

the **COOP**

The Fast Folk Musical Magazine



Ed McCurdy has been an important figure in American folk music. He is moving in March to Nova Scotia. His farewell New York performance will be at Speak Easy Feb. 26 & 27. He is interviewed in depth in this issue of The Coop.

February

Why a Musical Magazine?

"Goethe has said, 'a poet needs all philosophy, but he must keep it out of his work', though that is not always necessary; and almost certainly no great art, outside England, where journalists are more powerful and ideas less plentiful than elsewhere, has arisen without a great criticism, for its herald or its interpreter and protector, and it may be for this reason that great art, now that vulgarity has armed itself and multiplied itself, is perhaps dead in England."

-W.B. Yeats

I would hardly be so presumptuous as to compare our song movement to the golden age of Irish poetry and theater, but it is not without reason to compare our respective plights as regards criticism. Criticism in modern America, and especially in New York, has become either a part of the commercial process or has become synonymous with cynicism. Neither of these states are healthy for an artistic environment, nor are they serving the purpose that criticism was meant to serve: that of discovering, championing and honing art. Nowhere is this as true as in the criticism of modern folk music. Not only is folk music cursed with a label of being non-commercial by the multi-national record corporations, but this curse has been championed in the press. Somewhere along the line critics began reviewing success or potential for success and ceased reviewing music. It no longer mattered what a performance contained or whether it was good, but rather whether it was commercial, commerciality thereby being dictated by the economics of lowest common denominator. The stamps of approval no longer come from the press but rather from the record companies and the radio stations echoed by the press. Perhaps this is somewhat due to the changing of the trend of critical power away from the smaller specialized presses towards the daily and weekly newspapers, these newspapers being more directly tied to economic considerations.

It is wrong for newspapers to assume that commercial success is the goal for all these artists; that an artist is successful when he or she "wins" a record contract as though this is some sort of race. This has helped poison the artist mentality as well as affecting the record companies themselves in that the goal too often has been the signing of a record contract without any thought as to what might actually be recorded. The press flocks to the successful artist, thereby ignoring the unknown. To be unknown becomes a curse, synonymous with lack of talent.

Perhaps as has been suggested by some of my friends, the current reviewers lack the depth of understanding of lyric poetry and lack the insight to listen to music that is neither as complicated as classical music, nor as loud as rock. Perhaps, as has been suggested by some of the reviewers I know, they are limited for space by their editors

and have not the freedom to express their personal tastes. Or perhaps these reviewers have the depth of understanding, have the space, have taken the time to listen to this music, and just plain don't like it. For whatever reasons one might choose, it is a mockery to read the flowery terms formerly reserved for symphonic works now used for new wave rock; but, somehow, when confronted with reviewing folk music they are at a loss for words.

Where does that leave us? Simply, we must develop our own criticism as we have developed our own songs. We must become our own critics. This is dangerous, but it is also very exciting. We might be accused of vanity in the first degree, as those have always been accused -- those who put out their own records, their own books of poetry or photographs, or set up their own exhibits. But the precedents are in our favor. Even William Butler Yeats, quoted above, had to put out his own first book of poetry. The answer has always been self-assured action. Let the chips fall where they may.

the **COOP** The Fast Folk Musical Magazine

Published monthly by the musician's cooperative at Speak Easy
107 MacDougal Street
New York, NY 10012

Editor: Jack Hardy

Assistant Editor: Brian Rose

Editorial Board & Production:

Steven Brant
Susan Brewster
Tom Intondi
Ray Korona
Arvin Lightman
Frank Mazzetti
Janet Miller
Angela Page
Doug Waterman
Ilene Weiss

Recording Engineer: Mark Dann

Letters to the Editor are encouraged.

What form should this criticism take? It should be a relatively free forum for the flow of ideas. These ideas do not have to come from professional journalists. They can come from the people that know the music best: those who play it and those who listen to it. As the music itself is in different stages of development, so also can be the writing about it. In one sense the songs speak for themselves. We can have relative newcomers side by side with older stalwarts. Performers climb on stage at different levels of development. At every level there is merit. We will work with merit: discovering it, championing it and honing it. Many people have forgotten how to enjoy music. They become lost in the habit of being critical of it, to the point where nothing but "the best" satisfies them (whatever "the best" is). Our school system encourages criticism and plays down creativity (another full essay could be inserted here). People have to be creative in the way they listen. There can be much enjoyment derived from listening to someone who has creative potential, but is in an early stage of development.

Many of the listening public have grown lazy. They have ceased to have the instincts of the discoverer. They have been content to give up this power to the press. The press has been glad to usurp this power. The folk public is not as footloose as the rock public. They are predominantly older, part of the post-war baby boom who are now staying home having babies of their own. They outnumber the teenagers by a large margin. They are relatively well educated. They even have some money. These people religiously go out and buy the new albums of the folk heroes from the sixties: e.g. Judy Collins, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, even Bob Dylan. They are disappointed because these artists do not have the edge they once had. The major record companies have issued few new artists in this category and so it is assumed that these new artists do not exist. The exact opposite is true. Because these artists have been ignored for so long, they have had more time to develop, to hone their craft of songwriting and perfect their performing abilities. When they do connect with the public they are going to be just what the public is looking for. They are going to be more of what the public liked about Bob Dylan than Bob Dylan was, and they might have a certain integrity that was lacking in the fast buck sixties. Like it or not, the public was taken to the cleaners in the sixties. The gross commercialization of the folk boom left the public confused. What is this folk music? Is the Kingston Trio folk music? Is Bob Dylan folk music? Are the boring "comin' 'round the mountain" songs, forced to us in school and summer camp, folk music? Is Leonard Cohen folk music? People look for labels because they are lazy. If they can label it, stuff it in a corner, then they don't have to think about it. Folk has always defied categorizing. That is why it is just folk music. Journalists show only their ignorance of the subject when they brandish the terms "folk" and "folkie" (normally used derisively). It is like saying that someone is an American, as though all Americans were the same.

Some people are wondering, what has happened to the political spirit in folk music, so famous in the sixties. One must take a second look at not only the writing being done by folksingers but also at the folksingers themselves. Folksingers by their very lifestyle are political. It is a political statement to live hand to mouth, day to day, in a society built on comfortable materialism. It is a political statement to work a part time job to support one's artistic dream, to live in an environment of stripped-down material comfort. And folksingers are called upon to do far more than their share of benefits; not just political benefits but humane benefits. To perform at a benefit, to take time out of the day and put talents on the line for a cause, any cause, is far more of a political statement than picking up a pen to write a check for a favorite charity. To donate time to entertain in hospital wards, prisons, schools and asylums is also a political statement. To make a statement, any statement in a world that has given up thought control to the mass media is a political statement. Therefore the songs do not have to be the rhetorical political songs of the sixties, they can be love songs. It is the act of singing them that is political. How many people in this country actually make use of the right to express themselves. The politics of today are not as cut and dried as the politics of the sixties. The problems are far more complex. Folksongs and folksingers have become far more complex.

The banding together of musicians into a cooperative, musicians who are generally noted for their egotistical nature, is a significant event. To issue a musical magazine, not at all backed by profit motive is a significant statement. It is saying that this music exists, and that it is no longer being ignored. Those who continue ignoring it will be less comfortable in their ignorance. To assemble twelve musicians, all donating their talents to record an album is a significant statement. Word of mouth is where folk music began and is where it must return. Actions speak louder than words, a picture is worth a thousand words, and a song is worth a thousand pictures.

Let us state here that nothing herein is meant to be definitive; neither this essay, the other essays in this magazine, nor the songs on the accompanying record. We will never be saying that this is the best there is, only a slice of what is. We hope to draw more writers to write for our magazine and more performers to perform for our magazine. Like the folk process, it should always be in motion and it should never become stale. With a monthly timetable, no one magazine issue will have to stand as a definitive statement. Collectively they may begin to define the process called folk music.

-Jack Hardy



Voice of the Folk

Do you like folk music?

This question was asked of eleven high school students at the John W. Brown, a maritime school located here in Greenwich Village. The Brown is an old liberty ship used to transport cargo during World War II. Here are the responses the students gave.

