

FAST FOLK

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WOMEN IN SONG

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FAST FOLK

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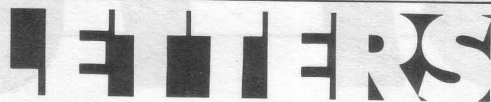
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her invaluable assistance in compiling
this issue.

COVER ART by Libby Reid



The following is a response by Fast Folk's Recording Engineer, Mark Dann, to a letter from the members of Second Chance, which appeared in the September issue of Fast Folk.

* * *

The letter by Second Chance criticized the technical quality of Fast Folk's June '85 issue in general and their song, "All the Wood of Lebanon," in particular. First, let me point out to them and to others who might be uninformed of the recording/record making process that the phonograph record you or I buy at the local record store is four or five generations removed from the original master tape. What this means in layman's terms is that your record is a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of the original master tape. For the members of Second Chance to assume that the distortion they claim to hear on their song is the fault of me or my studio is to assume a lot. Let me state that there is no distortion on the master tapes of their song, or of any other song on that album. I would be happy to furnish Second Chance with a cassette copy of the tape, which would prove this.

Furthermore, the sound that Second Chance is complaining about is not tape distortion at all. Listen to the Allman Brothers album, Eat A Peach: first song, middle of the last verse. Now that's tape distortion!

As a final note, Second Chance initially wanted to submit its own, pre-recorded tape. We refused. It is not now, nor has it ever been, Fast Folk's policy to accept prerecorded tapes. The quality would vary so much from cut to cut as to make for a very amateurish finished product. Imagine a 24-track, major record company's production side by side with home cassettes! And yet Second Chance's initial comment on the issue's recording quality was that the 'sound distortion' was most likely due to the difficulty of finding appropriate mix levels for cuts from different artists on the same disk. How much more difficult that task would be if each cut were recorded on different equipment in different studios.

- Mark Dann

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TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND FRIENDS,

We need your help!

As we approach the fourth anniversary of the Fast Folk project, we are trying to find ways of improving what we do--including not only the quality of the technical aspects of our record and magazine, but also the quality and variety of the music included. We also desperately need to improve our service to subscribers and listeners by producing the issues on a more timely basis and mailing them without delay, not to mention catching up with the backlog of mail and inquiries.

We have to face the fact that we have grown. What was easily handled by a grassroots volunteer organization when we had eighty subscribers is not so easily handled by the same organization now that we have over five hundred subscribers.

The past year has seen some major advancements. We have finally received our federal nonprofit status, which makes gifts to us tax deductible for our donors. Fast Folk is now distributed by Rounder Records, which means that it can be found in many record stores and ordered in numerous others. We have produced three successful Fast Folk concerts: one at New York's Bottom Line; one as part of the FolkTree Concert Series in Arlington, Massachusetts; and one at the Great Hudson River Revival festival.

The fact that we have grown has meant that our expenses have also increased. It does not mean, however, that revenues have kept up with expenses. We need to raise money.

What we don't want to do is raise the price of a subscription. We also don't want to throw more benefits at a folk audience that has already been benefited to death. But what we do need is donations. One place to start is with you, our subscribers and listeners. You are the people who will directly benefit from these donations: in increased efficiency, better service, and increased quality, and in numerous other areas for which money is crucial.

We realize that for many of our subscribers, the cost of a subscription is a lot of money, especially subscribers outside the United States who have been hurt by the strength of the dollar. But we have other subscribers who can afford and indeed have generously offered to send more than the cost of a subscription.

As a nonprofit corporation, we have to compete in a highly competitive world, with severely diminished arts budgets, where many foundations will not donate to an organization unless it has full-time, paid administrators, where arts councils will not donate to an organization unless it has a proven track record (financial and artistic), and where often the criteria for support is evidence that you don't need it in the first place. We must compete with the classical music field, which has a tradition of support from both wealthy and corporate sponsors. Folk music, on the other hand, has a tradition of being highly individualistic, often disdaining support from those with resources to help.

In addition to direct financial support, there are other ways in which you can help. As subscribers you can communicate with us more. You can help us identify possible donors, or

subscribers, or artists to record, or writers to prepare articles, or people in other fields who could help us with fundraising, accounting, legal help, locations for possible concerts, or radio stations that would be interested in us. You can resubscribe early, send a gift subscription for the holidays, help sponsor one of the promotional subscriptions for radio stations (tax deductible). You can let us know more about you by filling out our questionnaire in the center-fold of this issue.

Our staff has worked long and hard on a strictly volunteer basis to produce all aspects of this project--everyone from the artists who record for the album or write for the magazine, the engineers who put together the record, and the people who edit the magazine, get them packaged and mailed, handle the bookkeeping, and a hundred other chores that go into this project. This staff is dedicated to keeping Fast Folk alive and well, and will be able to do so only with your help.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Jack Hardy

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JANE SIBERRY

by Annie Leung

Imagine a slight woman, fair-skinned with delicate facial features and light, dancing eyelashes, strands of her short hair moussed in all directions, one huge, flower-like earring dangling from her left ear, black tights cropped at mid-calf, and an over-sized satin tuxedo jacket. And when she sings what you hear are wonderful ethereal vocals.

I am not as nervous when the night comes
And darkness falls among these desert rocks
Even though I still touch your beads
and wish for you
Waiting becomes easier than not.

"The Magic Beads"
Jane Siberry

This is Open Air Records recording artist Jane Siberry. Siberry is Canada's most valuable secret treasure. Originally from Toronto, she entered Canada's Guelph University as a music major, left with a degree in microbiology, and immediately returned to that first love of music.

Her early solo work--acoustic instruments and flowing melodies--was independently captured on vinyl in 1981 (Jane Siberry on Street Records), selling more than 3000 copies. Even on that first album there are hints of the musical metamorphosis this woman would undergo.

Siberry's songs were quickly transformed into full band adventures. Her second album, No Borders Here, on the Windham Hill/Open Air label, manages to be a very complex weaving of off-beat rhythms, angelic melodies, delicate harmonies, synthesized "80s sounds," and worldly, not-so-autobiographical lyrics that touch some part of your heart with wry humor or poignant sentiments.

The inspiration for Siberry's lyrics are not always intense personal reflections. Rather, she uses her experiences and those of others as a springboard for her songs. She says, "Of course I'm writing to express something, but I've never liked sentimentality, so I usually try to keep the song fairly distanced from myself by having that part-believable aspect to them." (Siberry quoted in MIX magazine, Vol. 9, No. 11.)



Siberry is often compared to Laurie Anderson and David Byrne. But these lukewarm attempts to describe who Siberry is and what her music is about do her work no justice. Her music speaks for itself. Siberry is undaunted by the frequent comparisons and constant use of words like "quirky," "special," and "different" to describe her and her music. She states, "I don't see my music as groundbreaking or unique. It's just my way of doing what others do, and it's different because I'm a different person. The imagery is sort of surreal and cartoon-like. I feel these distortions can help make a point."

Siberry's delicate balancing of simplicity and complexity, moving lyrics, and light playful storylines is her trademark. She makes the listener stop short because there often is a more compelling message underneath the surface statement of the song. Or is there? Is it simply a humorous commen-

tary, or is it really a more sobering statement?

His card says 'executive'
But it mumbles 'just a salesman'
He's not sure just who you are
But you might be a good connection

"Extra Executives"
No Borders Here

I'd probably be famous now
If I weren't such a good waitress

"Waitress"
No Borders Here

There is a sense of continuity throughout Siberry's songs. "I Muse Aloud," "You Don't Need," and "Follow Me" could have been written as a trilogy. These three songs detail one person's (Siberry's?) affections and the startling and painful resolution of the (one-way) affections.

I fill my baby up
I fill him up with so much love
He falls in love with them.

"I Muse Aloud"
No Borders Here

You don't need anybody
You don't need any comfort
You don't need any lovers
You can get it from yourself
You don't need anyone to want you
Don't want anyone to care
And I know you must be there
Because people stop to talk to you.

"You Don't Need"
No Borders Here

...follow me, follow me
There is nothing you need that
You don't have or can't do

I have love and so I stay
I have none so I go away
Follow me, follow me
You have no love
You need me now
So I go away
I free you now.

"Follow Me"
No Borders Here

Siberry's musical and lyrical brilliance is also easily noted in the song "Mimi On The Beach." This is no ordinary song about beach bunnies and musclemen. In fact, it reduces the 'typical' beach scene of the girl plus guy merry-go-round to the pretentious, shallow situation that it often is.

I'm still sitting over there
One guy just got up and brayed
They wag their words--they're all in heat
I can ignore it--just don't steam up the view.

The song focuses on two individuals (Siberry and Mimi?) and the psychological connection between the two strangers. Siberry may not even know Mimi, but the connection is there as it is between any observer and its chosen subject. Although there is no formal relationship between the two, there is an exchange. It is as if the observer on the beach sends courage through the waves so Mimi can defy the typical beach scene and "stand up." But the storyline is not the only special part of this song. Musically the song peaks and calms like the waves in the song. Changes in patterning and the return to familiar passages all symbolize the surf that Mimi rides.

