So I scratched my beard and smiled and lit my pipe
And then replied, "It's the dollmaker's secret..."

Once there was a little girl in a world of long ago
Who wore her mother's clothes up in her attic in the cold
And played with all her baby dolls in the mirror that she had
And I see her face in antique photographs beside my dad

Now, I've always been a loner--I've never had a wife
And these dolls have been my family and have been all my life
My eyes and nose look just like hers, the dolls' all look like mine
It's the dollmaker's secret

I've got to wash these windows, I've got to sweep these floors
For winter goes away and springtime comes to life once more
And another generation comes to see what I have got
Not knowing I love evermore the dolls they never bought
It's the dollmaker's secret...It's the dollmaker's secret.

© 1985 by Chuck Hall

BAPTISM OF FIRE

Baptism of fire, I never knew what that meant
but now the flames are rising higher
I guess I haven't seen anything yet
and now it's coming down around me
and I am risin' up,
like a Phoenix from the ashes
wings across the blue
the only way out is through

Forests of fury, kindling of fear
see how dark the woods have grown
after all these years
and now they're coming down around me
and I am rising up
like a lily from the shadows
glistening and perfumed
the only way out is through

All the detours taken never lead you home
what a maze you find yourself in
and still alone
you thought it would be easy
so the truth eluded you
the only way out is through

Baptism of fire, all happening within
illusions burn like tall grass in a
wild and wreckless wind
and now they're coming down around me
and I am rising up
like a great bell resurrected
ringing loud and true
the only way out is through

by Julie Snow © BMI Julie Snow Music

LONELY BOY

When I come over you're always alone.
Why do you act like there's someone home.
You keep me waiting on the stairs,
And that's not fair.
But don't you waste a sigh
On a lonely boy such as I.

When I come over it's always the same.
You're starting to call me by his name.
You treat me like I am not there,
And that's not fair.
But don't you waste a sigh
On a lonely boy such as I.

No, No, it's not the way you look within
That makes me cringe.
No, No, it's not the way you talk it out
That makes me pout.

When I come over you always act
Like you've discovered an unknown fact
About the way he combed his hair,
And that's not fair.
But don't you waste a sigh
On a lonely boy such as I.

© 1985 by Bob Holmes

WHEN THE BOW IS PULLED

Here's a tape that I made in a motel
and a notebook that I kept off and on
here's a picture of me with a rubber nose
and another one of you as a boy

You're as tall as I am already
whatever happened to all those years?
I don't have enough souvenirs...

Chorus:

When the bow is pulled...
and the arrow flies...
and a father's love...
leaps in my eyes...

Here's a jacket I've been saving in the attic for you
and a stone from that cave beneath the hill
here's a shoebox of my worn-out harmonicas
and a top from that zoo in Saint Paul

Sometimes I see your eyes in my mirror
and I drift out where the waters are deep
everything I will keep... (Chorus)

I never really understood what I was doing
and I'm still not quite sure how I feel
miracle boy will you take after me
you just couldn't be more real

So remember these bow and arrow days
they will seem pretty good later on
like the day when you were born... (Chorus)

© 1985 by Geoff Bartley

LUISE

Have you seen my baby
She must have left last week
Bought the milk and honey
Her love I couldn't keep
Walk down to the river
Walk down to the sea
Feel that temperature rise
What's come over me

Traveling through England
Through France and through Spain
Search the whole world over
Without her life's a shame
Walk down to the Thames
Look up through the rain

Chorus:

Oh Luise, oh Luise, oh Luise
Please come home

So I thought I'd take a trip to the country
Where cool breezes blow
Leaves colored and falling
Stars are bright and bold
Walk on through that forest
Silenced by the snow (Chorus)

Roll me over easy
Roll me over slow
Roll me over easy
You know this pain;
It leaves me cold
Watch that pale horizon
Moon shine white as bone (Chorus)

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FOR REAL

Death took the husband of a neighbor of mine
on a highway with a drunk at the wheel.
She told me keep your clean hands off the laundry he left
and don't tell me you know how I feel.
She had a tape that he'd sent her from a Holiday Inn
and she never played it much in the day,
but when I heard him say he loved her through the window at night
I just stayed the hell away.

