the Coop
The Fast Folk Musical Magazine

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Brian Rose

The new interpreters: some current as well as former members of the Song Project pose with other notables before the Bear Mountain Festival last summer.

Left to right -- top to bottom: Rod MacDonald, Lucy Kaplanski, Gerry Devine, Martha P. Hogan, David Massengill, Tom Intondi, Jack Hardy and Bill Bachmann

The New Interpreters

"Genius is merely the ability of clever theft."
-Aristotle

A noted folksinger was once asked what his idea of success was. He replied that if he could just add one song to the traditional repertoire of folksingers he would consider himself successful. Obviously, we will not be around to see whether or not we're successful under this criteria but we can at least witness the process in action. The first step of this process is when a singer learns a song from the person who wrote the song and then performs it. The song then benefits from a wider audience. The new singer interprets the song the way he or she hears it. The new interpreter may change the phrasing, the chord progression or even the melody, and might even change a word or two either by accident or design. At this point the singer-songwriter usually turns red -- his or her sacred song is being "butchered". But most of these changes, if not for the better, are at least towards the simpler, thus making the song easier for other singers to learn (if not easier to listen to). The new interpretation might also involve the use of harmony. The interpreter is out to put his or her mark on a given song. If this is done within reason (with taste) it can be very effective.

This process can help the songwriter immensely. It can be the first stamp of approval that says to the audience, "this writer is worth listening to". This happened on a mass scale in the sixties. The first time most people heard the songs of Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell or Jackson Browne, it was through the interpretations of other singers or groups. This built the cult of the singer-songwriter. The cult of the singer-songwriter has become too strong. Now it seems that every kid who gets a guitar for his or her birthday writes his or her first song two days later. On this point, a sociologist could go deeply into how our society is seeking modes of expression, but the fact still remains that the kid has not the foggiest idea of what a song is, and therefore, has no model on which to base his or her new creation. Kids now come into the Village to play at the hoots with an entire repertoire of songs they wrote, and yet they do not know a single song they did not write.

When I was still in college, I heard Paul Siebel perform several times. Every song he sang was unmistakably Siebel. Some of them he wrote, some were traditional or early country classics -- he even sang a Bob Dylan song, and this at a time when so many people sang Dylan songs it was becoming fashionable to not sing them. But when Paul sang it, it was no longer a Dylan song -- it was a Siebel song. At that point in my career (or lack of a career), this had a big effect on me. I had been singing Bob Dylan songs and Paul Siebel songs, but they were still Bob Dylan and Paul Siebel songs.

When the Roches re-formed as a trio, one of the most impressive facets of the new group was their arrangement of songs they did not write. Perhaps they identified with the songs they chose or at least they made you believe that they identified with them. With their unpredictable harmonies and unpredictable phrasing, there was always something new in whatever song they sang. They brought new life into staid traditional songs such as "Do You Have an Apple, Do You Love a Pear", to relatively unknown traditional songs like "The Shores of Pontchartrain" or the "Irish Factory Girl". They brought new life to swing classics like "The Naughty Lady of Shady Lane". They also performed songs by friends of theirs in the Village. There was a song that their father had written to the tune of "Pretty Peggy-o" about a wayward buffalo priest who had a penchant for the race track in "Fort Erie-o". This in itself represents a strong facet of the folk process -- new words to an old tried and true melody. I am sure that even the words to "Pretty Peggy-o" are not the first ones set to that melody. The original material that the Roches brought out at this time, specifically "The Married Men", drew heavily from traditional styles. This was also the first song of theirs to be recorded by someone else.

The Song Project, on the other hand, is a more calculated concept making use of the vast wealth of new songs in the Village. In the absence of any Peter, Paul and Mary type groups, the Song Project was originally put together to showcase twenty-four songs by twenty-four different Village based songwriters. Now in its third incarnation, the Song Project has settled in as a serious group that bases its repertoire primarily on songs written by people other than themselves. With a wide variety of lead vocal styles, and a wider variety of harmony options, as well as a newly improved instrumental format with the addition of noted guitar player Bill Bachmann, the Song Project has brought attention to many heretofore unheard of songwriters.