Jane Siberry is an 80s philosopher, whether she stands before her audience of an impressive 12,000, as she did at the Ontario Place Forum last August, or whether she ventures to claim new audiences, as she did recently here on the East Coast.

discography

Jane Siberry, Street Records

No Borders Here, Open Air Records

Speckless Sky, Open Air Records

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GILL BURNS

by Andy Nagy

From the Beatles to Echo and the Bunnymen, Liverpool has been a hotbed of English rock and roll. Surprisingly, folk music has never been a strong suit there.

A happy exception from across the Mersey in Wallasey is Gill (pronounced Jill) Burns, who has recently completed her sixth tour of the United States. Her repertoire of traditional, contemporary, and original songs, accompanied by a strong and often intricate guitar style, has earned her a growing reputation at home, in the Netherlands, and in the U.S.

While the solo woman folksinger is no longer a rarity in America, Burns is one of only a handful in Britain who performs alone. She first gained attention as a featured artist on Kicking Mule Records' 1979 release, *Women's Guitar Workshop*. The album featured performances by Burns and four other guitarists from both England and the United States. It was designed to showcase the technical abilities of women on guitar, and to "dispel visions of female guitarists as being limp-wristed, nylon strung, and tri-chordal." An interesting discourse on the subject from a definite English perspective is given in the liner notes by Maggie Holland, the banjo and bass player from Hot Vultures, the English Country Blues Band, and Tiger Moth.

Burns's contributions to the album were four impressive finger-picked versions of Irish and English jigs, hornpipes, and airs. It was on the strength of this album that she made her first extensive tours of the East Coast of the United States, first opening for the acclaimed singer and guitarist Chris Foster, and then in tandem with Lynn Clayton, another of the *Women's Guitar Workshop* artists.

A more representative sampling of her work came a year later in the form of her first solo album, *Aloan at Last* (named in honor of the financial aid given by her parents to help produce the record). After shopping around at different folk labels, Burns made the decision to put the record out on her own, calling the label "Nosuch" and enlisting the aid of a producer, photographer, and artistic designer.

Although sometimes stark, the album was an impressive debut, showcasing some fine guitar picking and singing,

with occasional overdubbed harmonies. The songs include haunting renditions of classic ballads like "The Unquiet Grave" and "The Blantyre Explosion," a jaunty arrangement of "Tarry Trousers," and three more solid instrumental fiddle tunes. Also on this album are three of Burns's own compositions, including her often requested "One About the Beatles," a reminiscence of the Fab Four's effect on a young girl growing up in Liverpool, with snippets of '60s memorabilia thrown in.



Gill Burns, Saturday Night in Marblehead 1984

An admittedly nonprolific songwriter, Burns came up with a pair of novelty songs about some favorite pastimes: roller skating and eating bananas. Recklessly she recorded and released them as a single in 1982. Both songs boast catchy melodies and sophisticated production, with full bass, guitar, drums, synthesizer, and trumpet arrangements accompanying strong vocals (on silly lyrics). But the chances of an independently produced folk-related single reaching a wide audience were slim, and both songs were unfortunately about two minutes too long. The record didn't sell well, but it's still fun to hear now and then, particularly for the vocals and trumpet solos.

Amsterdam serves as a second home for Burns, both professionally and personally. In 1984 she recorded two songs for the Amsterdam Folk Collective's second compilation album, entitled *Melange*. Her contributions were a solo rendition of an original hornpipe and a hot jazz Western Swing number, with clarinet and second guitar.

In that same year, four years after the release of *Aloan at Last*, Burns

finished up work on her most recent album, *A Sight More Curious...Than It Sounds*, which was ready in time for her autumn '84 American tour. An impressively mature work, it received positive reviews in the American and English music papers. The songs are a strongly chosen collection of traditional and contemporary songs, including the latest trio of Burns compositions.

Burns had truly outstanding accompaniment on the album from Silly Wizard's Phil Cunningham and American fiddler Jane Rothfield (who can also be heard with husband Allan Carr and bass player Martin Hadden on their new Meadowlark release, *When These Shoes Were New*) and from guitarist Jack van Asdonck, percussionist Jim Sutherland (of Scotland's Easy Club), and tin whistler Linda Keohane.

The album is a fully realized project, with hardly any weaknesses, and striking cover design by Burns. Highlights include a heartbreaking lament for lost love by Irish songwriter (and "Melange" compatriot) Martyn Travis, "The Anger and the Pain," the traditional grisly murder ballad, "The Cruel Mother" (with haunting whistles by Phil, and eerie hidden whispers), an obscure Nova Scotian ballad, "American Woods," with Phil creating a full orchestral sound on his Roland Vocoder, and two songs about Native Americans by Robin Williams and Texan Eric Taylor. The first, Williams's "Adam Rude," adds tribal syncopated rhythms on bell, bodhran, congas, and other noisemakers to Burns's otherwise a cappella vocals. Guitar playing on the album is downplayed, but the record as a whole is her strongest to date.

Burns has run into some unexpected sexist hiring policies at some of the English folk clubs, and suffers from the dearth of suitable hirings familiar to all folk performers there. However, she has garnered continued success in the various clubs at which she has played in the United States. With her guitar case and bag of buttons that she makes and sells, she has become a welcome return performer at most clubs she plays. She will be coming back to the States for a fall '86 tour; be sure to see her then.

For bookings and albums, contact Gill Burns at 3 St. Hilary Drive, Wallasey, Merseyside L45 3NB, England (tel. 051 639 2923). A limited number of each record is available from 589 California Street, Newtonville, MA 02160.

Iris S. Miller

ATLANTIC CITY MEMORIES

by Roger Deitz

Somewhere in late-night movieland, I was traveling that mist-obsured, cinematic memory lane situated between "The Joe Franklin Show" and the cry of the rooster. Once again the path was haunted by a black and white ghost of Hollywood's heyday, a fossil-like relic of a once-proud, bygone era, now functioning as filler placed between commercial advertisements for adjustable beds, above-ground mausoleums, and oldie-but-goodie records.

This night's fare was a vintage 1938 hard-boiled who-dunnit entitled The Saint in New York starring Louis Hayward as the dapper detective invented by Leslie Charteris. I have always been a Saint fan. Simon Templar was a hybrid of the classic good guy/bad guy type, his hat neither white nor black, but rather a very charming shade of gray. A good guy who broke the rules, made love to bad women, and caused the police no end of embarrassment.

This particular film, a real gem, featured Kay Sutton as the bad woman, a woman for whom I'd have robbed a bank or embezzled a fortune, if only she'd have asked me.

Kay was tall, dark, mysterious, bored, and beautiful, and one was never certain whether she was going to point her revolver at Simon or at her fellow gang members. The Saint, having infinite self-confidence, knew...or didn't care. Kay burned her candle at both ends, shed a wondrous light, and inevitably stopped a bullet with Simon Templar's pseudonym on it.

It was a little after four in the morning. I was sitting in front of the tube, drifting in and out of sleep. Actually, I'm sure that I was at some point between semi-consciousness and deep snore. That's why when I heard that man sing, I didn't turn off the television set as I would have if I had been in full command of my motor faculties. I heard Frankie Valli, and I was trapped. He and The Four Seasons were singing "Big Girls Don't Cry." I was wounded. Then "Stay." Hit again. Then a medley of "Can't Take My Eyes Off You," "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Dawn," "Walk Like a Man," and their number one hit from 1962--"Sherry."

Above that frightening falsetto voice I heard another deeper voice speak: "Announcing Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons Silver Anniversary collection...forty fabulous original chart-

busting hits...rush \$19.95 plus three dollars shipping and handling to..."

My head began to spin as if I had been a guest to Dorothy's house for tea during the twister. When the storm passed, I found I was deposited not in L. Frank Baum's Oz, but on a familiar stretch of boardwalk in Atlantic City. It was 1969 again. It was summer. And it was as if I had never left!

Wow! there was Mr. Peanut, the grotesque eight-foot-tall mascot of the Planters Peanut stand. What a horrible job, what a demeaning job for the guy inside the peanut suit. All day long under the hot sun, the poor schlep playing the role of Mr. Peanut would wave at people passing on the boardwalk. I think his job description also read, "Puts the fear of God into little kids. Fights off dogs and winos. Causes pigeons to go into cardiac arrest." Whenever I think my present job is bad, I just conjure up the image of Mr. Peanut striding the boards in the ninety-degree heat, sweating his goobers off.

What a dream. I could smell the tantalizing, slightly stale aroma of over-roasted legumes that I have associated ever after with eight-foot-tall peanut men.

On the corner there was a hawk selling the unbelievably high-priced VegeMix Health blender. He was offering the small gathering of curiosity seekers free samples of strawberry malts made exclusively from a savory mixture of carrots, beets, and celery tops. As I scanned further down the boardwalk to the horizon, I could see the many grand old hotels, saltwater taffy and postcard shops, and game arcades that made up the magic mile of this summer resort. A horn sounded, and I quickly got out of the way of a passing tram.