First & second chorus:

There's a hole in the middle of the prettiest life,
so the lawyers and the prophets say.
Not your father nor your mother
nor your lover's gonna ever make it go away.
And there's too much darkness in an endless night
to be afraid of the way we feel.
Let's be kind to each other,
not forever but for real.

My father never put his parachute on
in the pacific back in world war II.
He said he'd rather go down in familiar flames
than get lost in that endless blue.
And some of that blue got into my eyes,
And we never stopped fighting that war
until I first understood about endlessness,
and I loved him like never before. (Chorus)

It's lucky that my daughter got her mother's nose
and just a little of her father's eyes.
And we've got just enough love that when the longing takes me,
well it takes me by surprise.
And I remember that longing from my highway days,
though I never could give it a name.
It's lucky I discovered in the nick of time
that the woman and the child aren't to blame.

Third chorus:

For the hole in the middle of a pretty good life,
I only face it 'cause it's here to stay.
Not my father nor my mother nor my daughter nor my lover
nor the highway made it go away.
And there's too much darkness in an endless night
to be ashamed of the way I feel.
I'll be kind to my loved ones,
not forever but for real.

Final chorus:

Some say that God is a lover,
some say it's an endless void.
Some say both and some say she's angry,
and some say he's just annoyed.
But if God felt a hammer in the palm of his hand,
then God knows the way we feel,
And love lasts forever,
forever and for real.
Love lasts forever...

by Bob Franke © 1983 Telephone Pole Music Publishing Co. (BMI)
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SIDE BY ROSTWO

MADE IN THE U.S.A.

In Nicaragua harvest time is not much fun
But the coffee's ripe and it must be done
Guadalupe and her friends board the rusty bus
Twenty miles in the heat and dust

Twelve-year-olds love to play and sing
Making games of most everything
Who loves who now the gossip flies
The little towns and the miles roll by

The old bus breaks down in Tatlapán
Somehow Ramon makes it run again
"Si dios quiere" he likes to say
No spare parts from the U.S.A.

The road is steep not much more to go
But the Contras were seen here three days ago
'So far so good, say your rosaries.
'Cause right now they'd have us on our knees''

Six men in roadside just ahead
Something in the driver's mind senses dread
He yells, "Contras, get down!" and steps on
the gas
Too late as bullets smash the glass

Screams and cries and blood all around
The Contras run off to higher ground
Twelve are wounded lying on the floor
And Guadalupe is no more

The bus burns with the close of day
The Contra officers collect their pay
The guns, the grenades, and the bullets say
"Made in the U.S.A."

Mourio por sus patria" the priest will say
Guadalupe will your papa's tears dry someday?
Leaving scars that time will never wear away
Made in the U.S.A.

© 1985 by Eric Kilburn

MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Bells are ringing and people are scheming
There's tension in the air
The time is here, its essence is clear
Revolution's about to break
Find the plans for this I must
Deliver the rebel cause.
With no time to lose for this I choose
To do at any cost

Chorus:

So goodbye my love goodbye
Yes goodbye my love goodbye
With these few words I leave you now
With the hope of a safe return
Oh goodbye my love goodbye
Goodbye my love goodbye
With these few words I leave you now
With a message to the world

ALBERT APPLETON

Albert Appleton worked down at Sammy's car wash
He was deaf and dumb but always eagle eyed
He vacuumed out the ashtrays and the back seats of the cars
He was the rag man over on the driver's side

Jokes were told at Al's expense, he was always made the goat
Some were harmless as it goes, but some were cruel
Al would nod his head and smile, and go on working all the while
Just to be one of the boys he played the fool

He headed off each evening in his lonely silent world
The jokes and pain wore off as he walked home
He fixed supper for himself on a rusty hot plate ring
Then he'd remember his reflections in the chrome

He did the dishes after dinner until they glistened
Then he'd sit down with his paper and his pen
And until very late at night, Albert Appleton would write
He let out all of the words he kept within