Keith Blanding, junior, engine department:
"I like it. It's down to earth music. Sometimes those guys sing out of tune. It expresses feelings more than other forms. Like the blues. I like the sound of stringed instruments. That's why I like it."

Danny Hiraldo, junior, steward department:
"What is folk music? I don't know. Do you?"

Jonathan Jones, junior, engine department:
"Yes."

Fidel Sacato, junior, engine department:
"Music that shows the culture of a people. I like it. It talks about peoples' experiences, their greatest loves. It's less for money, more for how they really feel."

Mitchell Greene, sophomore, deck department:
"No. I don't like folk music. I do like bluegrass and punk rock. I haven't heard much folk music. Bluegrass has something to do with it. I picture folk music as something you listen to when you're up in the country, packin' out that can of beans, ready to chow down."

Kenneth Downes, sophomore, engine department:
"I never really listen to it. Music from states that have no television. You know, people slappin' their knees and shit. Rhyming (sometimes called rapping and/or rocking the mike) is a form of it. I like it sometimes."

Verna L'Heureux, junior, steward department:
"No. I don't like it. I don't even know what it is. I don't like the old Puerto Rican dance songs."

Pete Cruz, junior, engine department:
"I'm not sure what it is. I know it's songs that people make up as part of their culture. In America, it comes down to different groups. People from the West have one style. The South and North have another. Music that people in the cities listen to is not folk. People don't consider rock to part of folk, but if you look deep into its roots, it is. Modern country music is part of folk. Not as much as the old time country music, the simpler songs. Modern rock and country come more from professional songwriters who are more sophisticated than the old folk songs. Disco has no relation at all to folk. The music is too heavy although the lyrics are still simple. Folk is softer than what city people are used to, which is related to stress. If you listen to 'KTU or 'PLJ, the top stations, the music whether disco or rock is very aggressive. There is a joining of these musical forms. Rock kids are getting into that boning out disco feeling. Time is a factor. The Beatles are now part of folk (especially Lennon's songs)."

Wayne Lewis, senior, engine department:
"I consider reggae part of folk music. Pop oldies from the fifties like the Drifters are folk. I like all that. Also rock 'n' roll, not that crazy rock, is part of folk. I like that. Jazz, like Dixieland, St. Louis stuff is part of folk. I like all those forms."
(Editor's note -- Wayne is from Barbados)

Marie Hodge, senior, steward department:
"Never heard it. For square dancing fools. I had to do it in grammar school. I hate that grab your partner stuff. Dosy doe to you to!"

Antonio Rodriguez, senior, deck department:
"I enjoy it. It's relaxing. It's part of U.S. traditions. I think of it as like a soft rock with more meaningful lyrics than regular rock. Charlie Daniels, Johnny Paycheck and country music are part of it. I turn the dial a lot. I listen to lots of kinds of music."

The Literary Song: A Definition

By Brian Rose

Poetry and popular song have historically moved on related but parallel tracks. Treading the ground in between, as do some of the writers featured in this magazine, is a risky business in part because clear precedents are scarce, and those that do exist, like classical songs and traditional folk songs, often appear old fashioned or limited in scope.

For instance, Shubert's songs which are undeniably beautiful both musically and lyrically, fail to convey the immediacy of speech in the way that folk songs do. I mean no slight to Shubert in saying that David Massengill's "On the Road to Fairfax County" combines a sophisticated lyrical and musical sensibility with the natural qualities of spoken language and simple melody. However, where Shubert's songs are considered high art, most songs in the folk vein are considered popular art. I think that the problem for those of us caught among these distinctions is one of definition. What exactly is this kind of song, and what are the reasons for its existence?

I think it can be agreed that poetry usually does not reach the broad public that popular song does, and popular song rarely achieves the level of artistic commitment common in poetry. In some respects, one provides what the other does not. Poetry is contemplative and introverted even in its rawest form compared to most popular songs, especially rock 'n' roll, which are more visceral and aggressive. Indeed, the wide appeal for rock is in the total sonic experience. Rock seems born right out of popular culture as a highly reactive and theatrical expression. Poetry, although often spoken, is so firmly nailed to the page that efforts to do more than simply enunciate the text tend to sound curiously histrionic. Poetry can and should be read aloud, but the reading will not necessarily transform the written word into something else. Whether spoken or not, poetry implies both the internal and external qualities of language simultaneously.

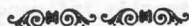
Somewhere between the extremes is a kind of music/text that can be called literary song or song poetry. The literary song attempts to embrace language and music equally, allowing language to become text, but never entirely. Music serves as the *raison d'être* for words as a primal and abstract force. Even if the writer chooses to address the text first, it is in reaction to the pervasiveness of melody. As Nietzsche said of folk songs, "language is strained to its utmost that it may imitate music."

Poets rarely take this leap into lyrical limbo, choosing instead, texts that do not fly off the page. They may follow a traditional verse format, almost yearning to break into song, but the sense of the language will not imply that it is actually to be sung. Similarly, popular song writers keep their lyrics rooted in the fabric of the overall sound. The song therefore is more textural than textual.

Contemporary rock bands like Public Image, Ltd. or Gang of Four layer music and text in thin non-intersecting lines -- compressed sandwiches of sound -- that are conceptual, visual and musical without being particularly melodic or narrative. The lyrics are sung in a rhythmic and incantatory manner that meshes with the music as one of several primary currents. Other less avant-garde creators of songs may rely on a more common collaboration of melody and lyrics where the ultimate goal is a successful stylization of the two elements. Excessive emphasis on lyrics disturbs the mixture prescribed by commercial standards for mass appeal. A successful popular song is usually one that combines lyrical and musical hooks (catchy phrases) into an effective textural whole. The literary song places the emphasis on the precise relationship between music and text, the one animated by the other, and struggles to find form between these extremes of poetry and music.

These distinctions should be applied loosely, for in reality, the differences among song styles are rather unclear. Moreover, the writers themselves do not necessarily adhere to one style within the overall body of their work. I believe it is possible, however, to group together writers found in this month's magazine like David Massengill, Suzanne Vega, Skip Barthold and myself as good examples of practitioners of the literary song.

None of this is to suggest that these artists deserve more acclaim than those pursuing alternate directions. Nevertheless, it behooves us to reflect on the relative value of all aesthetic directions, asking age old questions concerning the merits of popular expression versus scholarly expression. The literary song is a function of two sets of dialectical relationships: the relationship of popular and elite culture, and the relationship of music and text.



Synthesis in Folk Blues

By Peter Spencer

The traditional definition of the term "folk music" has generally involved its use of the oral tradition. This is the process whereby younger musicians of a given social or ethnic group learn the indigenous music of their group directly from the masters of the form, orally, without ongoing academic tradition or, in many instances, the use of written music. Consequently, the younger musicians, freed from any rigid systems of orthodoxy, responsible only to an audience of their peers, synthesize the disparate elements of their musical apprenticeship into a single concept that expresses their personal reality, as well as that of the group.

Music critics and media scholars have documented how the information explosion of the Twentieth Century affects this process. Television, radio, film, and especially, phonograph records, have vastly broadened the scope of inquiry for the folk musician. It is beyond the reach of this article to plot every current of change in every style of folk music. We will concentrate on the American folk music known as blues, and more specifically, on the use of solo guitar and voice in a blues context. In this area alone, the effects of burgeoning media have been felt forcefully. Many solo blues guitarists of this generation are influenced to the same degree by the classical music of India or the baroque string music of southern Europe in the Middle Ages as by the work of the old masters in their own particular genre. Yet, throughout this confusion runs the thread which connects today's folk musician with his earliest counterparts in the oral tradition; that is the process of synthesis whereby disparate elements of a musical apprenticeship are welded into a single concept.

Robert Johnson was a young boy during the glory days of the American folk music known as Mississippi blues or Delta blues. Many accounts describe him during the 1930's as a star-struck pest, incapable of playing even the simplest blues, following the local masters around the area, constantly asking for a chance to play during the breaks at dances and parties. Legend has it that Johnson disappeared for six months, returning to the scene able to outplay anyone. The explanations are many. Some say he went to Texas; some say he went to Chicago. One obscure folklorist argues that Johnson was kidnapped by a spaceship and taken to another planet. Whatever the explanation, Robert Johnson's records of 1936 and 1937 reveal a new and startling use of synthesis.