I could smell the ocean, that salt water scent reminiscent of decaying kelp and dead clams. I could even feel the spray off the ocean. This was Atlantic City as I remembered it, Atlantic City before the Las Vegas facelift, before the gambling casinos and urban renewal projects. Here again was the natural seediness that I found so enticing.

I turned to view the Steel Pier. It was just where I expected it to be. An announcement was being made that it was time for the diving horse to make her leap off the pier into the ocean. In those days the diving horse was one

of Atlantic City's big attractions--every bit as big as the Miss America Pageant. The Steel Pier was a landmark, popular because it specialized in presenting current pop artists in concert. All the hot groups like the Turtles, the Lettermen, the Happenings, and, oh yeah, Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons played the Steel Pier.

The Steel Pier also housed the General Motors automobile exhibit. Inside, that company's latest models were on display for inspection and sale. This was great! I had been transported back to the day I purchased my first brand new automobile. I entered the exhibit in the gleeful anticipation of reliving the joy I had once experienced. It really was 1969. In the showroom I could see a '69 Camaro, a '69 Impala, and the object of my many dreams that year, the current model Chevrolet Nova. (No longer the Chevy II. That designation had been dropped for the new model year.)

That summer of 1969 I had sought to mix work and recreation into one fun-filled dream break from college anatomy, physics, and organic chemistry courses. Those courses were grunTERS. They had taken their toll. I needed to get away from the books and recharge my batteries or I would soon die of terminal tool. As a kid, I had always enjoyed the short Atlantic City seaside resort vacations taken with my family. That's why I headed there for summer break.

I got a job at Jacobson's Auction House (booth) on the boardwalk at Massachusetts Avenue. Jimmy Jacobson sold antiques, objets d'art, and furniture at "unbelievable savings" by way of hourly mini-auctions to passers-by who were enticed inside with the promise of free gifts and a drawing for a trip for two for a cruise to Barbados. The free gifts were fly-swatters, genuine ivory-colored plastic backscratchers, and postcards of Jacobson's gallery as it appeared back in the twenties. Every hour on the hour Jimmy's sister Irene would win the free trip to Barbados.

My job was that of shill. For those of you who don't know, a shill is to auctions what a relief pitcher is to baseball. In the vernacular, a shrill is the "ringer" who gets the "stiffs" or onlookers bidding. It was my responsibility to sit among the bidders as if I were one myself, and infuse a sense of drama and excitement into the bidding process, thereby creating

a demand for otherwise unappealing items. It was my job to bid up the price of certain items when they were in demand, and buy back for the house those items in danger of being sold at too low a price.

I also delivered flyers to hotel lobbies and swept up. For this I was given room and board and a modest salary. (Jacobson argued that he didn't have to pay me much as I was learning a valuable trade, and therefore was really an apprentice.) I didn't care. The job allowed me to work at the shore and remain in proximity to Jacobson's niece, Janet, the auction house cashier, the most attractive girl I had ever seen.

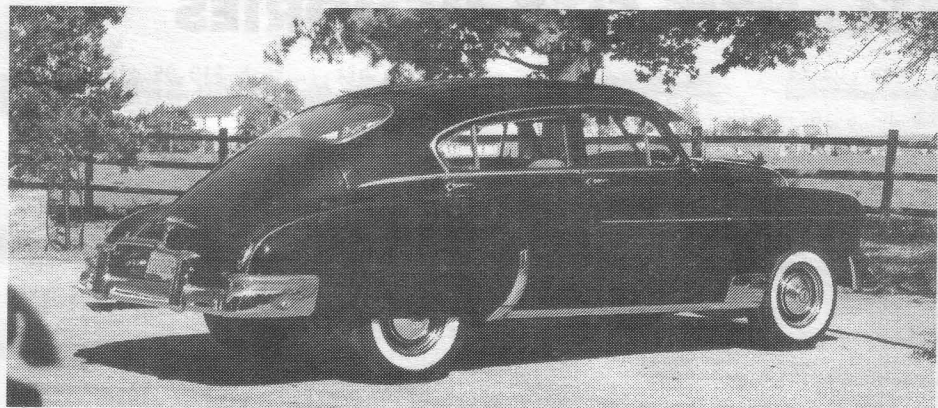
I would have paid Jacobson for the privilege of working near Janet. She was tall, dark, mysterious, bored, and beautiful. Every now and then she smiled at me. She must have been bored.

Earlier in the summer my days were taken with thoughts of how long it would be until my '58 Chevy Bel Air (undertaker black, reeking of Noxon metal polish, covered with dents and rust, purchased for all of fifty bucks) would explode. "The Beast," as she was known in my neighborhood, had a slow leak in the electronic fuel pump that replaced the mechanical fuel pump that had worn out a cam in the small six-cylinder engine. It also had a three-speed gear shifter on the column that would regularly get hung up between second and third gear. Who could blame The Beast for being somewhat tired? After all, it was eleven years old.

For hours each day I would pore over the new auto brochures and weigh the relative merits of the Ford Maverick versus the Rambler American versus the Chevrolet Nova. All relatively inexpensive new cars, and all (except the Rambler) preferable alternatives to exploding. Lately, I found myself poring over the relative merits of Janet versus the other women I knew.

Now I found myself more often doing all the dumb, dippy, moonie things guys do when they fancy themselves hopefully in love with young ladies. I would regularly treat Janet to a Coke or a sandwich from the Taylor Ham stand; I'd do her work for her so she could take longer coffee breaks; and I'd lie about myself whenever the opportunity presented itself.

I think I told her I was a dental student who was young looking for my age because I had a glandular problem. Only a man in love could be stupid



"The Beast" in its younger years.

enough to think that a woman would prefer a dental student with bad glands to an undergrad with a clean bill of health. We talked about teeth a lot. Her father was a dentist. The way she talked about him, I knew that I at best would ever only be able to run a close second to the man Janet truly loved. But I did all I could to convince her that I was every inch the dentist that her "daddy" was.

It worked. Eventually, she agreed to go out on a date with me. I enticed her with tickets to the Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons Concert at the Steel Pier. I was so elated by her consent, and embarrassed by my present automotive transport, that I immediately took off to buy a new car.

In my dream my walk into the General Motors exhibit was exhilarating. I was reliving one of the great moments of my young life as I made my way toward the best-selling Chevy of all time.

"The 1969 Nova. Don't be fooled by expensive imitations." The azure turquoise Nova was ringed with promotional blurbs. It gleamed under the spotlights thanks in part to a heavy coat of Simonize wax.

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I was convinced. I started to deal. The salesman offered to let me have the car for \$1969 plus the cost of extras. Then he tried to sell me a host of extras. He said I could "build my

own Nova." He read off the checklist of options as if each were a necessity: power steering and brakes; air-conditioning; auxiliary lighting; luggage carrier; child safety seat; speed warning indicator; Soft-Ray tinted glass; AM/FM stereo radio; eight-track deluxe tape system; special instrumentation; dual exhaust system; vinyl roof; super sport package; Rally wheels; powerglide transmission; 300-hp V8 engine; and a headlight washer.

I went all the way. I bought the basic car with the small six-cylinder engine and three-speed manual transmission with the shift lever on the column for \$1969, and I popped for an additional \$65 for an AM Delco radio, the only option I would buy. I regretted I could not afford the headlight washers. Even so, how was I ever going to pay back my loan payments of \$62.50 a month? Gas was nearly 26 cents a gallon. I'd probably go broke.

Outside of the second thoughts that usually plague any decision I make, I was otherwise elated by my monumental purchase. I thought of how impressed Janet would be when she learned what a big shot she was going out with. I'd spring the news on her that Saturday evening after the concert when I planned to take her into the GM showroom, point the car out to her, and tell her it was mine on order.

It was raining torrents that Saturday when I went to pick up Janet for the big date. I had on my best sportjacket and tie and enough cologne to anesthetize all of my shaving wounds. I had just discovered English Leather Lime, and as I recall, I did not use it sparingly. Frankie Valli was singing on the car radio as my defective speaker buzzed out the bass line. I was getting wet. My car tended to leak in the heavy rain. As I neared Janet's house, I thought about my new car, and about the woman with whom I was to

Courtesy of General Motors

spend the evening and, with luck, my life.

Then fate dealt me one from the bottom of the deck. As I rounded, The Beast skidded and hydroplaned into the curb. I hit a telephone pole, but that was no problem. Another dent was barely noticeable unless one was keeping track of how much of the car was rust, how much dent, and how much body putty. My concern was for the fact that my muffler had broken off at the exhaust pipe and was, as I drove on, dragging on the pavement. Also there was a strange clicking sound emanating from the right rear axle.

I wasn't worried about The Beast. After all, she was about to be history. My mind was on Janet and how the clicking and scraping wouldn't exactly add to the mystique of my personna.