The majority of the cuts on the recording of this issue of the "Musical Magazine" is devoted to the "new interpreters". We have several current, as well as former members of the Song Project and several individuals who are making their mark at least in part by singing songs by other writers.

In closing, I would like to note that in our rendition of Utah Phillips' "Goodnight Loving Trail", I have sung too old to ramble instead of wrangle. I checked a tape of my singing the same song eight years ago with Maggie and Terre Roche, and I had made the same "mistake" then. Perhaps the person I learned it from (not Utah Phillips) sang it that way. While working out the harmonies for this new rendition, we had to compromise on additional differences in the version Lucy Kaplanski had learned in Chicago. Priscilla Herdman, a talented interpretive singer as well as a long time friend of Utah Phillips, happened to be in town so we added still another version and harmony to the melting pot. But I had to laugh at the irony of my own change because it changed a beautiful internal rhyme between wrangle and triangle. In further discussion of the song it was noted that few people knew that Goodnight and Loving were the names of pioneers for which a famous cattle trail had been named. This is even obvious in the way we sing "lovin'" instead of "Loving". I was going to point this out in the middle of the first take, but I got carried away in the harmonies and decided to finish the song. As with most of the herein, we only took one take. Perhaps, this process can never be that calculated.

-Jack Hardy

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I have been asked by Jack Hardy, a longtime friend, to make a musical contribution the monthly record album issued by the musician's cooperative at Speak Easy.

I've just read Jack's article in "The Coop" magazine entitled "Why a Musical Magazine?" and feel the best way for me to contribute is to address myself to some of the opinions put forth therein with which I most vigorously disagree.

Here I quote Jack: "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...it is a mockery to read the flowery terms formerly reserved for sympphonic works now used for new wave rock."

I shudder to find all classical music lumped into the narrow category "complicated" and all rock music into the even more restrictive category "loud". NEW WAVE ROCK! The boogie man. It is another category, like "folk music" which seeks to confine and de-fang expression for the convenience of overlooking that which is potentially disturbing were you to experience it and let it affect you. Art doesn't fall into a stylistic category. It runs through all forms of expression and challenges from all directions, screaming in the face of dangerous complacency, gentling amidst the chaos of mass frenzy and always going after the truth and beyond the boundaries of what we wish to believe.

Jack goes on to say: "Folk music has always defied categorizing...Folksingers by their very lifestyle are political...To donate time to entertain in hospital wards, prisons, schools and asylums is also a political statement...It is a political statement to work a part-time job to support one's artistic dream..."

As a person who has donated time playing in institutions I feel there is to each individual his or her own motive for doing so. Performing for those who are handicapped or held captive is not without its ego rewards. Also, it is certainly no phenomenon peculiar to foksingers to work a part-time job. Everyone has to do that. Does Jack think there's some trust fund set aside for struggling rock musicians who often have the additional expense of hiring musicians and rehearsal space? What about struggling visual artists, writers or struggling anybody else?

I began performing publicly in the twilight years of the Sixties. I came to the Village and played Hoots at the Gaslight and Folk City. I was not written about in the newspapers but I got a chance to perform in front of people. Far from being grossed out when Bob Dylan evolved through his various intriguing stages, I see a thread of integrity running through his work. His life is different from mine. I assume he is attending to the business of writing from his perspective as I struggle to write truthfully from my own.

In a bizarre twist to his diatribe against commercial success, Jack suggests that the new artists of today are "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." It seems to me he is wishing commercial success on these unsuspecting folksingers, at which point they too can begin to take the public "to the cleaners", earning their "fast bucks" and putting out records which will disappoint their former fans.

In my opinion, what the public likes is not necessarily what should be the guiding factor in creative expression. Write what you see to be true. It will not always be liked.

This is what I wonder: Is the Speak Easy a place where creativity in all its disturbing array will be tolerated from everyone, or is it a "banding together" of a clique of people who each approve of each others' philosophy of art and "become their own critics", refusing to allow the outside world to affect it?

In closing, I wish good luck to anyone trying not to compromise his or herself because that is a tough thing to do, whether you're dealing with a multinational corporation or the local in-crowd. And I hope Jack doesn't send me a ticking cake.