The guitarists who primarily influenced Johnson were Son House, Charley Patton, and Skip James. Unlike other early blues guitarists, Johnson did not simply copy the styles most popular in his area, but seemed to seek out those influences that would benefit him the most. Skip James wasn't even from the Delta but from Bentonia, in central Mississippi. Also innovative was



Paul Geremia

Johnson's synthesis of blues piano. The rhythms of "stride" pianists like James P. Johnson had long been a part of blues guitar, especially in the alternating thumb rotation style of players like John Hurt. Robert Johnson's breakthrough was his use of the harmonic sense of blues and "barrelhouse" pianists, especially Leroy Carr.

Carr lived in the North, in Indianapolis, but his records were popular in Black communities across the nation. To the blues artists of a generation before, it was unheard of to be influenced by performers one hadn't known personally. For Robert Johnson, it was perfectly natural to take inspiration wherever it could be found; after Robert Johnson it became axiomatic, a part of the form.

Blues scholars like Paul Oliver and Robert Palmer have charted Johnson's pivotal importance in the ongoing development of blues, rhythm and blues and rock music. For today's solo guitarist, Robert Johnson's importance also involves his innovative use of synthesis. Musical influences today come in a bewildering variety, but the promise of that variety is a promise of infinite subtle differences

across the whole spectrum of music. Today's guitarist is free to organize his influences in the most specific and individual manner possible so that American folk music remains fresh and relevant.

In this climate of unlimited possibilities, the most successful artists are often the most idiosyncratic. Dave Van Ronk has developed a synthesis that cuts sharply across what used to be inviolable boundaries. In the beginning, he had no taste for the folk blues of the day, preferring records of the urban "hot" jazz of the classic period and singing this material in groups around the city. Yet as circumstances led him to solo performances accompanying himself on guitar, Van Ronk suddenly found himself in the folk blues mainstream. In a similar instance the great New Orleans guitarist Lonnie Johnson made some solo records after becoming famous as a sideman for Louis Armstrong and others. Lonnie Johnson was the quintessential jazz guitarist of his day: urbane, precise, sophisticated. Yet his solo records gave him an instant reputation as a country blues artist alongside rough untutored singers like Blind Lemon Jefferson with whom he had little or nothing in common musically or personally. Once the direction was made clear, both Lonnie Johnson and Dave Van Ronk continued to make solo blues records with great success.

Yet, Van Ronk adds still other dimensions to his work. Along with the urban jazz and country blues, there is a sizable body of Scots-Irish-English-American traditional music on which he draws to great advantage. All sung in the same one of a kind voice, these three separate styles influence and feed off each other until they merge, forming a seamless whole which leads to another style for Dave Van Ronk: that of popular singer and songwriter. It seems perfectly natural once the synthesis has been made to apply it in the more personal area of songwriting and to the work of friends and associates over a long and distinguished career.

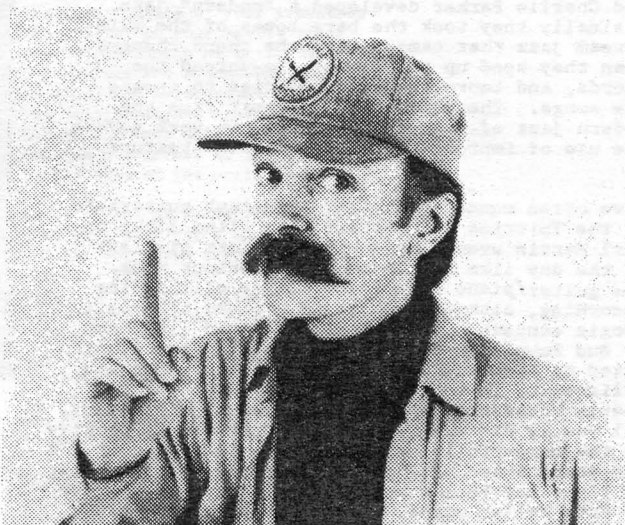
Obviously one can't expect to write songs in a given idiom without knowing the idiom. It is also obvious that there will be many attempts at idiomatic songwriting based on insufficient knowledge or understanding. Yet for the accomplished folklorist, the rewards are great. Songwriters from Hoagy Carmichael and Duke Ellington through Ray Charles to Bob Dylan and Tom Waits have used the sonority, structure, and feeling of blues to inform their own music.

Frank Christian is a local guitarist/songwriter whose mastery of many styles gives his music a special quality. His experience as a guitar teacher and freelance accompanist makes it possible to synthesize widely diverse elements in his songs. Bach inventions, Broadway show tunes, jazz from all periods, Renaissance lute pieces, popular and traditional songs -- all seem to approach blues as a common ground in his music. The early guitarist Buddy Boy Hawkins had much the same approach. Already well known before World War I, Hawkins returned to the Delta after serving in France and made some astounding records using sophisticated melodies and flamenco rhythms he learned from gypsy guitarists; yet, the blues still stayed in his music, too dynamic a force to deny.

Frank Christian also roams far afield of his chosen tradition in his songwriting, jazz playing, and classical approach to technique and phrasing. But even in his most harmonically advanced material, with complicated melodies and chord changes, he is able to deliver his message forcefully and with feeling simply because the blues music he knows and loves stays in his playing.

Paul Geremia, a native of Rhode Island, takes as his main body of inspiration the so-called East coast blues developed in Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas. This style differs from other regional blues styles in its use of spritely dance rhythms, more complicated harmony, and rapid syncopation requiring virtuoso technique. Geremia draws on Blind Blake, Carl Martin, Tampa Red, and especially Blind Willie McTell for material and concept. His focus is more narrow than that of the other artists mentioned so far, but Geremia brings a certain panache to his work that brings out the variety in his material while leaving his performance unhurried, unforced, and completely natural.

One factor in Geremia's naturalness is the way he concentrates his singing on achieving proper subtlety of phrasing and nuances of feeling rather than attempting to sing on the original dialect. Thereby avoiding the trap so many young singers (especially those from other countries) get caught in, namely to slavishly copy old records down to the last scratch, skip, pop, and mumble. Hopefully in the future we can have fewer college educated blacks trying to sound like southern field hands and fewer effete English rock stars bellowing like King Kong in the hockey rinks of America. In the early days of recording there were several white artists able to make convincing blues records without singing "in blackface". The Allen Brothers, Jimmie Rodgers, Dick Justice, Frank Hutchison, and Sam McGee all made convincing records without denying who they were. Paul Geremia doesn't deny who he is, either. There's no reason he should.



Erik Frandsen

Folk blues has a long comic tradition to go with its sad and lonely side. In travelling medicine shows and also in Vaudeville the music was often called "hokum," and the singer/guitarist was mostly a comic. Soloists like Blind Blake and Bo Carter, and groups like the Memphis Jug Band and the Mississippi Sheiks, were capable of making powerful blues and yet were most popular as comedians. Erik Frandsen brings the same comic sensibility to his eclectic mix of original songs, blues, instrumentals, and exotica.

Frandsen brings a kind of literate daffiness to his sets. The approach is folkloric in the juxtaposition of one style to the next yet, in that the whole performance is filtered through a very personal focus and an all-encompassing looney sense of humor, the research involved isn't obvious: the leaps from genre to genre don't seem so long and terrifying as they might otherwise. Frandsen plays with authority, his Baroque instrumentals a maze of multiple moving voices that would sound fey and tinkly in the hands of a lesser player. Rather than use his technique to transcribe the work of the old masters, he lets his memory of the old masters keep his own music in line, as if they were ghosts to be answered rather than plundered.

Frandsen's use of synthesis seems strange at first. Much of the influence on his work comes from popular musical comedians like Tom Lehrer, Spike Jones, and Homer and Jethro. But in bringing these influences into the world of the solo guitarist he uses the same process common to all the artists mentioned in this article. The material might be different, but the basic discipline is the same.