Janet's father was a real good fellow. Even though I was already pretty wet, what with inspecting the damage and riding in an indoor Jacuzzi, he told me not to get any wetter and went to work himself on tying up my muffler with some bailing wire. The expression on Janet's face did not go unnoticed by either of us. To me it meant that I would have to work extra hard to overcome the handicap I had given myself. To her dad it said, "Don't worry, Daddy. This jerk hasn't got a chance with your little girl."

We left Janet's father soaked and waving goodbye from the front porch. It was the last time I ever saw him. I have to hand it to him; he did a good job with the muffler. That's the way I sold the car, along with my other modifications, such as the rubber band and paper clip assembly I rigged up to keep the shifter assembly from getting hung up between second and third gear.

Janet was silent for a while. I think the clicking was upsetting her. As we rode, water from a small leak was dripping on her lap, but she hadn't yet noticed. She might have been concerned that I had given her father a fatal chill. More likely she was afraid that someone she knew would recognize her riding in The Beast. She was very upset that her new hair permanent wasn't. I found that out because by the time we got to the concert she was talking to me again. I took that as a very encouraging sign.

This unfortunately was just the calm in the eye of the hurricane. In the next few moments she would break a heel off her shoe, sit in chewing gum, and develop a splitting headache.

Frankie Valli started the show and hit a few of those high, piercing notes for which the boy from Newark is well known. With each falsetto solo, Janet held her head and rolled her eyes.

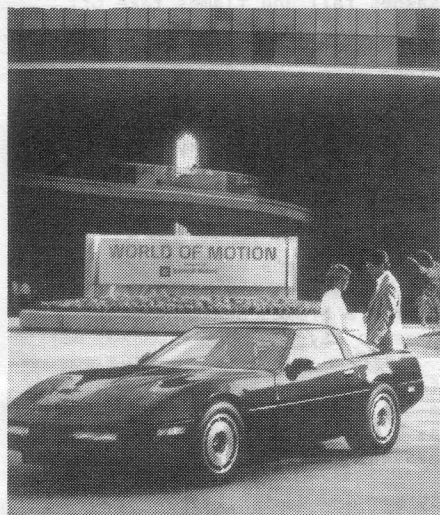
At intermission she requested that I take her home, and I agreed, saying that I didn't much care for the concert either. On the way out, however, I led her through the General Motors exhibit. It was time I played my ace in the hole. As we neared the Nova, she perked up. "Oh, look!" she exclaimed. (Had she seen the Nova? Might I finally score a few points?) "Here's the car Daddy promised he'd buy me if I go to a local college and commute to school this year." She wasn't looking at the Nova.

Janet ran over to a Bridgehampton blue Corvette Stingray. "Come sit in my car, Roger." Her headache seemed to be gone. Mine was just beginning.

In the following months Janet and I found little to talk about. When I got my new car she never even acknowledged it. She never even noticed it. Daddy bought her the Corvette when she consented to spend the school year at home. As for me, the Nova lasted eighteen years; that's seven years longer than the old junk it replaced.

Every now and then the fuel pump leaked and the shifter got hung up between second and third gear. Perhaps I hadn't given The Beast enough credit. In the years to follow, I instinctively retuned the radio every time a Four Seasons tune played, I cowered each time I saw a blue Corvette, and I never returned to Atlantic City, except now and then in my dreams.

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FOLLOW ME DOWN

If you could see me now, wending my lonesome way back home
Through the empty city streets at one o'clock in the morning
Would you dare follow me down to the last commuter train of the night
Would you ride it with me...would you follow me down

And if I could see you now tucked up asleep in your single bed
In a room with unicorns, glass roses and velvet
Would you dare to follow me down, borne on the wings of the endless night
Would you ride it with me...would you follow me down

Bridge:

Miles away, our dreams wind together, and our hearts, miles apart
Never mind the distance or the pass of time

And if you could see me now, wending my lonesome way back home
Through the empty city streets at one o'clock in the morning
Would you dare to follow me down borne on the wings of your astral flight
Would you ride it with me...would you follow me down (Bridge)

And if you could see me now, wending your lonesome way back home
Through the empty city streets at one o'clock in the morning
Would you dare to follow me down to the last commuter train of the night
Would you ride it with me...would you follow me down
You could ride it with you, you could follow me down.

© 1985 by Judith Zweiman

Additional lyrics to "Follow Me Down"; new third verse:

And if you could see me now, hands in my pockets and shoulders tight
On the windy city streets, any time of the morning
Would you dare to think of me on the last commuter train that you ride
Could I ride it with you, could I follow you down

by Richard Meyer of Folkano

SOMEBODY'S HOME

It's raining in my house tonight
Roof's leaking everywhere
Flowing over buckets
And pouring down the stairs
Taking spins around the hallway
Then ramblin' out the door
Out across the highway
And down the empty pier

Deep into the river
The water it does fall
Then it's just a part of water
Flowing through it all
And every time it rains
And every time I cry
It's just another current
In that river flowing by

Chorus:

Somebody's home
Though you ache and feel alone
Someone you've always known
Somebody's home

There's a fire in my house tonight
It's burning everywhere
It started in my cellar
Now it's raging up the stairs
And now my walls are burning, too
And the roof is crashing in
Finally there's only flames
Where once my house had been

The sashes fall and flames take off
In spirals to the sky
And turn into the blazing stars
That through the blackness lie
And though I mourn my own four walls
I try to understand
It's spread across the sky
And through the earth on which I stand
(Chorus)

Bridge:

In a desert there's an old man
Against an ancient sky
Weary from a broken heart
He comes to say good-bye

But first he wants to know
If he can know it once again
And as his tears do heal him
The heavens start to rain (Chorus)

© 1985 by Lucy Kaplanski

ALL-IN-ALL

(Editor's Note: At the author's request, we are running these lyrics as they were originally written. Ms. MacKinnon has reworked some of the lines to fit her particular point of view--yes, the folk process in action.)

Well she's pretty enough
She's tall and she's tough
And she lookin' when I turn around
And she smiles when I smile
And we look for a place to sit down

And it's what are you drinkin'
And what are you thinkin'
And baby, you wanna go home?
It's a Saturday night
And you don't want to spend it alone

Chorus:

All-in-all
I think I'd rather be in love
I think I'd rather be with someone
Who makes me insane
With someone I can't get enough of

All-in-all

I wish that I could fall again
I know it's a game I always lose
But I sure could use
One more chance to win

Well I'm happy I guess
Sometimes more, sometimes less
I get most of the things that I need
And my old married friends
They pretend to be envyin' me

I'm never neglected
But never connected
Always a guest at the meal
I'm not mad or upset
I just tend to forget how I feel
(Chorus)

Bridge:

Well it's not like I'm broke
Or I'm hungry
Or out in the rain
I know what I had
And I know what I've got
And I gave up a lot
To be free of the pain

In the hours right after
We're forcing our laughter
And neither believes it, I know
And I give her a kiss while I wish
She had somewhere to go

And tomorrow is Sunday
And after it Monday
And Tuesday and on into time
I don't like what I see about me
At the end of the line (Chorus)

© 1985 by David Buskin

SIDE YR SONE

WHAT IT IS

Somebody said that it would last forever
 Somebody else said it was really love
 Somebody said that it would be so wonderful and
 Suddenly it wasn't
 Suddenly it wasn't
 Suddenly it wasn't
 And now
 There you are
 And it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is
 It is, it is, it is, it is it is.
 I put all my faith in the future
 It's hard to have faith in the past
 This time it's all in the present
 It ain't the first, it ain't the last
 But it is, it is, it is, it is, it is,
 Oh it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is.
 I like the way you smell
 Baby powder and cigarettes
 Something else, something more I guess
 Something different, something different
 Definitely something good
 Is what it is, it is, it is, it is, it is
 It is, it is, it is.
 I put all my faith in the future
 It's hard to have faith in the past
 This time it's all in the present
 It ain't the first, it ain't the last
 But it is, it is, it is, it is, it is,
 Oh it is, it is, it is.
 And somebody said that it would last forever
 Somebody else said it was really really real
 Somebody said that something was so wonderful and
 Suddenly it wasn't
 Suddenly it wasn't
 Suddenly it wasn't
 And now
 Here you are
 And it is, it is, it is, it is, it is, it is,
 Oh it is, it is, it is, it is, it is
 What it is
 Is what it is.