-Terre Roche

To the Editor:

Somebody's Gotta Do It

I like it. When Jack Hardy asked me to put on a song for the first L.P. it sounded like another pipe dream, but I consented. O.K. Jack; just tell me when and where I have to be and I'll be there on time if not hungover.

Jack and I go back a few years. I owe him. A couple of years ago he took me to task for not writing up to my potential. Where does he get off, I thought. I'll show him. I cursed Jack in the darkness for three months and worked like hell on a song called "The Great American Dream." It may never mean much to anyone but Jack and me, but he egged me on and I hit back the only way I knew how. The winner was the song. I do the same for him. Peer criticism can get tacky, but it proves a motivating fuel.

Continued on the next page.

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Letters to the Editor are encouraged.

Continued from the preceding page.

I remember telling Jack he was writing too many damn songs about piss farms, that he couldn't or wouldn't tell a story. I like a lot of different type songs but my favorite is the story song. Now Jack didn't like hearing that from me anymore than I liked hearing the same from him, but I'd just written the "American Dream" and he had to get back at me somehow. So what does he do? He writes about 50 story songs. Some of them are perfect. What a bastard.

It's easy to dislike Jack because he's got ideas. He even has the gall to believe in those ideas. And he even has the infuriating habit of putting those ideas into action. Jack would have made an exceptional second-story man had he not chosen the less glamorous and profitable career of a songwriter. Jack takes a lot of flak; that's why he's the editor.

I was asked to investigate this "clique" business. Some people act like they came to the Village to make friends or something. I didn't; I came to make songs. That's why there are no, repeat, no cliques; there are only songs. At first, people generally know you by your song(s) rather than your name. John who? You know, that guy that does that song about a sex change operation. You know, ugly man changes into ugly woman, proclaimed pioneer--that one. Oh yeah, that one. They don't give a damn what your name is; that comes later. End of clique report.

On another upbeat note, the addition of the Speak Easy as a music joint has not hurt anyone's business on the weekends. The club scene is busier than I've seen it in years. All the clubs seem busy to me. It's even croweded sometimes. Frankly, I thought the Speak Easy would close in less than a month. But it has defied my cynicism. There is promise. And there is a record ever month.

Which brings up the record industry. Some say it is in a state of lethargy, some say worse. It's all too miserably complicated for me to go into. They do take chances they support deserving artists, and they even put out brave stuff sometimes. But not enough to suit me. Or get me a record deal.

There are two conflicting rules of thumb that come into play here. Rule of thumb #1: If it's good, there is room for it. Artists run that way. Rule of thumb #2: If it's good, it's a hit. Let's just say the majority of stockholders of the record industry run that way. I know it's ridiculous. You know it's ridiculous. Even they know it's ridiculous. But that's the way the cookie crumbles. They want hits! Not interested in songs; they want hits, they tell you over and over. I've got nothing against hits. I like hits. I respect hits. Some of my best friends are hits. A song is a song is a song is a song, but a hit, my dear, is a good cigar (and a sure career). Ridiculous, but true.

So it becomes even more ridiculous to wait on their expensive good will. A record that sells 600 copies can pay for itself, nearly. Isn't that a hoot? Not only that, but it can be beautiful and bold and sound like a million dollars. It can mix it up with reckless abandon. The secret ingredient in Jack Hardy's stew is reckless abandon. It doesn't hurt anyone, certainly. It can serve as a hell of a way station. It's a big world out there, boys and girls. We're looking for good songs. God help us when we have a hit.

-David Massengill

Folk Listings

FOLK CITY

Thu 4 Alistair Andersen
Fri 5 June Millington
Sat 6 Mary McCaslin/Jim Ringer
Sun 7 Dave Van Ronk/Spider John Koerner
Thu 11 Guy Van Duser/Billy Novick
Fri 12 Peter Stamfel
Sat 13 Irish Tradition
Wed 17 Touchstone
Fri 19 David Blue
Thu 25 Joe & Antoinette McKenna
Fri 26 Josh White, Jr.
Sun 27 Tony Trishka

THE EAGLE TAVERN

Sunday night guitar picking series

7 Guy Davis
14 Anniversary Celebration/Guy Davis
Nick Katzman/Johnathon Kalb/Ari Eisinger
Bob Zaidman
21 Heartstring
28 Ken Pearlman

NEW YORK PINEWOODS FOLK MUSIC CLUB

Fall/winter series concert

Fri 19 Ian Robb & Grit Laskin
P.S. 41, 116 W11th St.