In my own case the discipline involves basic concepts as well as individual songs. I have long wondered whether there could be a "modern" folk-blues in the same sense that Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker developed a "modern" jazz. Basically they took the bare bones of the mainstream jazz that came before the chord changes. Then they sped up the tempos, re-voiced the chords, and improvised new melodies to create new songs. The concepts I use most from the modern jazz of the Forties in my own work govern the use of improvisation and speed-as-texture.

I've often wondered whether itinerant guitarists of the Thirties and Forties like Blind Blake or Carl Martin ever played with the jazz pianists of the day like Art Tatum or Thelonious Monk. The guitar/piano duet was a staple of Thirties recording, although always in a blues or boogie-woogie context. Often I try to sound like Monk or Bud Powell in the same way that Robert Johnson tried to sound like Leroy Carr. Other pianists I listen to in this way are Jelly Roll Morton, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Little Brother Montgomery. All vastly different in style, they manage to give me the wonderfully self-righteous feeling that I'm the young Skip James or John Hurt or Willie Walker or Blind Boy Fuller working on a James P. Johnson or Fats Waller piece. In any case, I've given up trying to get every note right.

There are guitarists all over the world who have listened to and been influenced by the American folk music called the blues. Some of them play the music just as it can be heard on the old records. Some reach for new combinations, hoping through perseverance or blind luck to change the way people view music or life or possibility. Some reject the term "blues" as an embarrassing reminder of a time best left forgotten. In the welter of conflicting ideas and opinions, though, the process goes on.

Folk music is not a style. It isn't a gimmick or a certain kind of instrumentation. It isn't sung or played by one group of people as opposed to another or all others. It is a process. Folk musicians can collect from any tradition or style they want because the process of collecting and synthesizing is what makes folk music. That's what all these artists have done and continue to do. They assimilate from the past, and give to the future.



Dave Van Ronk and Jack Hardy share a cigar at Speak Easy's opening.

Musicians' Cooperative at Speak Easy

The folk music scene is slow in changing. Significant events are not always heralded by any great fanfare. Most major events are only major in retrospect. Few people noticed the first time Bob Dylan played at a Folk City Hoot, though now, the event has been chronicled in biographies. One such event in the past year, is the opening of a musician's cooperative at Speak Easy. A small group of interested parties approached the owner of a floundering disco around the corner from Folk City. An arrangement was made whereby a musician's cooperative was formed to coordinate the booking and operation of the back room. The cooperative would receive the cover charge and the owner would receive the bar receipts. The opening was in late September. It is now February and much has happened at the club.

The involvement of the "old guard" in the cooperative has been refreshing: Ed McCurdy's time and energy running the Monday night hoots, Dave Van Ronk's involvement in Dollar Nights and weekly meetings, and Erik Frandsen's help with graphics. The tireless work of some non-performers such as Angela Page, Janet Miller and Jay Rosen in coordination, booking, publicity and sound has been impressive. The involvement of many performers, either booked or just drop-ins, has made for many enjoyable evenings of music.

What makes this club different from other clubs in the city? According to Angela Page, general coordinator of the Co-op, "This is New York's only all folk music club. It is a listening room. It's run as a cooperative so the musicians determine the booking policy and the running of shows. This allows for a wide variety of acts on weekends that still fall within our music policy."

According to Ed McCurdy, MC of the Monday evening open mike, "Our hootenany is regaining the feeling of people playing for fun, seasoned veterans next to amateurs. We are getting away from the desperation of the audition and creating a more respectful atmosphere for performers regardless of their stature. One minute you've got Steve Forbert singing a duet with Jack Hardy, and the next minute, a talented amateur like Gary Paris is singing an old cowboy song."

According to Jack Hardy, co-coordinator with Dave Van Ronk of Tuesday's Dollar Night, "We are an extension of the open mike. The more people who drop in to play the more fun we have. We can give some of the hooters an immediate chance to play more often. A Dollar Night is the best bargain in town for the audience."

Sheldon Biber, coordinator of Wednesday's poetry and song night: "Poets and singers don't always travel in the same circles, so I enjoy bringing the two together on these evenings."

Paul Kaplan on Thursday's Dollar Night: "I am trying to attract more traditionally based performers, the overflow from the Eagle Tavern crowd, as well as having special events such as politically oriented or ethnically oriented performers. We have also expanded to include bluegrass on Sunday nights."

All this put together makes for a very impressive cooperative effort now in its fifth month. New exciting ideas are currently in the works, of which this musical magazine is but one.



Opening night's crowd at Speak Easy

February's Song Lyrics

Where Were You Last Night

Cigarettes and coffee black
On a rainy Tuesday morn
Tolling bells and brief farewells
Newspapers stuck on thorns
A winding breeze 'round crippled trees
Tossing notes of light
Where were you last night?

The moonlight like a dagger shines
Through Venetian blinds
Showing yearning shadows
Starting to unwind
Partly eclipsed the quiet traffic
Scars the asphalt with tatoos
And I sit and think of you

But now I only stare through windows
Scratched with veils of rain
And I see a sky bleached white
And I wonder will I ever forget the pain
That you were a lie

I remember your smile
Elastic on your face
Put me in a viscous sweat
I grasp you in the haze
And your eyes so soft and warm
You delighting in your harm

Copyright 1982, Frank Christian

For the One Who Loves Me

You are more
than a good friend to me,
today.
God knows I never tell you when you need to hear it most.
God knows I take your love for granted.
You are more
than a good friend to me,
today.
You're the one who loves me.

I'm gonna try and learn how to swallow my pride
for the one who loves me,
I'm gonna try and learn how to give you my love
'cause I don't think I've given you enough

You are more
than a good friend to me,
tonight.
God knows you won't betray me when I need someone to trust.
God knows you never left me stranded.
You are more
than a good friend to me,
tonight.
You're the one who loves me.

I'm gonna try and learn how to swallow my pride
for the one who loves me,
I'm gonna try and learn how to listen for once
'cause I don't think I've given you a chance.....
I don't think I've given you a chance.....

Copyright 1982, Susan Brewster

Howard Hughes' Blues

If I had a lot of money
Like Howard Hughes
I would have me any woman
That I might choose
I would even buy Chicago
So I could have the blues
If I had a Lot of money
Just like Howard Hughes

If I were loaded like old Howard
I'd do just as I please
I'd need me a truck
To carry all my noblesse oblige
I'd always tip that good old boy
That shines my shoes
If I had a lot of money
Just like Howard Hughes

Just give me those
Franklins, Grants and Jacksons
I'd put them to good use
'Cause I got just what it takes
To be a rich recluse
I'd get invited to the White House
And I'd flat out refuse
If I had a lot of money
Just like Howard Hughes

On that midnight flight to Mexico
Howard finally ran out of luck
They took him to the graveyard
In a big Brink's armoured truck
That Infernal Revenue Service
They won't forgive him
'Cause when old Howard went
He took it with him

And left me here
With those mean old Howard Hughes
Blues

Erik Frandsen
Copyright 1982, Esteemed Class Music

Cracking

It's a one time thing
It just happens a lot
Walk with me
And we will see what we have got

My footsteps are ticking
Like water dripping from a tree
Walking a hairline
Stepping very carefully

My heart is broken
It's worn out at the knees
Hearing muffled seeing blind
Soon it will hit the deep freeze

And something is cracking
I don't know where
Ice on the sidewalk
Brittle branches in the air

side one

The sun is blinding
Dizzy golden dancing green
Through the park in the afternoon
Wondering where the hell I have been

Copyright 1981, Suzanne Vega

down below the james

I spoke my name out loud
it floated like a cloud
not knowing that I was freed
I quivered like a reed
whispering my name
down below the james

what will the season yield
the dusty peanut fields
buried under the soil
are the workers who toiled
my history and shame
down below the james

what smoke thin ghost is want
among these tin roof haunts
endless trains of coal
pass by the old swimming hole
the black water in my veins
down below the james

to those who call his name
a southern god lays claim
I woke as the smoke rose higher
I was nailed to a cross of fire
but I would not take the blame
down below the james

andy hill
how was he killed
by a god of wrath
thy rod and thy staff
will not ease the pain
down below the james

mr and mrs rose
no one really knows
in heaven or in hell
where their memories dwell
in the ghost of a name
down below the james

Copyright 1982, Brian Rose

The King of Hearts

The King of Hearts is a desperate card
And the swiftest in the deck
He'll take your queen, neat and clean
He's a royal pain in the neck
He's a royal pain in the neck

My love and I were at the bar
When the King of Hearts came in
He gave her a rose right under my nose
And my troubles did begin
My troubles did begin

With his red rose in her left hand
My love was hypnotized
He danced her out that swinging door
Right before my eyes
Right before my eyes

I ran out into the road
But all that I could find
Was a golden band from her left hand
That she had left behind
That she had left behind

For three long nights awake I watched
Awaiting her return
For three long days I gazed and gazed
Until my eyes did burn
Until my eyes did burn

For three long weeks I did not sleep
Nor even eat a meal
While the bitter wind seemed to sing
"You got a rotten deal,
You got a rotten deal."