© 1985 by Susan Vosburgh

CHOCOLATES AND SHAME

Primo went off to war
 To the frontline in Africa
 Where fighting meant no more
 Than life for many a soul
 Like any soldier he would pray
 Whenever someone passed away
 Could hardly wait to get back home
 Where Lina waited all alone
 Lina was very cold
 Starving more than before
 Had Primo been around
 She'd've layed the blame upon him

One day a foreign soldier came
 To bring her chocolates and shame
 To leave her with a dark child
 Who's forty-one years old now

I grew up on a farm
 Known as Lina's only son
 And sure enough I must confess
 I wasn't seen like all the rest

Primo got back alive
 He was bold when she was frightened
 There were many unhappy scars
 On his face and in our hearts

I saw him stumble in the night
 Mumbling words never defined
 Awaiting answers never found
 Until nobody came around

And any time I look behind
 After a few glasses of wine
 I try to change my fate in vain
 Left here with chocolates and shame

© 1985 by Germana Pucci

BIOLOGICAL TIME BOMB

Listen girls...
 do you hear something ticking?
 I do
 it's inside me it's inside you
 biological time bomb

Oh you can barely hear it when you're twenty
 but when you're thirty it's plenty louder
 your mother warned you but no
 you had to doubt her
 "I've got plenty of time, mom"

Oh, the ticking echoes in that empty womb
 oh, from the next apartment
 did you hear that 'boom'
 her biological time bomb

Now every time you see a baby carriage
 you curse the years you have avoided marriage
 you are angry, you are confused
 but wait
 'cause I have figured out how to defuse
 the biological time bomb

First you have a dozen of your eggs aspirated
 frozen in the freezer of a doctor's 'fridgerator
 in ten or twenty or thirty years, whenever you wish
 you thaw them out to romance wiggles in a petri dish
 then plant the little goober in a girl of seventeen
 who's into natural living and Prevention magazine
 No fuss! No muss! No stretch marks!
 (well, not on you)
 maternal instincts satisfied
 the modern thing to do

Listen girls...
 you can't ignore that ticking any longer
 as you grow older it will grow stronger
 biological time bomb

© 1985 by Christine Lavin

SIDE YR C&S TWO

LOCAL COLOR

I came back from Santa Cruz on a bus which overheated
Sold the amp to my guitar--wonder which of us got cheated
Crossing the line to my home town it cut me like a knife
Walking past the playground swings in the yellow street light
The green house with the rusty gate I'd short-cut on my way
To the school with my best friend--knew they'd tear it down one day

Refrain:

Some dreams die hard
Washed away with the rain
Some dreams die hard
They never come back again

Mrs. Jones on her front porch in her lap's her dog that's blind
She don't say nothing to no one since her man left her behind
Her boy his name was Randy--he used to chase the bus
Long after it would drop him off--bus driver say in disgust
"There goes that crazy white boy. Waddaya think a that?"
One day he went to fetch his ball--fire truck just squashed him flat
(Refrain)

We had choir practice once over at the reverend's house
When everybody'd gone he stuck his tongue right in my mouth
I told my ma about it later on that day
Said I was just thirteen, nobody would believe it anyway

God, there's Jim's house boarded up--no one's lived there since
We used to sit up all night long sittin' on that fence
We'd sing the saddest songs we knew--lightning got that tree
The weekend his folks went away and he made love to me
He wore this stupid railroad hat with stripes along the brim
I got pregnant once in March--never did tell him (Refrain)

© 1984 by Lillie Palmer
WINTER SKY

Put on the overcoat and walk out through the door
The stars are out and frost is on the stairs
My breath looks like smoke as it clouds up in the air
But my thoughts are all too clear

Winter sky look down and see me here
Winter sky you stare but you don't see
High and cold, too high to feel
But cold enough to kill
Winter sky

I thought our love was safe and sheltered from the storm
There wasn't anything it couldn't do
But time goes by and I've come to believe
That our days of love are through

Winter sky look down....

Somewhere's a place where there is laughter, joy, and light
And other people's windows show it's true
But I'm here tonight, an outsider looking in
Feeling cold and old and blue

Winter sky look down and freeze these tears
Winter sky you swallow up my cry
I'm alone with you tonight, but you don't answer me
Winter sky.

© 1985 by Michal Shapiro

GRANDMA'S BATTLECRY

It's blowing in the wind again
It's drifting in the rain
Before the dead have moldered yet
Or wounded healed their pain
I am so old, my grandsons,
That I remember when
I marched to hail the Armistice
I was barely ten

That was the war to end all wars
To save democracy
Praise God, they said,
We've won the peace
For all eternity
I marched for Spain when some years passed
And marched and marched and then
Another war to end all wars
And so I marched again

I marched in Minneapolis
Chicago and Duluth
In San Francisco and New York
I marched to shout the truth
I marched in Hiroshima
And knealt before a stash
Of tens of millions bones of people
Atomized to ash
And with the distant rumble
Of new regiments of men
I read the warning on the tomb
"This must not be again"

Chorus:

I marched to staunch Korea's blood
I marched for Vietnam
I marched to stop the napalm and
I marched to stop the bomb
I marched and marched and marched, Oh Lord
I'm sure I've done my due
I marched since I was barely ten
And now I'm seventy-two

I should be lying in the sun
Or dreaming in the grass
But how, when generals everywhere
Are polishing their brass
Entranced with dreams of four-star roles
So help me, Lord, they're glad
It's said that whom the gods destroy
They first must render mad

Their burning eyes see no-man's land
And armies poised for action
And you, my warm and loving ones,
You're merely an abstraction

It's geopolitics again
And oh, with what finesse
The players push their pawns about
These masterminds of chess
How cunningly they plot each move
How skillfully they spar
And checkmate one another
Like the masters that they are

How stimulating, how intense
A world to lose or gain
Except for one dismaying fact
The players are insane
Controlled, dispassionate they play
This game that madness spawns
And I can't even look away
My children are the pawns (Chorus)

Some people keep on fighting
When they've lost an arm or leg
Some still keep up the struggle
When they're fragile as an egg
I've heard men rasping, "I object!"
With voices turned to gravel
I've seen a woman raise a fist
Who couldn't lift a gavel

And even with a broken heart
One still can make a stand
So lead, my children, lead the way
Reach back and take my hand
We'll march again, confound them all
Don't quibble at my age
I'll shield you with my brittle bones
I'll nourish you with rage (Chorus)

© 1980, Words by Irene Paul
Music by Barbara Tilson

KNOWING WHAT I KNOW NOW

Out on the road and a refugee
Thinking about it and I cry out loud
I wouldn't ask you to comfort me
Knowing what I know now

We had a love and it all went wrong
I had a dream and you let me down
But I wouldn't ask you to take that on
Knowing what I know now

Would I ask a seeing man to go blind
Would I ask a sane man to lose his mind
Would I expect you to come back somehow
Knowing what I know now

As much as you are in my heart
As much as I want you around
I wouldn't ask you to play that part
Knowing what I know now

© 1985 by Shawn Colvin and John Leventhal

THE BUS

The fat man wears a bow tie
The thin man wears a hat.
The lady with the raincoat left wrappers where she sat.
The banker has his money, so he won't make a fuss,
And we all go a-riding on the same bus.

The artist has a sketch pad
The thinker has some books.
The lovers on the back seat exchange their warmest looks...
And everybody's thinking the things we can't discuss,
But we all go a-riding on the same bus.

Chorus:
Well, sometimes it gets hectic
As we scramble for a seat.
Everybody pushing, shoving,
Trampling your feet...
But traffic jams don't stop us
'Cause we have our jobs to do.
And we know that the bus driver will
Always pull us through.

THE ROAD OF THE ROCK N ROLL

It was down in New York City in the year of '73
A man they just called Dino came a-walkin' up to me
He said, "How do you do young lady, and would you
like to go,
And spend the summer gettin' rich on the road of the
Rock n Roll?"

I being out of employment to old Dino I did say,
"This goin' out in the Rock n Roll world depends upon the pay
But if you pay good wages, transportation to and fro
I'll spend the summer havin' fun on the road of the Rock n Roll

We crossed the Mississippi; our tour had just begun
The first damn job we went to play the sound man didn't come
The crowd became unruly and they wouldn't let us go
The promoter ripped us off that night on the road of the
Rock n Roll

Now the food it was McDonalds; it was meat I could not chew
We'd stay up on road aspirin which was against the law
We'd drive all day and play all night in some forgotten hole
And sleep in someone else's bed on the road of the Rock n Roll

Now the men they were numerous; I'll not deny that here
They'd drive you to distraction with the grinding of the gears
Good booze and too much cocaine most everywhere you go
These are the lubrications of the road of the Rock n Roll

Well, our tour it bein' over old Dino he did say
The boys have been extravagant and they were in debt to him
Oh, we begged and we pleaded but still it was no go
So we ripped off his equipment on the road of the Rock n Roll

Now it's goodbye to all the roadies and promoters wearing beads
And the leaguers who attended my urges and my needs
I'm a-goin' on back to folk clubs where the audience is small
And you'll never see my ass again on the road of the Rock n Roll
Oh no, you'll never see my ass again
On the road of the Rock n Roll

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Last verse by Ken Bloom
Music, traditional

The beggar has his rags on
The lawyer wears a suit
The music student carries an apple and a flute.
The hero has his medals, though some have
turned to rust,
But we all go a-riding on the same bus. (Chorus)

The dreamer
Has the future
The pauper has the past.
A father has his family
A playwright has his cast.
And when the road gets foggy,
In
God
We place our trust...

And we all go a-riding on the same bus.
Yes
We all go a-riding on the same
bus.

© 1985 by Julie Gold

global village preservation society

MOSES ASCH AND FOLKWAYS RECORDS

by Gary Kenton

Although many tend to think of the independent record company as a recent phenomenon, the fact is that in the 1940s and 1950s, independent producers and manufacturers were the backbone of the industry. One of the oldest of these indies is Folkways Records, founded in 1947 and itself the successor to two previous indie labels.