KENNY'S CASTAWAYS

Tue 2 Judy Dunleavy
Thu 4 David Roche
Fri 5
Sat 6 Bernie Shanahan
Tue 9 Jack Hardy

THE OTHER END CABARET

Tues 16 Tony Bird

SAVOY

Sun 7 Leo Kottke/Livingston Taylor
Fri 12 The Mamas and the Papas
Tue 16 The Clancy Brothers
Thu 18 Jerry Jeff Walker
Tue 23 The Kingston Trio/Bob Gibson
Josh White, Jr.

HOBO MEDIUM

Sunday nights at Jan Hus Presbyterian Church

7 Acelebration of Men
14 Josh Joffen
21 Guy Davis
28 Rod MacDonald

We hope to expand these listings in future months to include all the folk events in New York.

Village Women Songwriters at Folk City

By Paul Mills

Friday, February 12, Suzanne Vega, Martha P. Hogan, Ilene Weiss and Deirdre McCalla performed at Folk City. A large and attentive audience stayed till three A.M. for two sets of what proved to be some very fine performances by four of the Village's best known songwriters.

The opening slot was drawn by Suzanne Vega. In addition to her well known "Cracking" (available in last month's magazine record), Ms. Vega performed two recently written selections, "Tom's Diner" and "Freeze Tag". Her first set was a particularly lighthearted one for Vega, dominated by fast-paced upbeat tunes, while the second, perhaps a reflection of the later hour and mood, was the more serious, closing with a very moving, penetrating redition of "Neighborhood Girls".

Vega's performace was marked by its sensitivity, like that of one of her guitar's steel strings stretched very tightly, and a tone as unrelenting and clear as perfect justice. Her voice is characterized by a distinctive, no-frills, crystalline clarity. She sings with dauntless resolution, and her lyrics sometimes seem to describe her view from a very great height.

Her works are like the strong simple things that grow in a rarefied atmosphere, intelligent songs of independence and a fierce determination to be free. The sources for her songs are various. One is based on a legend from "The Odyssey" and yet another on a conversation overheard on the subway.

Next up was Martha P. Hogan, who had that day gone out to buy boots, and purchased instead a pair of denim pantaloons, which she wore onstage to striking effect. Ms. Hogan was the only one of the four not to dress in black.

Ms. Hogan had an air of professionalism and confidence which assured her audience of the quality of music she would provide; she quickly and easily established a comfortable rapport with them. She was joined onstage by the ubiquitous and very talented Mark Dann on standup bass.

Ms. Hogan seemed happily possessed by the rhythms and melodies of her music. Hers was a very joyous celebration in song. At one point she remarked, "I wish I had more songs like that", and it was very evidently a sincere regret.

A traditional folk theme that ran through Ms. Hogan's set was that of the land. "The Mountain", "South of My Soul", about Mexico, and "Kankakee", about the river of that name, are some examples of her gift for articulating a feeling for the earth and its meaning to her. "Kankakee", one of the most powerful songs in her set, derives from her experiences on her grandmother's Indiana farm. Repeated trial has produced an impressive redition, one which emphasizes an American Indian rhythm to accompany her lyrics describing the history of that river.

The third performer of the evening was Ilene Weiss. Her performance had many strong points, the most immediately evident, perhaps, being her great sense of humor. She spoke directly to her audience, asking them questions, and finding in their responses her own quick-witted punchlines. She also has deathless inter-song patter, marked by intelligence, wit and spontaneity.

The tenor of her lyrics ranged from humor to devastating honesty. Her voice is very rich in the scope of its tonal qualities. One of her standards is the first

Irene Young

song she ever wrote, at age seven, "The Legend of Uncle Joe". It is a testament to her remarkable skill as an interpreter of music that even this simple melody and lyric, about a rabbit whose forest is chopped down, becomes moving.