For three long years I've shed no tears
Nor tried to fix the blame
I played and lost, and paid the cost
For being in the game
For being in the game

But sometimes when I see a rose
I pick it where it stands
I marvel at the way it glows
Then I crush
I crush it in my hands

Oh, the King of Hearts is a desperate card
And the swiftest in the pack
He took my queen, neat and clean
And he never gave her back
He never gave her back

Copyright 1982, Paul Kaplan

February's Song Lyrics

The Greatest Part of Love

Southside city bound
Lord I'm feeling down
I've seen this world turn me around a million ways

Moments lead to change
Angered by the pain
Left to face the hurt on my own

And when I called your name
You never came
I went warm to cold and back to warm again
So if you need a friend
Or need much more
You can always find me standing at your door
For the greatest part of love is letting go

Inlet harbor bay
Morning's fresh array
There still are things that will always make me smile

So you can leave me now
Or you can stay awhile
As long as it's what you're really wanting to do

And I understand
The words never said
And I hope that you can one day make it through
So if you need a friend
Or need much more
You can always find me standing at your door
For the hardest part of love is letting go

And though I called your name
You never came
But that's no reason for me to be so cold
So if you need a friend
Or need much more
You can always find me standing by your door
For the greatest part of love is letting go

Copyright 1982, Ansel Matthews

The Garden State Stomp

Allamuchy, Hacklebarney, Rockaway
Piscataway,
Ho-Hokus, Secaucus, Lower Squankum,
Fair Play,
Wannanassa, Succasunna, Manimuskin
Plumsock,
Bivalve, Bucksshooten, Turkeyfoot,
Mecanipock,
Jugtown, Febbletown, Nummytown,
Rahway.

Wickatunk, Manunk-achunk, Mantua,
Mizpah,
Manisquan, Raritan, Matawan, Totowah
Whippany, Parsippany, Penny Pot,
Hackensack,
Batsto, Nesco, Metedaconk, Peapack
Loch Arbour, Egg Harbor, Swinesburg
Caviar.

Cheesequake, Boy Scout Lake, Moonachie,
Tenafly,
Netcong, Watchung, Pluckamin,
Mount Misery,
Bardonia, Ironia, Colonia, Weehawkin,
Menahawkin, Mantoloking, Mahalala, Pennsauken,
Ducktown, Iron Bound, Frelinghuysen,
Lodi.

Hard Scrabble, Double Trouble, Pickettinny,
Montague,
Muckshaw Pond, Okanikon, Espamong,
Ocean View,
Navasink, Shabaconk, Onge Hat,
Jumbo,
Wortendyke, Water Witch, Blue Ball,
Ringoes,
Matchaponix, Delawanna, Wawayonda,
Timbucktoo.

Dave Van Ronk
Copyright 1982, Folklore Music, ASCAP

On the Road to Fairfax County

O once I loved an outlaw
He came and stole my heart
O how I count the hours
Since we were torn apart

On the road to Fairfax County
I spied a highwayman
He wanted all my money
My heart beat like a drum

I gave him all my money
And sweet he smiled at me
His beauty I took pity
Beneath a black oak tree

We kissed but for an hour
The sun was newly warm
The clouds were as the flowers
That bloom but for a morn

He gave back all my money
And bowed most gallantly
He promised for to meet me
That night beneath the tree

We'd flee to some far island
And there we would be wed
And freely we would live there
With no price upon his head

side two

That night I went to meet him
With my inheritance
He kissed me 'neath the half moon
And joyful we did dance

O love betrays all secrets
It whispers in the breeze
The sheriff he did follow
With all his deputies

Like hounds rushing to slaughter
The fox whose luck is run
He stood erect and cursed them
"Goddamn you everyone!"

They seized him in a fury
And heeding not my plea
They hung him from the oak tree
Where he made love to me

O once I loved an outlaw
He came and stole my heart
O how I count the hours
Since we were torn apart

David Massengill
Copyright 1980, Bowser Wowser Music

Joined in Laughter

There's a woman joined in laughter
With a man who is not funny
They are blind and sad and after the money

I see people counting blessings
As they reap each other's loathing
They are howling as they're dressing in sheep's
clothing

Yeah, love and money
They both come up again
Dollars dipped in honey
Are sticky things to spend

I've uncovered some emotions
That I've seen portrayed by players
I'll go through more than the motions,
stripping layers

There are lies in all the records
There are truths denied there histories
There are double, triple deckers of mysteries

You go through such contortions
Looking for your gut
Sorting through distortions
Of how and why and what

When the silence overcomes me
Like before a newborn's first cry
I will trust that when you want me it is
no lie

Striking balance is elusive
Opportunity's distracting
And this desire for the exclusive is
not passing

The depth of feeling
Is certain and obscure
With trust that has no ceiling
And doubt that has no floor

What a fine surprise in meeting
What a perfect time to kiss you
An embrace that must be fleeting—
I will miss you

I will numb my tongue with spices
To proceed with what comes after
But I'll keep away the vices from our laughter
I will keep away the vices from our laughter

Copyright 1981, Ilene Weiss

Kneeling by Your Chair

I am kneeling down beside you
at the foot of your chair
Listening to the words that you
are weaving through the air
I'm overcome with strength you've had
in adversity
And though you are beyond your prime
your looks still dazzle me
Defenseless in your air of grace
I dare not touch your hand
I am but a servant
It is you who have command

But how have you so long endured
might I have the pleasure
To ask you just once to reveal
the most fragile of your treasures
The soldier on your mantle piece
you helped though he later betrayed you
The student who squandered your fortune
on study and never repaid you
The politician who came for advice
though the town said your honor was tainted
How has a princess so pretty become
in the eyes of the world degraded

And I'll lap up every word you speak
Like warm milk for a cat
and let you hover over me
circling in attack
And I am full of feelings
you will never hear me say
I dare not mar the work of art
that you are up there making
So then I must be satisfied
to let your highness rule
And wonder how the dirt has grown
so glorious a jewel

Copyright 1982, Skip Barthold

Continued on Page 19

The Coop Interview:

Ed McCurdy

Frank Mazzetti, a songwriter and member of the musician's cooperative at Speak Easy, interviewed Ed McCurdy on January 24, 1982. The interview was tirelessly transcribed by Ilene Weiss.

Frank: Let's get started. How about ribald songs?

Ed: What about ribald songs? I have been best known probably, in some quarters, for the ribald songs, which are about, I'd say, one quarter of the recording that I did. Most of the recording was in the area of the traditional song. That was back in the days when folk singers sang folk songs; I mean in the sense that they all were traditionally orally transmitted. Although, that never was a very accurate description of what a folk song was here because as soon as anybody could write, and could realize a penny or two out of writing about what they...a lyric...they would do so and they just set it to an existing tune...as the Irish did -- the Irish weren't the only ones that did that -- and people would write about...people who were convicted to be hung and so forth, would write a ballad cursing out the populace and the police and have it distributed at their hanging. Actually, the term...the definition that says it has to be orally transmitted has never been accurate for what we call folk songs today; I heard very few folk songs at the Gaslight. I don't mind if we call ourselves folk singers down there-- you've got to call yourself something-- but the term "folk song" is about as hard to pin down as the term "jazz".