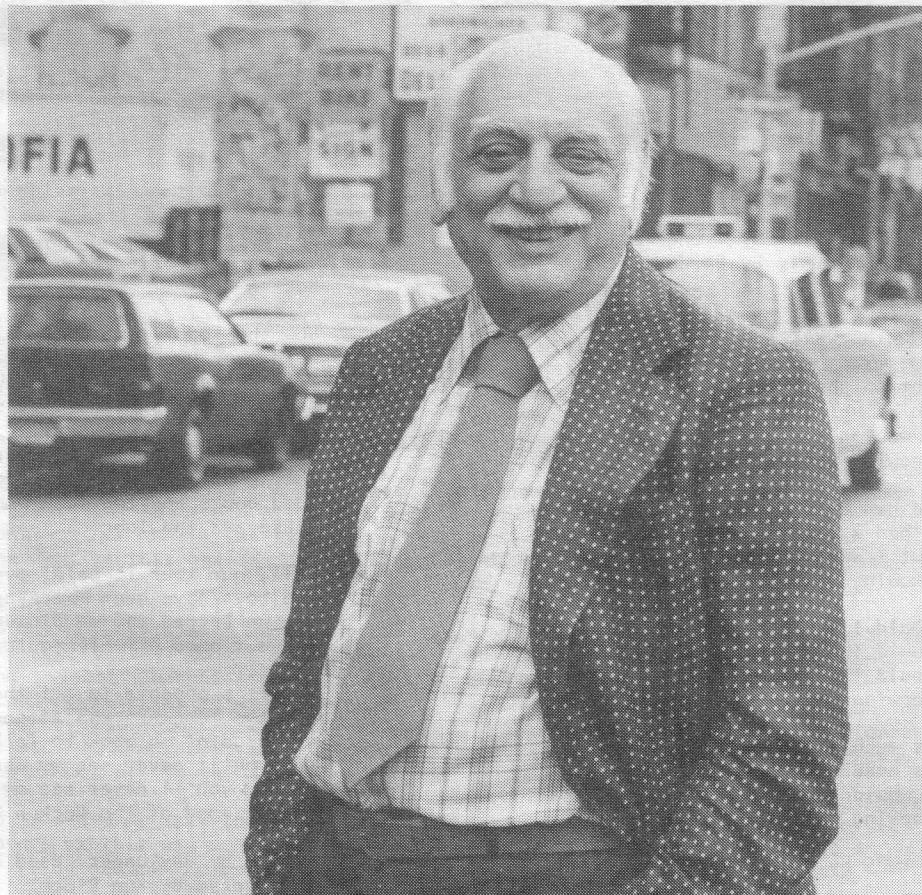
Over the past 38 years, Folkways has had its ups and downs (reaching its zenith during the folk boom of the 1960s), quietly amassing and sustaining a catalog that now boasts nearly 2,000 titles covering a diverse range of musical, literary, political, and experimental recordings. To study Folkways is to gain an education in musicology, history, and alternative marketing.

Folkways is very much the product of one man's lifelong vision and effort. That man is Moe Asch who, at 80, still arrives at his art-festooned office each morning at seven to sort his mail and prepare for the day's labor.

This gruff-mannered, white-haired man no longer produces records himself. However, he still decides what is to be recorded and released, and he spearheads all marketing, sales, and promotion activities for the label. If one were to call Folkways in search of, say, early folk-blues by Leadbelly, dulcimer songs by Kevin Roth, or classic jazz piano by Jelly Roll Morton, it is more than likely that Moe Asch would be the one to answer the phone and fill the order.

Moses Asch was born in Warsaw, Poland, on December 2, 1905. His father was Sholem Asch, the world-renowned Yiddish writer whose controversial novel on the life of Jesus, *The Nazarene*, was an international best-seller. His aunt, Barbara Shapiro, was a minister in Lenin's cabinet in Moscow and a revolutionary. Asch has been married for 55 years and has one son (an anthropologist who collaborated with his father on several American Indian field recordings for Folkways) and two grandchildren.

In a very real sense, though, the entire roster of Folkways artists and producers, as well as the listeners who comprise their audience, are an extended family to Asch. After the



Moses Asch on the streets of New York City

schools and universities, whose large acquisitions indicate the value placed on Folkways records in the field of scholarship, Asch's best customers are the children and grandchildren of people who bought his earliest releases two generations ago.

In fact, sales of Folkways' children's recordings account for nearly 40 percent of his revenues. "I am selling to parents whose upbringing was affected by Woody Guthrie's *Songs To Grow On* and Pete Seeger's *American Folk Songs For Children*," says Asch proudly. "The stores don't understand this market. No amount of demographic research can account for it. These parents want these same records for their children."

In addition to children's records, the Folkways catalog boasts recordings in such categories as ethnic, folk,

country and bluegrass, blues, spoken word, classical, sea chanties, and, to the surprise of many, an extensive repertory of electronic, digital computer recordings.

Among the performers and personages who turn up, in one context or another, on Folkways albums are Langston Hughes, Bob Dylan, Mary Lou Williams, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Uncle Dave Macon, P.G. Wodehouse, The Chambers Brothers, Gertrude Stein, Lightnin' Hopkins, Huey Newton, James Joyce, Mahalia Jackson, Phil Ochs, Charles Dodge, Dr. Martin Luther King, Bertolt Brecht, Dock Boggs, and Richard Nixon. If that isn't diverse enough, there are also smatterings of science, language instruction, murder mysteries, religion, street sounds, Shakespeare, and just about anything else in the world that makes purposeful noise.

© 1980 by David Gahr

In sharp contrast to most commercial record companies, Asch has never deleted a single item from this astounding catalog. He explains his iron-clad policy with this analogy: "One does not eliminate the letter 'J' from the alphabet because it is not used as much as the other letters. Each record in my catalog is important for the intellectual information on it, and I will not cut something out because it is not in demand at the moment."

* * *

After studying electronics and high frequencies in Germany in the 1920s, Moe Asch set up Radio Laboratories, creating custom recording and amplification equipment and was the Eastern representative for Stromberg-Carlson, which he dubs "the Rolls Royce of radio." One of the firm's early clients was Les Paul, who had his first electric guitar amplifier built by Asch. Asch also built equipment for several radio stations, among them WEVD, a still-extant New York station named after socialist leader Eugene V. Debs.

When Columbia and RCA unceremoniously dropped their international record series' in 1939, WEVD and other stations were left without religious and ethnic records to satisfy their largely immigrant audiences. Asch stepped into the breach and started making records for this market, using his Stromberg-Carlson contacts to get his product into the retail shops. When Japanese military actions curtailed shellac imports in 1941, Asch made a deal with Herbert Harris of Stinson Records, who supplied him with shellac and acted as a distributor for the fledgling Asch Records. He was also able to diversify his roster to include such artists as Leadbelly, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, and others.

This arrangement lasted to the end of World War II, when Asch joined forces with Norman Granz to form Disc Records, a label that was responsible for some of the finest jazz ever recorded. Mary Lou Williams, James P. Johnson, Coleman Hawkins, and Nat King Cole (before he became a pop idol) are among the stellar players who recorded for Disc between 1945 and 1947. But Granz was a notoriously reckless businessman; the sessions he conducted with Hawkins were legendary for their extravagance, and Disc was soon scuttled beneath a sea of debts. The helping hands of Jack Kapp of Decca Records and George Mendelsohn of Vox enabled Asch to form Folkways in 1947, only months after Disc had gone bankrupt.

Asch maintains that his earliest recordings, made at his self-designed studios on West 46th Street in Manhattan, had the best fidelity of any he has issued. "In those days there were no acetates; they recorded directly on wax," he recalls. "We used one RCA ribbon mike, set in such a way that there was a balance between the instruments and the voice. It was a direct from microphone to wax process, which is still the cleanest sound there is."

"I am just an instrument," Asch continues. "I simply represent the people who create and perpetuate an expression of their culture. Today, producers and engineers sit there and turn knobs and make artistic decisions based on some idea of what they think the record should sound like. The musicians have very little to say. With artists like Pete Seeger, Cisco Houston, or Leadbelly, we were all interested in content, not in the engineering. There was very little rehearsal. They'd come to me when they were ready to record. Woody Guthrie wouldn't be 'produced' or 'directed'; he was an individual."

One area in which modern technology did prove to be a boon to Folkways was the development of the 33-1/3 RPM long-playing record in the 1950s. "We had been constricted in trying to get folk ballads on records in under three minutes on our 78s," explains Asch. "With the 33, we could do longer narratives."

The advent of the long-player left Asch with only one problem: a stockpile of Asch, Disc, and Folkways 78s that he needed to sell in order to raise funds and make space for a new line of LPs. Again, Asch might have gone under were it not for some timely outside aid, this time from legendary retailer Sam Goody, who bought out much of his stock of 78s, enabling him to proceed manufacturing 33s.