He polished up his metaphors and he buffed his rhyming verse
He vacuumed out the corners of his mind
When he didn't show for work one week, they found him on the floor
And they found twelve hundred poems he left behind

No one realized that he could write, much less the way he did
He was taken for the fool he seemed to be
He couldn't hear and he couldn't speak but he wrote in brilliant rhymes
He was a genius in our midst that we didn't see

They did a story of his life in The New Yorker magazine
A posthumous book of poems drew rave reviews
Some poems were harmless as they go but some were cold and cruel
And the boys at Sammy's car wash weren't amused

They told jokes at Al's expense, he was always made the goat
Sammy's car wash still washed cars with the same old folks
They hired a new man to vacuum ashtrays and the back seats of the cars
And they made damn sure he could talk and hear their jokes

Albert Appleton worked down at Sammy's car wash
He was taken for the fool he seemed to be
He used to nod his head and smile, go on working all the while
He was the genius in our midst that we didn't see
He was the genius, in our midst, that we didn't see

© 1985 by Harry Lipson

Crowds have gathered with arms and chatter
Of violence, destruction and hate
Plunging my way through the bodies I fear
That perhaps I am too late
But try I must to reach the point
Where so many have lost their souls
And enter a plea for humanity
Let love be the weapon of war

© 1985 by Jason Threlfall

I DO FOR YOU, YOU DO FOR ME

When I was young I did things right
I cleaned by day and cooked at night
He slaved 'til late then came home tight
We watched TV then had a fight

It was so set so dull so trite
He'd slam the door I'd cry all night
He ran around then ran away
I was a fool to wish he'd stay

No more of that, it's so old hat
No he does this and she does that
I have a dream of how it should be
I do for you, you do for me

I'll learn to fly you'll learn to skate
My dog your cat they'll get on great
If you've got kids they'll feel like mine
And we'll have our own, if there's still time

No he does this and she does that
Oh, can't you see that's so old hat
I have a dream of how it should be
I do for you, you do for me

They've grown alike we'll hear it said
We won't recall who said let's wed
We'll talk about what books we've read
And sleep like spoons in our old bed

No he does this and she does that
Oh, can't you see that's so old hat
I have a dream of how it should be
I do for you, you do for me

Will I find you, will you find me?

© 1985, Music by Jeanie Stahl, Lyrics
by Harriet Reisen

BEGGAR'S SONG

Here's to all the beggars poor, whose living room is the streets.
The drunken bums and helpless boors, their callous-cracked bare feet
Have roamed the open marketplace an eternity of years
Searching for that friendly face, but only getting jeers from the passerby
Sneers from the classes high above them

But still those feet hold up that frame although they barely can
To a passing stranger with no name he stretches open hand.
His longing eyes meet mine, he says, "Hey, mister, can you spare
A loaf of bread, a pair of shoes, a measly coin of care,
I'll owe ya,
Share with this wretched one below ya."

Chorus:
Are they fools or are they men?
Is it cruel to pretend that they're not there?
Can one man mend a tear that will never close?
Would you call him your friend
If you were told you're the same in the end?
And will your pity bend to his pleading eyes?

Here's to starving millions, meanest hand of fate has hurled
To the cardboard towns, under bridges down in most destitute of worlds
Picking for their measly share in merchant's garbage cans
Sticking you with stabbing stare, still reaching out that hand
Who'll save them?
Will misery enslave them 'till their dying day? (Chorus)

But I am genteel, I must keep my distance
Cannot feel, I must show resistance
He tugs at my coat, I must beware
Treat him like the stinking garbage in the gutter there.

Here's to those who never had a semblance of a chance
Victims of unfathomably ugly circumstance
And will you care to ask yourself, why does it have to be?
And is there something I might do to make the world to see
Please tell me so!
'Cause this is just a song I know. (Chorus)

© 1983 by Dean Stevens

ROCKIN' IN A WEARY LAND

Sing me an old song, mother and child.
She rocks the babe safe in her arms through the
hard and hungry night.
Earth is the mother, we are her young.
Each day she rocks us, dancing from darkness into light,
from darkness into light.