F: Yeh, we found that out while we were doing this. Anything more specific about the ribald songs?

E: No, the ribald songs...they basically were erotic. I write ribald lyrics and there are certain areas of ribaldry that I am very fond of. I have a pretty good collection of pornographic limericks, but that's just a...I wouldn't particularly enjoy reading any of them aloud; some of them are horrendous. I am more interested in erotic lyric 'cause I'm more interested in physical manifestation of love which is what erotic poetry and song is about. The stuff I do gets called bawdy and I say, "No, it's Oscar Brand that does bawdy ballads. I do erotic ballads." Erotic is just about sex and bawdy can be about anything, including excrement and other less pleasant... I understand that there are other people who don't share my view but that's never

bothered me. No...I really resent to some degree, with I think some justification, being called a singer of dirty songs 'cause I don't consider sex dirty, at all. I think that sex between consenting people with some degree of affection is beautiful, and both the Church and the Gutter have condemned it over the years by calling it, to me, blasphemous terms. And I think if the Lord intended us to have groins, he would have intended us to use them-- with as much joy and consideration of each other as possible. If I'm getting too ponderous, Mazzetti (laughs)...

F: (laughs) And to write about them...

E: Yes, and to write about them. No, I think the more people get to accept that we are born with spirits and groins, and there should be no conflict, the happier the species will be. And the more chance for survival we'll have 'cause we have sublimated ourselves sexually and got our rocks off, as it were, by fighting each other; and that's dumb, and also immoral. I think war is totally immoral.

F: I imagine you know that Guthrie went to jail for writing obscene letters?

E: Oh, sure, Woody? Oh he was what they call a dirty old man. I wouldn't call him dirty, just raunchy. Raunchy is a term I like. It just means very aware of your sexual apparatus, and the sexual apparatus of others...which used in conjunction (laughs) is a lot of fun. And I don't see anything wrong with fun. Though...I really do, to some degree, resent being associated with "dirty" songs. I was asked if I would take part in a...I first suggested David Massengill and I do an evening of ribaldry and erotica, and they translated that into "an evening of dirty songs". I said you can have your evening of dirty songs but I won't be in it. That's not semantics 'cause "dirty" has taken on an aura that I just find disgusting. And I don't find myself disgusting except on occasion...when I fall from grace.

F: I've never known you on those occasions.

E: No you certainly haven't. You're a nice clean chap, and if I were homosexual I would have my eye on you very definitely (laughs). If I make it to seventy, I might change my inclinations...I don't know, I kept threatening to do that when I was forty, fifty, sixty and so forth.

F: (laughs) Moving up the ladder...Well, the next logical thing to turn to would be religion, then.

E: I've written religious lyric. I have a very strong, individual, somewhat eccentric association with the historical Jesus, who has been insisted upon (being) regarded as the one and only messiah, and I have grave difficulty with that...ever since I first heard about it, 'cause I don't think the creator could be that bad-tempered and illogical, and mean, to suddenly tell people, "Okay, all these other religions are wrong. I'm gonna make you bow at the foot of the cross or I'm gonna send you to hellfire." I don't believe that and I don't care about it. I recognize the symbolism of the cross to Christians. But I also recognize the symbolism of the hemlock to Socrates and other people who have died rather than recant, or go back on their principles.

F: Numerous during the Inquisition.

E: Numerous during the Inquisition, and a lot of them Jews, yeh; a lot of them non-Roman Christians, as well. That wasn't the fault of the Catholic Church, that was the fault of Christianity.

F: You mean something built into the basic precepts, or just ...?

E: I don't know where it was built in. I think it is the relative reluctance of mankind to believe that mankind by itself can be good. There's an old Protestant hymn that I was raised with, and it's disgusting. It says "Alas and did my Savior bleed/ And did my Sovereign die/ Could He devote His sacred head/ For such a worm as I" and I've never felt like a worm in my life...Except when I was despondent. And I was taught to have guilt...about my groin, about my appetites, about my doubts. And people who feel that doubt is evil should read theologians who disagree, like Tillich, and so forth...I think that's his name...The Dynamics of Faith...which makes what to me is a bold and correct statement: that faith is based on doubt, and unexamined truth ain't true.

F: Interesting that it came around to this. A song I'm working on right now, one of the verses has to do with that.

E: I thought of writing something once... "Don't grovel at the foot of the cross; get up and stand like a man." Face it-- you don't have to feel inferior to know what we're just small portions of the Universe. It is much more exciting to know that how huge the Universe is, nevertheless we are a part of it; we're allowed to be here, therefore we are important. I don't want Christ to come again. I don't want the Messiah to come back. I want him to stay the hell away until we have more chances to do something ourselves. We were given, if you believe in the Creator-- in the divine personage as a divine power-- you can read all through the history of theology that this Earth was given to us to husband and take care of, and we've done a fucking poor job of it up to now, and Christianity's done a very poor job with Jesus. There's only one piece of the Sermon on the Mount that I really have difficulty with, and that's the one about adultery. I don't give a-- I don't think adultery's relevant. If it hurts somebody's feelings to have somebody go out and screw somebody else, then I think there is an issue. But those feelings shouldn't be so possessive in the first place. We don't own each other and (mating) based on the symbol of ownership is a horrible thing...and that's what the women's movement has been fighting stridently all this time. And I have been a feminist ever since I was born... 'cause I was born of a very feminine woman; a very tough cookie as well. And a real horny one as well. An eccentric, married to a farmer and...Anything else?

F: Well, let's...

E: I happen to have a large background of religious music because I was trained in it as a church soloist. I was studying oratorio as well as opera, basically, and the first song I ever learned was not an aria but it was (sings) "Caro mio ben..." If you say you don't know it you should be ashamed of yourself. Ask your grandma if she'll teach it to you...every little Italian kid should know that...But my first job was as a gospel singer; WKY, Oklahoma City...9 o'clock in the morning Mondays Wednesdays and Friday-- fifteen minute show-- with a jazz piano player playing a pump organ, chewing gum, and making obscene gestures at me. People would come through the studio and take their cocks out

and try to break me up. But I was pretty unflappable in those days, and I was about half drunk anyway.

F: Let's get back to the adultery thing and the hurt feelings.

E: Yeh, okay.

F: Do you think that that's only an outgrowth of the Judeo-Christian teachings--

E: No, I think it exists in almost all, in all religious culture. When you have a dogma you have to have prohibition; you have to have taboos in order to have a rigid dogma...and dogmas apparently have to be quite rigid to exist. For instance, the Soviet Union is going through a helluva a mess right now because they're facing the fact that their dogmatic, so-called Marxism, which has never been that-- it's their form of power elite-- is going to have to modify, and what the hell are they going to do? Because a dogma once it starts modifying itself, loses its authority. And authority is a terrible thing. We don't need authority...we shouldn't, rather. The whole idea of the basic philosophical concept behind anarchism is that individuals can come to the point where they don't need to be told what to do, how to behave...we'll already know. And I think adultery is just another manifestation of the concept of ownership which all religions have taught (that) men are dominant. And even in the matriarchal societies which we've had throughout history-- I don't remember the dates of any of them at the moment, but I know we've had them-- (they) were unsuccessful, too, because they were wrong.