Asch's enthusiasm for the LP was tempered only by the accompanying changes in recording techniques. Folkways' straightforward, sometimes rough recording style was being rendered obsolete by an industry tripping over itself to satiate the public appetite for "high fidelity" stereo sound. (Stereo albums became available for home use in 1958.) "Mostly they just pinched the tracks," says Asch, with no small amount of disdain in his voice. "They boosted the highs and suppressed the lows, but the reproduction is false."

With the dawn of the be-bop era and the record equipment revolution of the

late 1950s, Asch ceased making jazz records, whose practitioners now demanded double-tracking, and began to withdraw from producing altogether. Although he has since moved to new offices on West 61st Street and seldom steps behind a recording console, Asch still exerts control over Folkways' recordings, farming work out to trusted associates who are largely faithful to his recording philosophy. He also has a network of musicological sources from which he receives field recordings from every corner of the globe. Among some of the notable contributors to Folkways over the years are Samuel Charters, Harry Smith, David Jasen, Fred Ramsey Jr., and, in the ethnic field, the late Henry Cowell, Laura Bolton, and Harold Courlander. Asch himself has concentrated his considerable energies on running the business.

One notable exception was a 1963 excursion to the studio on 46th Street with Bob Dylan. Dylan had been signed to Columbia Records by an astute John Hammond. (Legend has it that Dylan was turned away from the Folkways offices. He later told journalist Israel Young that he "never got to see Moe Asch.") However, when he came up with some overtly political songs he wrote to benefit *Broadside* magazine (a mimeographed, topical publication founded by Pete Seeger and Sis Cunningham), Hammond arranged for him to go into the studio under the alias Blind Boy Grunt with Asch at the production helm. Several of Dylan's performances are still available on a couple of Broadside discs in the Folkways catalog, including a memorable duet with Happy Traum on a song called "I Will Not Go Down Under the Ground," Dylan's answer to the bomb shelter craze of the time. Obviously, neither Ronald Reagan nor Caspar Weinberger heard this particular song.

But Asch's main aesthetic task over the past two decades has been to decide what material is good enough, or carries sufficient cultural weight, to be on Folkways. It is difficult to get Mr. Asch to define his standards. This is not because he is secretive but, rather, because he seems to make decisions largely by instinct. True, his instincts are sharpened by years of experience and by the counsel of expert colleagues, but in the final analysis, Folkways is a monument to the intelligence and inspired impulses of Moe Asch.

"It's hard to spell out the criteria," he says evenly. "You use your feeling

(Continued on the next page)

(Continued from the previous page) and your whole experience when you hear something and you decide whether it is right or not. Each record has to be judged on its own merit. I am interested in the music primarily as a social expression, not as a technical expression. The music that I issue should have some humanistic purpose. Even my electronic music is not all mechanical or mathematical; it has social content. And I look for things no one else has put out. If it expresses something in the culture, it deserves to be available to the general public.

"It is really not so difficult," he continues, "to know what is the truth

and what is falsehood. For instance, you know the twang that many folk-singers developed after Bob Dylan. This is false, it is not common to the man. With Dylan, of course, it was the poetry that counted rather than the rendition. His popularity was a combination of the rendition and the poetry, but that style wouldn't work for Folkways.

"On my Broadside sessions with Dylan, he was dealing with specific and economic problems, so he didn't falsify his voice. He stated it as he felt it. This is my main criterion. Does a guy actually mean what he says, or is it just something he thinks he can make a couple of bucks out of? The guy has

to live it and feel it and has to say, 'I'm being browbeaten by society and I've got to get it out of my guts... I'll go to Asch and see what he says.' That's the kind of thing I look for."

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Portions of this article have appeared in Musician and RPM magazines.

Gary Kenton is currently at work on a book on Moses Asch and Folkways Records. For a free Folkways catalog write to Folkways Records Service Corp., 632 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

RECORD REVIEWS

Lui Collins, *There's a Light*

by Bob Stepno

There's a Light, the third album from one of Connecticut's favorite singer-songwriters, includes a lot of new friends and new arrangements of songs that Lui has polished in concert (or in the living room) since her last record four years ago. A few arrangements may take Lui's coffeehouse fans by surprise, but her clear, clean voice and sensitive lyrics still come through.

In fact, a glance at the record's notes reveals three backup vocalists, percussion, mandolin, dulcimer, two fiddles, cello, flutes, fife, oboe, Fender Rhodes, bass, drums, synthesizer, piano, French horns, trumpet, electric guitar, and a bell tree.

You have to get inside the jacket to discover that this is not a 15-person orchestra; fewer than four accompanists appear on most of the songs, and the drums only hit one track on each side. The excellent players include John Cunningham (fiddle and synthesizer), who also produced the album, Leo Kretzner (dulcimer), Joe Gerhard (fiddle and mandolin), and Skip Healy (flute), among others.

The electric keyboards are handled with skill and restraint, and only appear on three songs. Lui does one song a cappella and another (the

opening cut, "Dance Me 'Round") with an interesting mix of percussion, mandolin, and dulcimer. She plays guitar on only three cuts, and piano on one.

The other voices join in on three songs. The voices belong to Lui, Sally Rogers, Howard Bursen, and Leo Kretzner, and I wish they were there more often. They make "All You Can Do" one of my favorite songs on the album. "There's a Light," one of Lui's own compositions, is a wonderful song about hope and sharing. I only wish she had shared the chorus with the other singers instead of (or in addition to) the Fender Rhodes, bass, drums, and a touch of overdubbing. That's o.k.; you'll be adding your own harmony soon enough.

The constantly changing cast of players gives Lui a chance to showcase her lovely voice in a variety of settings, but it also gives the album a bit of the feeling of a "greatest hits" compilation or a collection of experiments, even if most of them are successful.

"Dance Me 'Round" starts the album with the words,

You make my heart beat.
You make my head spin.
You make my eyes glow.
You make me warm from within,

letting you know that marriage and motherhood haven't hurt Lui's talents for writing good old-fashioned roman-

tic love longs. "Midwinter Night," "The Enfolded" (CooP, August '82), and "Lullabye" are other kinds of love songs, each deeply felt and lovingly sung. "Midwinter Night" has a special kind of warmth (despite the title) enhanced by David Darling's cello. For emotional balance, "Leaf in the Winter" is about the gray cloud between those silver linings, with Skip Healy's flute and Lui's voice giving the cut its own silver lining.

With "All You Can Do" (CooP, November '82), written by Martha P. Hogan, and Bob Franke's haunting "For Real" (Fast Folk, April '85), Lui shows that she's still finding great songs by other folks and making them her own. Like her title song (and Julie Snow's "Baptism of Fire" on Lui's previous record--also on Fast Folk, April '85), both of these are strong statements of hope and will, and well worth the price of admission. The setting of "For Real" is striking--just Leo Kretzner's dulcimer with Cunningham's gentle synthesizer building on the dulcimer's drone and harmonics, giving Lui's voice plenty of room to tell Franke's story about death, love, life, and God's personal pronouns.

The a cappella number is "The Ballad of the White Seal Maid," Lui's setting of a poem by Jane Yolen, based on the Silkie seal-folk legends that Lui, Gordon Bok, and others have sung about before.

Finally, "Ecstasy" is a Sacred Harp hymn from the shape-note tradition of

unaccompanied harmony singing. Here it is far from unaccompanied. This is the cut with Cunningham's electric guitar, plus trumpet, French horns, bass, drums, and rattling things. "What better way to praise God than to celebrate life in joyous, majestic, raucous, ecstatic music?" say the liner notes. It's certainly joyous, but some may find it more raucous than majestic.

Whatever your idea of ecstasy, this album probably has something you will want to learn, sing, play for friends, and give as a Christmas present to people with whom you like to share feelings, music, and other important things. It also may have one or two moments you'll wish weren't on the same record, but life's like that.

Elaine Silver, Wandering Woman

by Gerry Hinson and Nancy Hershatter

On *Wandering Woman*, her second release (Dandelion Records, SSM-002), Elaine Silver confounds the categorizers, purists, and marketeers of every stripe, for she doesn't sound like a mainstream songbird, traditionalist, Appalachian woman, broadsider, modern folk lyricist, or countrified folk-singer; actually, she sounds like all of them in turn. From the wrong artist this could be a ludicrous presentation. Silver, however, has both the voice and the experience with each style to do justice to all types of songs.

Judiciously choosing from both her own material (all but two songs on side 2) and from that of other writers (all but the last song on side 1), Silver has produced a superb work with genuinely broad-based appeal.

As for the standout numbers, Melody Daniels's "Don't Let Me Throw This Love Away" and Silver's "In Old England" are real treats. The latter song is the most optimistic face put on life on the road by a musician in quite a while.

But this well isn't dry yet; blues enthusiasts will enjoy "Hoboken Wishbone Blues" and "Warm Weather Woman," which includes a dobro augmenting a 12-bar blues. "The Ploughman Laddie" will please the English traditionalist fans.