Chorus:
We're rockin' in a weary land, rockin' in a weary land.
May love guide each and every hand,
Rockin' in a weary land, rockin' in a weary land.

We've been shortsighted, done so much harm,
The land stripped bare, the poisoned air. Some cry
progress, some cry in pain.
Wild geese are flying, springtime returns.
The breeze blows without anger, the sun shines without
blame, the sun shines without blame.

A crack in the pavement, a wildflower breaks free,
Lifts golden blossoms to the sun, roots run deep in
mother earth.
May we learn to treasure every gift we receive,
The changing dance of each new day, the miracle of
birth, the miracle of birth.

© 1985 by Lorraine A. Lee, Snowy Egret Music, BMI

the reluctant folksinger **BOB BLUE**

by Craig Harris

Bob Blue never intended to become a folksinger. In fact, throughout most of high school in the late 1960's, Blue was politically conservative and listened to very little music outside of Broadway show tunes.

Blue had taken the mandatory several years of piano lessons and one year of vocal training. However, his playing was more influenced by a history teacher, during his junior year, who helped him to make the shift to a more progressive political consciousness.

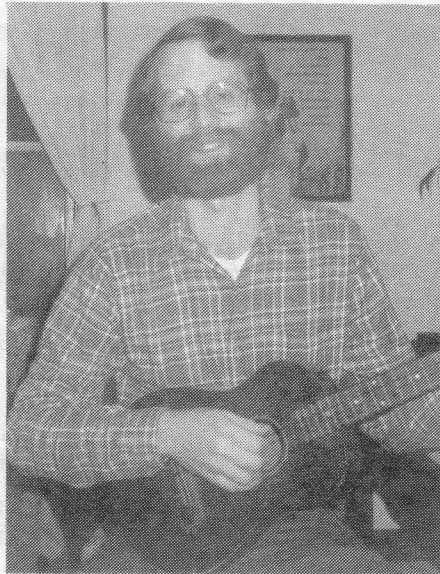
Blue, who had listened faithfully to the zany, satirical songs of Tom Lehrer, wrote his first song, "Their Way," in 1969. A parody of Paul Anka's "My Way," the song was a response to Blue's college experiences and to the "self-made man, the man who believed that he got where he was because of his own sense of character when, in reality, a lot of it was luck and being in the right place at the right time."

The song was temporarily forgotten, however, as Blue attended graduate school and received his teaching certificate. Blue had taught himself a few chords on guitar and had played at parties, and, according to legend, at all-night ragtime sessions in Cambridge ice cream shops. However, music was still strictly an avocation for him.

That began to change after Blue composed a song for the wedding of two friends. He remembers, "'The Ballad of Erica Levine' somehow really worked. I came home one evening really inspired and wrote a very quick first draft. When I woke up the next morning, I went to see if it was as good as it had sounded before I went to sleep. I really liked it."

A few weeks later, Blue was on a con-tradance boat cruise around Boston Harbor when the MC asked if anyone wanted to perform. Blue walked over to the mike to volunteer, and performed "Erica Levine." Kim Wallach happened to be there, and later asked Blue for a copy of the song.

The rest is history. Wallach sung it around the country. By the time Blue knew that Wallach was performing it,



the song had spread and was being sung by Frankie Armstrong and Faith Petric. Eventually the song, which has been described as "the theme song of interpersonal relationships," was added to the repertoires of Priscilla Herdman and Bob Franke and published in Sing Out! magazine.

This newly found acclaim has led Blue to become more active as a songwriter. Unable to write musical notation, Blue sees his recently released album, Erica Levine and Friends, as a way to help get his songs to other performers.

Blue continues to work closely with Kim Wallach, who has added Blue's "When the End Came" to her repertoire. "I found a picture in a calendar of women's artists, and there was a man and a woman standing on a hill," Blue reflected. "The sky was gray and bleak colored. I imagined it as a man and a woman embracing right before a nuclear holocaust. I tried to imagine slices of life before the bomb. Business as usual. It was an easy song to write."