F: But if people, let's say, feel hurt, is it simply because they've been indoctrinated in this whole possessive--

E: I don't know how basic it is to human instinct. I have known people who were monogamous, and evidently they were born that way, but most people are not. I am not. I have a wife who is, and therefore I have been quite...I've had to consider other people's feelings all through my life. Most of the time I've done pretty well (dealing with) people's feelings. But I would rather mildly shock than snow somebody, than to pretend to virtue which I don't consider an issue. I don't know what virtue is aside from honesty and some degree of love. If people loved each other enough, we

wouldn't need whores, and we wouldn't need anything. There'd be no starvation. Love is, you know, "Love loveth long and is kind; Love loveth not itself and is not puffed up"--that's from Holy Writ. I don't know whether you Catholics get it that straight; for a long time you weren't allowed to read the damn book...not that the book is all that damn reliable...There's things in there that chill my blood-- "The plains of Abraham shall flow with the blood of thine enemies". God just says, "you go and tear an ox apart, or do something to it, and I'll let you smite your enemies"...and there's been a lot of smiting going on rather than the laying on of hands and sexual love, and I prefer the latter. I'm very adamant about that. (Someone). the other night said, "why don't you read a lyric that isn't dirty? Why don't you read a clean lyric?" I announced that I hadn't been aware that I'd been reading dirty ones; they just happen to be about sex. And I think they're funny... I think sex, in addition to being beautiful, is also mildly ridiculous. these positions we assume are not exactly balletic grace, neither is ballet, as amatter of fact, come to think of it.... so that's a misnomer right there. Ballet dancing is very artificial. Modern dancing is a great deal more sensible to me.

F: It's too stilted, ballet... classical ballet.

E: Too stilted... it asks the body to do things that aren't natural. That's why I'm against opera, except in Italy by Italians. It comes naturally...

F: (laughs)

E: ...Truly!

F: But don't you feel that when the throat gets the various muscle bulges that that can be compared to the ballet dancer whose feet get rather distorted and the legs bulge out?

E: ...and why a baritone should stop singing well at the age of fifty-five or sixty is beyond me. And why singers, opera singers should-- I know why, but it's just ridiculous that the technique (has) to be so artificial and so overextended in the use of the human voice that people tire out by the time they're sixty.

I still think that anyone who can move you at a soft conversational tone is doing a helluva sight more, actually, what the art of song is, which is what singing is about-- the servant of the art of song-- then you're getting somewhere. If you can't sing "Down in the Valley" at a whisper, you haven't learned to sing yet. I used that when I was coaching, I still do occasionally... I make people sing "Down in the Valley"... like, try to remember how they would do it as a child and whisper it..."crooning", which is one beautiful word and it means a lot, too. That's what mothers do to their children; that's what sweethearts do to their swains; that's what swains do to their sweethearts, and so forth.

F: You know, one of the first conversations we ever had was regarding "Strangest Dream" and you were telling me about that when it was done right, it had that religious quality to it, the way a good hymn would.

E: Sure, it is just as almost...there's a pathos involved in it, because it's a dream that we might well never...never see realized...because we are going stupidly on our way, further arming, with a weapon that is unuseable, in any practical sense...if any weapon ever was practical. This one is totally impractical because in order to get rid of somebody, you're gonna have to get rid of several others of your own kind. But there are people willing to do that.

F: Oh yes, many people willing to do that.

E: They're talking about a winnable nuclear war and that's horrendous use of language. It makes no sense. No, relig...there's...the people like Sam, the reason I defend Sam and want him to sing there (Speak Easy) is because Sam is-- I don't agree with him at all, very little... But I like to have somebody there who is totally dedicated to what he considers purity. I disagree with him but I think for those of us who go up there and manifest our ego by being smart-ass, I think we need a counterplate. Because we're all smartasses; it's a whole ego trip down there.

F: Of course.

E: It is for you, it is for me...Maybe not as much for us as it is for some. And the sad thing is that so many of them down there want so much to become professional singers and doesn't have a fucking chance in hell to do it. And it doesn't matter...it shouldn't matter. You sing for the joy of singing. Of all the sensual acts man could be involved in, I think singing is one of the most rewarding. My wife who was ballet dancer is convinced that singing, at its best, uses more of the human person than ballet; more muscles more intensely, 'cause you're using words. And that's why I get mad at people whose words I can't understand. This is a great language of ours. It's a better language than the language of your forefathers...That's too easy a language...Italian's much too easy.

Editor's Note: At this point it becomes necessary for us to go to press on this our first issue of "The Coop". The fast folk are not fast enough this issue to include the entire interview with Ed McCurdy. We skip ahead countless pages:

E: They can't print the whole thing. It would take too long to read.



Surviving Under the Copyright Law

By Ray Korona

This article is intended to serve as a songwriter's practical guide to the essentials of obtaining copyright protection. Along the way, I will try to clear up some widespread, rights-threatening misunderstandings about copyrights.

Do You Have To Register To Get Copyright Protection?

Much is said about how you have acquired a copyright the moment that you write down the music and lyrics or record a song you've created. Section 408 of the Copyright Law states that "registration is not a condition of copyright protection." Don't be misled into a costly mistake. As the head of the Copyright Office recently observed, "There more reasons to register now than there ever were before."

You do have a copyright without registration, but you may not be too happy about what you've got. An unregistered copyright along with a sealed certified mail envelope sending yourself a copy of your song the day you wrote it plus your original notes and drafts and ten witnesses who heard you sing the song "way back when" and a subway token will get you a ride on the subway. The problem is that as of January 1, 1978, the Federal Copyright Law preempts (overrules) all state statutes and common law protection afforded to copyrights. It is your only remedy. However, unless you register your copyright claim, you lose very important rights under the federal law.

Here are just two examples of the many outrageous things that can happen to you if you don't register your claim. Suppose your song gets published and a few months later a large record company decides to release a recording of it by one of its star performers. You cannot go to court for the statutory damages or attorneys fees that would otherwise be yours even if you register the song at this point. These valuable rights have been lost for good. Even more significantly, if you don't register your song and someone else registers it first, there is a presumption under the law that the "chief" is the rightful owner of the copyright. You start with a major uphill struggle to overcome this presumption against you. It's something like being presumed guilty until proven innocent instead of the other way around.

What You Need to Register a Copyright Claim

We are considering copyright protection here only with regard to music. The copyright does not cover a song title, a song idea or, as far as we can tell at this point, a chord progression. Generally, the copyright gives you certain rights relating to your music and lyrics for your entire lifetime plus fifty years.

So, the first thing you need is a song in tangible form -- a lead sheet or a cassette tape or a reel-to-reel tape or a disc recording, etc. Any one will do; just make sure the lyrics are clear and complete and the melody is included.

Next you need the PA Form available free from the Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559. This is a fairly easy form to complete and there is a valuable summary of copyright information right on the form. If you want more help, ask the Copyright Office for Circular R-1, "The Nuts and Bolts of Copyright" (also free). Along with the complete PA form, you must include the copy if your song (cassette and whatever) and a check for \$10.00.

If you are the sole owner and author of a number of songs, you may submit them as a collection under the "Title of This Work" section of the BA Form with a title like "Paper" and Other Songs by Ray Korona. I would then list the name of each of the songs in the "Previous or Alternative Titles" section of Item One on the form. In or to ensure that the title of each song in the collection is indexed individually in the Copyright Office files, you may use another form called the CA Form to show the titles of each of the songs in the collection as an "amplification" of your original filing. If you send in this form and another \$10.00, the Copyright Office will index all of the songs in your collection under their individual names.

Using Your Song

Whenever you put your song onto paper, tape or disc, always show the pertinent copyright information. The copyright symbol, the word "copyright", the year of creation of the song and the name of the copyright claimant should be shown in a prominent position as illustrated:

© Copyright 1981 by Ray Korona

You should be conscientious about placing this notice on your music to avoid a loss of rights. You may do this as soon as the song is completed before you actually get around to sending in the PA Form.

Publishing Your Song

If you or a publisher decide to produce your song for public sale, additional kinds of registrations and notices are necessary. The song will need to be registered as a published work. If it is made into a sound recording, you or your publisher should also complete the SR Form and its requirements should be met. To protect sound recordings, another type of symbol is used as a notice on each copy: (P). This article cannot adequately cover this aspect of Copyright Law, but you can start to learn about it by ordering the SR Form and the explanatory circulars on sound recordings from the Copyright Office.

Selling or Transferring Your Copyright Rights

You may at some time be faced with the question of whether to sign a contract (with a record company, publisher, manager, etc.) which may affect your copyright rights in a particular song or in all of the songs you write during a specified period. In this type of situation, you would be well advised to seek legal counsel before signing anything.

Conclusion

I hope that you now have, at least, survival level knowledge of this subject. I have not copyrighted this article as I would like to see this information become available at no cost to as many people as possible. Feel free to copy what you like!