FAST FOLK MUSICAL MAGAZINE REVUE

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Silver displays her Country & Western influences on her own "Back Home Lovin' You" and on "Roses" by Rich Reitz & the Split Rock Rhythm Band (with which Silver has often sung), a bit heavy on sentiment but lively enough for a good bar, a C&W radio station, or The Opry.

A song with an Appalachian flavor and appropriately leaner instrumentation is her cheerful "Key West Sunset Celebration Song," whose sound echoes the reclusive bergerfolk, and her ominous rendition of John Kruth's "The Grim Reaper's Song," transmitting a rural familiarity with the arbitrariness of Sudden Death to an urban audience through the words of an off-beat New York poet and musician; no mean feat, this effort.

Perhaps Silver has saved the best for last. She gives an excellent rendition of Fred Small's broadside, "Fifty-nine Cents (For Every Man's Dollar)," perhaps the most effective attack on sex discrimination in the marketplace that is fit to sing. When played for the first time on, appropriately, National Secretaries Day, these lines seized our attention:

Fifty-nine cents for every man's dollar
Fifty-nine cents, when's this deal gonna change?
Fifty-nine cents makes a grown woman holler
Keep your flowers, buddy, give me a raise!

This song is one of few broadsides that both rings true and sings well.

"Blue Skies and Teardrops" by Mike Williams opens the album, a sheer

delight with a straight-ahead tempo, brightly colored melody, and lyrics of resilience in which joy follows partings as the singer moves on. Opening side 2 is Silver's own "Wandering Woman," the title track. This song is slow-paced, and displays a contrasting asset: intensity and self-revelation, which draws in a listener; no repelling egomania here. Lyrically and melodically Silver burns here with that 'quiet fire' we once felt from Roberta Flack and Lori Lieberman--a rare quality, more of which hopefully is forthcoming.

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ON THE RECORD



Jason Threlfall

Shawn Colvin



Alan Beck

Lucy Kaplanski



Susan Spelman

Raun MacKinnon



Julie Gold

DAVID BUSKIN, author of "All-in-All," is a singer/songwriter living in New York City. He is also one half of Buskin & Batteau, a popular duo that performs frequently throughout the United States and Europe.

SHAWN COLVIN was born in South Dakota. Her father introduced her to guitar. She's been playing professionally since 1974, living in Canada, Illinois, and Texas prior to settling in New York City.

JULIE GOLD is a singer/songwriter/piano player who lives in New York City. Although she cannot play tennis or the guitar (for some reason she draws a comparison, perhaps because of the similarity in shape), she believes that had she received proper instruction, she would have excelled at both.

LUCY KAPLANSKI is primarily an interpretive singer, concentrating on local New York writers. She is featured on the Cornelia Street album and performs alone, with Shawn Colvin, and with The Roommates.



Christopher Lavin

Christine Lavin

CHRISTINE LAVIN has just signed with Philo Records and is working on her next album. Her most recent album, Future Fossils, is available through Rounder Distribution.

RAUN MACKINNON lives with her first husband, Jeremiah Burnham, in New York City.

LILLIE PALMER and GLADYS BRAGG formed their duo in June 1984. Since that time they have appeared on Fast Folk three times: Oct. '84, Dec. '84, and March '85. Most recently they headlined at The Minstrel Show in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Lillie is currently a student at Mannes College of Music in Manhattan.



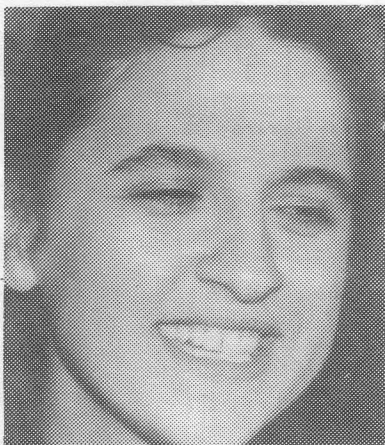
Faith Petric

IRENE PAUL was a union organizer, newspaper editor, author, peace activist, and poet. She wrote "Grandma's Battlecry" in 1980, when she was 72 years old. Her great-granddaughter-in-law, Barbara Tilson, wrote the music.

FAITH PETRIC was born in a log cabin at Orofino, Idaho, in 1913. She claims to know a thousand songs, including workers' songs, songs about women's lives and experiences, children's songs, topical songs, humorous songs, and others, which she performs all over North America.



Gladys Bragg and Lillie Palmer



Germana Pucci

Bob Zaidman



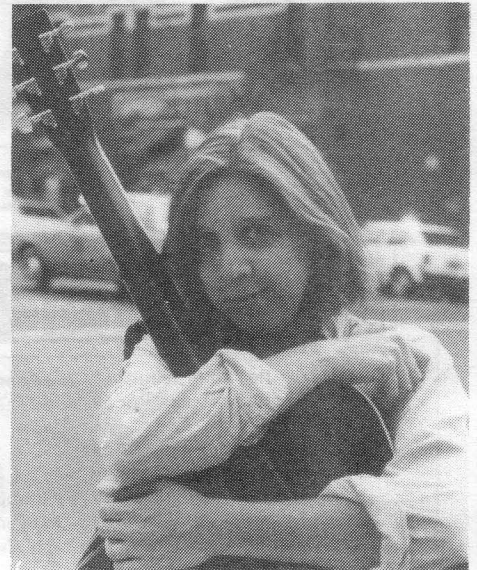
Elaine Silver

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.

MICHAL SHAPIRO has been singing professionally since the age of eleven. In the late 1960s she recorded and toured with the rock group Elephant's Memory, and appeared on the soundtrack of the movie, *Midnight Cowboy*. During the 1970s she completed her college education and returned to the music business, founding Charged Particles, a fusion/new acoustic band, with banjoist Marty Cutler.

ELAINE SILVER has been a full-time performer since 1979 and has appeared at hundreds of colleges, festivals, and clubs throughout North America and Europe. She has been a guest artist on "The Uncle Floyd Show" and has just been awarded a fellowship grant

Ty Robertson © 1985



Susan Vosburgh



Judith Zweiman

from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts for songwriting. She has two albums on Dandelion Records and will begin production on number three in early 1986.

SUSAN VOSBURGH is currently "living" in New York City and pursuing three separate careers in theatre, music, and art. These are the most upbeat lyrics she has ever written. Don't worry; it didn't work out, and she's depressed again.

JUDITH ZWEIMAN, singer/songwriter/guitarist/bassist, makes her third appearance on *Fast Folk*, this time with her own group, Summer Solstice, and supported by the other members of the newly emerged Folkano, recently risen from the primordial dust of the New York songwriter scene. Her motley musical past has included the groups Whitewing, Late For Dinner, Ell's Kitchen Original Jazz, and union's with other *Fast Folk* performers such as Deb Kayman, Marcie Boyd, and Pete Gardner.



Michal Shapiro

SIDE ONE CREDITS SIDE TWO

1. Follow Me Down (Judith Zweiman)
Judith Zweiman/Vocal & Guitar
with Summer Solstice:
Chris Allinger/Bass
Mark McColl/Drums
Background Vocals by Folkano:
Richard Meyer, Josh Joffen,
Hugh Blumenfeld, Judith Zweiman
2. All-in-All (David Buskin)
Raun MacKinnon/Vocal & Piano
3. What It Is (Susan Vosburgh)
Susan Vosburgh/Vocal & Guitar
4. Somebody's Home (Lucy Kaplanski)
Lucy Kaplanski/Vocals & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass & Drums
5. Chocolates and Shame (Germana Pucci)
Germana Pucci/Vocal & Guitar
Peter Lewy/Cello
Jill Burkee/Mandocello
- *6. Biological Time Bomb (Christine Lavin)
Christine Lavin/Vocals
Mark Dann/Overocean Wind-up Clock
Handclaps & Fingersnaps: Raun MacKinnon,
Julie Gold, Christine Lavin, Roz Schaul

1. Local Color (Lillie Palmer)
Palmer & Bragg:
Lillie Palmer/Vocal & Electric 12-String
Guitar
Gladys Bragg/Vocal
Tom Duval/Acoustic Guitar & Vocal
John Siomas/Drums
Mark Dann/Bass
2. The Road of the Rock n Roll (Lyrics: Jay Unger
& Ken Bloom; Music: Traditional)
Elaine Silver/Vocal
3. The Bus (Julie Gold)
Julie Gold/Vocal & Piano
4. Knowing What I Know Now (Shawn Colvin
& John Leventhal)
Shawn Colvin/Vocal & Guitar
John Leventhal/Electric Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass
5. Winter Sky (Michal Shapiro)
Michal Shapiro/Vocal
Marty Cutler/Strato-banjo (Stranjo)
Gary Oleyar/Drum Program & Electric Rhythm
Guitar
Erik Udel/Electric Bass
- **6. Grandma's Battlecry (Irene Paul & Barbara Tilson)
Faith Petric/Vocal & Guitar

*Christine Lavin appears courtesy of Philo Records.

**Recorded live at SpeakEasy in New York October 13, 1985; Richard Meyer, Recording Engineer.