In addition, Blue has recently co-written a song, "Freedom of Choice," with Wallach. With its theme of abortion, Blue was faced with the challenge of keeping the song pun-free. He admits, "There's little room for humor in a song about abortions. I had to make sure that there wasn't any point where the audience was going to laugh."

Because of the success of "The Ballad of Erica Levine," Blue contends that "people think I'm going to be funny and are ready to laugh. It's a difficult balance when I'm writing something that's serious."

Blue is extremely eager for Pete Seeger to perform a recently composed song, "Rebecca Jones." "It's right for his voice and for his spirit."

In retrospect, Blue's early interest in Broadway show music has caused him to write songs with strict rhythm and rhyme patterns. "Although I'm not satisfied with forced rhymes or squeezing in rhythms," admits Blue, "my songs are predictable."

According to Blue, most of the initial inspiration for his songs comes from some political issue. He then writes a first draft, which goes through a lot of technical work, such as developing key phrases and ideas. Blue then spends anywhere from days to months searching for a structure.

Although an event sometimes inspires a song, Blue said, "I recently discovered that I haven't written a song in the past three months, so I began compiling a list of things that I could write a song about."

In the course of revising material, Blue places great emphasis on the feedback of friends. Among the questions he asks are: Does it communicate what I'm trying to communicate? Is there a line in it that you don't like? Do you recognize the message? Is it something that you recognize from someplace else? Do you recognize the tune? Do you have any suggestions for the tune?

In addition, Blue has compiled a list of questions for self-analysis of new material. These include: "Is it too preachy? Is it about such a specific experience that nobody is going to understand? Is it too trite? Is it an idea that's been used over and over again? Is every part of it consistent with my own political feelings? Is it accurate? Did I falsify the experience, and, if I did, am I aware that I'm doing it? Who might sing it?"

Blue continues to teach second grade at an elementary school in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Although he performs very sporadically, his concerts are rare showcases of well-crafted songs. ■

Craig Harris is a freelance writer whose articles have appeared in The Boston Globe, The Patriot Ledger, Boston-Cambridge Tab, and The Black Sheep Review.

ON THE RECORD

GEOFF BARTLEY's performances tell of migrating birds ten-thousand feet up over Saskatchewan, of blue nights in the magic of deep summer, and of the grit and funk of life in these times. Geoff is a prize-winning guitarist with one album out on his own label.

BOB FRANKE's album, One Evening in Chicago, lost out to Bob Dylan's Infidels album in the 1983 Boston Globe Reader's Poll. At the moment he lives in Salem, Massachusetts, with his wife and child.

CAROL GOODMAN has lived in the Boston area since 1977. From '77 until the closing of The Idler's Back Room (a club in Cambridge, Massachusetts), where she performed regularly, Carol could be heard around the Boston area and at folk and women's music festivals in the New York/New England vicinity. Since the closing of The Idler she performs occasionally at colleges and benefits for the arts and political issues.

CHUCK HALL studied classical guitar and applied music at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire, and fingerstyle guitar with Vic Hyman. His songs reflect the variety of jobs he has held, and the characters that he's known. Chuck currently resides in Salem, Massachusetts.

RICK HAND (cover artist) is an artist and bluegrass musician who lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has done the posters for Passim (a folk coffeehouse in Harvard Square, Cambridge) for the past ten years.

BOB HOLMES grew up in a now nearly defunct mill town near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Fourteen years ago he came to Boston and has been performing mostly in the New England area since. His songs have always been about working people and their heroes. He hasn't written many love songs, but he's chosen a brand new one for this issue.