David Massengill

By Dave Van Ronk

Three years ago, or so, a bunch of us were sitting around Tom Paxton's dressing room at The Bottom Line. It was coming on World Series time. Tom had caded a portable T.V. and we were watching the playoffs; waiting for Reggie Jackson to do something remarkable. Somewhere around the seventh inning, Dave Bromberg stuck his head in the door and said, "There's something you have to hear". Standing next to him was a lean, tallish young man with an Einsteinian mop of wavy brown hair. He looked embarrassed. Bromberg turned to him and said, "Play 'Fairfax County'." The young man produced a dulcimer from a swaddle of bath towels and thermal plastic, and for the first time I heard "On the Road to Fairfax County". I don't remember how Reggie made out that evening.

David Massengill is not just another damn singing poet. A poet, yes, and a fine one. He also sings. But in his readings of his own material, the two aspects merge into something quite unique. Fortunately, I don't have to try describe it because you have the record and you can hear it yourself.

Dave is from Bristol, Tennessee, where his family has resided for centuries. Soft-spoken and courteous in the Appalachian manner, but with a streak of understated, almost savage wit, he is incredibly good company. His songs are carefully wrought and sometimes intricate, but first and always, musical. I've criss-crossed the country with him, on tour, a couple of times, and I have watched him develop songs from the first idea to the final revision, and what always surprises me is how effortlessly the end product seems to flow. This I believe is the signature of a master. You'll be hearing a lot more of him. I know I will.



David Massengill

When Soldiers Die on Battlefields

When soldiers die on battlefields
Leave them where they lay
Let the bright and burning sun
Their torn young flesh decay
Until the stench so fills the air
That all the human race must fill its lungs
And gasping cry
"Disgrace, disgrace, disgrace"
Disgrace not just for bodies still
Not just for mortal stink
But for the spirit so controlled
That minds programmed to think
In jerk reaction acting out the age old to and fro
That our traditions have ordained
The way all man must go
And that is wrong
A blasphemy against all creatures of the earth
And dooms each new born thing
From the moment of its birth
All this must change
And change can be
For love exists
It always has
It is for you
It is for me
And if we stop denying it
We all together may agree
To search out and find a peaceful destiny
For if we don't
And still go on with slaughter, hate and pain
The agony will never end
And nothing will remain of human kind or animals
Or sweet green grass
Or oceans deep
And we'll befoul our universe
Then truly will the angels weep

Copyright 1982. Ed McCurdy

Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream

Last night I had the strangest dream
I ever had before
I dreamed the world had all agreed
To put an end to war

I dreamed I saw a mighty room
And the room was filled with men
And the paper they were signing said
They'd never fight again

And when the paper was all signed
And a million copies made
They all joined hands and bowed their heads
As Grateful prayers were prayed

And the people in the streets below
Were dancing round and round
While swords and guns and uniforms
Were scattered on the ground

Last night I had the strangest dream
I ever had before
I dreamed the world had all agreed
To put an end to war

Copyright 1950. The Richmond Organization

Ed McCurdy

FRANK CHRISTIAN, 29, comes from Newark, N.J. having traveled in and out of New York most of his life. At New York University he studied English and Music. He now lives in Greenwich Village where he is a noted guitar teacher.

SUSAN BREWSTER, 27, was raised in Wisconsin and moved to New York in 1979.

ERIK FRANDSEN plays the guitar and lives in New York City. He needs work. He's in the phone book.

SUZANNE VEGA is from New York City. She is a Barnard College graduate and is 22 years old. She has been active in dance and theater, and recently wrote and performed in a musical theater production based on the life of Carson McCullers.

BRIAN ROSE came to New York in 1978 from Williamsburg, Virginia. He is a professional photographer having graduated from Cooper Union, and has exhibited in the United States and Europe. He is 27 years old.

PAUL KAPLAN grew up in Philadelphia and Chicago, and graduated from Hunter College with a degree in music theory. He has appeared on two Broadside's albums on Folkways records and has produced three Phil Ochs albums for the same label. He teaches guitar and his first solo album is to be released this month. He is 33 years old. His song "Call Me the Whale" has recently been recorded by Debbie McClatchy.

ANSEL MATHEWS, 22 years old, was raised in Florida. Before his arrival in New York City seven months ago, he was attending Furman University in South Carolina.

DAVE VAN RONK has been a major figure in folk music since its resurgence in the early '60's. Over 15 albums of his have been released, and he goes on several national tours each year. He is originally from Brooklyn.

DAVID MASSENGILL is known primarily for his songs accompanied by dulcimer, although he has recently taken up guitar. He has toured the country twice with Dave Van Ronk and his songs are performed by such artists as the Roches and Rosalie Sorrels. David is from Bristol, Tennessee.

ILENE WEISS grew up in Philadelphia and lived in Providence and Chicago before moving to Manhattan one year ago. She is 26 years old, and studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, the Second City in Chicago, and ran Kneecap Natural Foods in Providence, Rhode Island.

SKIP BARTHOLD studied classical guitar at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland. He recently moved to the City from upstate New York.

ED McCURDY was born in 1919 in Willow Hill, Pa. He began singing in 1938 and has worked in Vaudeville burlesque, night clubs, radio and television in the U.S. and Canada. He has recorded over 25 albums of folk songs, erotic songs, sacred songs, and children's songs and stories.

SPEAK EASY 107 macdougall nyc

598-9670

Shows at 9pm 'til ? unless otherwise noted

FEBRUARY '82

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31 MARTY CUTLER and CHARGED PARTICLES \$2.50 the SONS of the UNDER-BRUSH return	1 OPEN MIKE WITH ED McCURDY	2 dollar night - Dave van Ronk &/or Jack Hardy, hosts	3 Poetry & Music - Shelton from Biber, W.C. erotic song contest judged by a panel of n.j. librarians sign up-8pm 1\$ the PAUL LYNDEN MEMORIAL BENEFIT... even sillier than usual! \$1	4 \$1 nite Paul Kaplan, m.c. JUDY GORMAN-JACOBS RAY KORONA \$4 Godfrey Daniels' Revue \$1 DOLLAR NIGHT paul kaplan, m.c.	5 Andy Breckman Christine Lavin Joey George & Judy O'Brien \$4 SUNI PAZ live recording session! 3-PART INVENTION \$4 Jack hardy priscilla herdman ANSEL MATTHEWS \$4 Ed McCurdy's Farewell galea brandt \$4	6

Side One

- Where Were You Last Night — Frank Christian
Vocal & guitar: Frank Christian
Bass: Mark Dann
- For the One Who Loves Me — Susan Brewster
Vocal & guitar: Susan Brewster
Bass: Mark Dann
- Howard Hughes' Blughes — Erik Frandsen
Vocal & guitar: Erik Frandsen
- Cracking — Suzanne Vega
Vocal & guitar: Suzanne Vega
- Down Below the James — Brian Rose
Vocal & guitar: Brian Rose
Bass: Mark Dann
Mandolin: Jack Hardy
- The King of Hearts — Paul Kaplan
Vocal & guitar: Paul Kaplan

Side Two

- The Greatest Part of Love — Ansel Matthews
Vocal & guitar: Ansel Matthews
Bass & 2nd guitar: Mark Dann
- Jersey State Stomp — Dave Van Ronk
Vocal & guitar: Dave Van Ronk
- Fairfax County — David Massengill
Vocal & dulcimer: David Massengill
Guitar: Erik Frandsen
Bass: Mark Dann
- Joined in Laughter — Ilene Weiss
Vocal & guitar: Ilene Weiss
Bass: Mark Dann
- Kneeling by Your Chair — Skip Barthold
Vocal & Guitar: Skip Barthold
Bass: Mark Dann
- When Soldiers Die on Battlefields/
Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream — Ed McCurdy

Recitation & vocal: Ed McCurdy
Guitar: Frank Christian
Bass: Mark Dann
Background vocals: The Speakeasy Chorus:
Susan Brewster
Jack Hardy
Ansel Matthews
Suzanne Vega
Doug Waterman
Ilene Weiss