ERIC KILBURN is the director of the Nameless Coffeehouse, New England's oldest free coffeehouse. He has released two albums, Every Year and Celtic Guitar, on Wellspring Records. He is currently working on his third album, which will be released later in 1985. "Made In the the U.S.A." is a true story. Eric's albums are available from Wellspring Records,

961 Beacon Street, Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02159.

LORRAINE LEE has played Appalachian dulcimer for more than 20 years and taught and performed for more than ten years. Her newest album, Leeway for Dulcimer, recorded with her husband Rick, has recently been released on Greenhays/Flying Fish Records. Her book, The Magic Dulcimer (Yellow Moon Press, Brighton, MA), and her 6-cassette instructional series for Homespun Tapes (Woodstock, NY) present her playing style in depth. She performs with the New England band, Solomon's Seal.

HARRY LIPSON is a singer/songwriter in the Boston area. He has one LP, which is impossible to find. Harry also is involved with FolkTree ConcertMakers, producing folk concerts in New England.

(Continued on the back cover)

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(Continued from page 15)

DENNIS PEARNE, founder of the Rising Tide Band, now plays in the Marienne Kreitlow/Dennis Pearne duo, based in the Boston area. Dennis plays guitar and bass in that group.

JULIE SNOW is now home with a two-year-old son, considering and reconsidering taking up songwriting and playing again. Thanks to Lui Collins and others, her songs stay out there while she's at home.

JEANIE STAHL has been performing and recording for over ten years. Since 1974, she has sung with Mason Daring, with whom she has done two albums--Heartbreak and Sweet Melodies in the Night. Her solo album is called I'm Just Fooling Myself. Her song on this album is the theme song for a half-hour feature entitled Rolling, which will be aired on WGBH and other public broadcasting affiliates in the Spring of 1985.

DEAN STEVENS was born and raised in Costa Rica and has been living in Boston and performing throughout the United States for the last five years.

He performs his own songs and a wide assortment of other material in Spanish and English. His first LP, The Overview, is on Volcano Records (Volcano 2001). He is currently working on his second album. He frequently returns to Central America, where he has performed in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

JASON THRELFALL has been writing songs for close to seven years now and performing since September 1984. His songs tend to revolve around change and growth, often using his own experiences to vent his ideas and feelings through.

SIDE ONE CREDITS SIDE TWO

1. The Dollmaker's Secret (Chuck Hall)
Chuck Hall/Vocal & Guitar
Dennis Pearne/Bass

2. Lonely Boy (Bob Holmes)
Bob Holmes/Vocal & Guitar
Dennis Pearne/Bass

3. Baptism of Fire (Julie Snow)
Julie Snow/Vocal & Guitar
Dennis Pearne/Guitar & Bass
Chorus: Judy Molner, Geoff Bartley, Gail Rundlett, Bob Holmes, Doug Waterman

4. When the Bow Is Pulled (Geoff Bartley)
Geoff Bartley/Vocal & Guitar

5. Luise (Carol Goodman)
Carol Goodman/Vocal & Guitar

6. For Real (Bob Franke)
Bob Franke/Vocal & Guitar

1. Made in the U.S.A. (Eric Kilburn)
Eric Kilburn/Vocal & Guitar
Dennis Pearne/Bass

2. I Do for You, You Do for Me (Jeanie Stahl & Harriet Reisen)
Jeanie Stahl/Vocal
*Guy Van Duser/Guitar

3. Albert Appleton (Harry Lipson)
Harry Lipson/Vocal & Guitar
Dennis Pearne/Guitar & Bass

4. Beggar's Song (Dean Stevens)
Dean Stevens/Vocal & Guitar

5. Rockin' in a Weary Land (Lorraine Lee)
Lorraine Lee/Vocal & Dulcimer
Chorus: Michael Kane, Eric Kilburn, Angela Hardy, Jack Hardy, Malcolm Hardy, Jay Rosen, and Sweeney

6. Message to the World (Jason Threlfall)
Jason Threlfall/Vocal & Guitar
Dennis Pearne/Bass
Doug Waterman and Judy Molner/Harmony Vocals

Recorded March 7, 1985, in the basement of The Nameless Coffeehouse, Cambridge, MA
Jay Rosen--Recording Engineer

*Guy Van Duser appears courtesy of Rounder Records

Six more songs from this session will appear on the June '85 issue of Fast Folk.