Ms. Weiss had a lot to give in terms of feeling and performance of her songs, and she gave it all. So moved was she herself, along with her audience, in the performance of her fourth number, "Just By Offering", that she did not return to the whimsicality of the earlier portions of her set. With characteristic irony and frankness, she closed with a song confessing that she was "Here to entertain/Drive away your troubles/ Not cause them to remain."

Following Ilene Weiss was Deirdre McCalla. In contrast to Ilene Weiss', Ms. McCalla's was a more consistently serious mood. Beginning with her first number, she gradually warmed up the audience. Her music is a more comples kind of folk music, and her lyrics deal with sophisticated themes of mature love. While her performance may be serious, it was never oppressive. Her voice is well-suited for the articulation of her deeply-felt experience. She tore into the performance of her fourth selection, "Solitude". This was an angry song, but it was an anger that was shared with her listeners, rather than intimidating them.

She was joined onstage by Paul Kovit, whose mandolin provided muted coloring and accented harmonies as they performed together. Ms. McCalla interprets well the songs of a number of Village women songwriters. One of the best examples of her ability to do so was her rendition of "Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained" by Daisann McLain.

This evening of music by Village women songwriters was another event in Folk City's continuing series of performances by women. The music industry has long been recognized for its bias against women as performers, and Folk City is to be commended for its willingness to try to alter that rule.

Lightnin' Hopkins (1912–1982)

By Peter Spencer

"Now h'yere's the way the song go. Now I want you to play it 'n' I don't want you to be...y'knowin' so well that you doin' so good...I-I want you to do good, you know...right c'here!"

I have seen Lightnin' Hopkins deliberately try to fool musicians slow to understand his music, who expected the same number of measures in each verse, counting instead of feeling this music which was (no, still is) one man's entire life and an entire culture in miniature. At Carnegie Hall in 1973 he lengthened the verses by two beats each time around -- 11½ bars, 12 bars, 12½ bars, 13 bars, 13½ bars -- and the overweight overpaid sidemen provided by his record company of the moment never did quite figure it all out, perhaps because he added the two beats in a different place every time.

But leaving his accompanists in the dust behind him was his way of increasing his communication with the audience, not lessening it. With enough distance between the big old Gibson guitar carving ancient licks in tablets of stone and these other guys playing their rock and roll off to the side, the real music of the occasion stood out in bold relief. He really ran it down for us that night. The crowd was so wild for the tall, spare man in the immaculate thirty-year-old pearl-grey suit, that they had to bring him out again to sing with Muddy Waters, hat raised in benediction, gold tooth winking in the spotlight.

Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins was born near Centreville, Texas, the youngest of five children in a musical family. His childhood and adolescence during the classic period of the Texas blues style that produced Blind Lemon Jefferson gave him the raw materials he later refined and strengthened through a long apprenticeship with his cousin, the great Texas Alexander. Hopkins was already a gifted and original artist in 1946 when he made his recording debut on the West Coast with pianist Wilson "Thunder" Smith. Over the next several years he had a number of hit records, achieving national prominence in the rhythm and blues field. Later championed by the new folk music momement of the 50's and 60's, Hopkins became one of the few blues artists to move with equal success between the two worlds of the ghetto blues audience and the middle class folk-song audience, communicating to both on his own terms and with no compromise of his artistic integrity.

What I always loved about Lightnin' Hopkins was his facility with the spoken word. He could take cliched interjections like "Lord have mercy" or "watch me now", and make them work without being patronizing or fey or jive. Lightnin' made the old feelings live again, fresh and new as ever, made them real for audiences as far removed from the work's original context as one can imagine. When he brought the music down and started talking about the song or the situation, laughing that dry, percussive laugh, running down the old toasts or bragging stories from who knows how long ago, or just putting in that one telling comment, the house would lean forward, straining to hear, because they knew this was the truth.

When he told me about Lightnin' Hopkins' death, Michael Mann said, "The blues died last night. He took it with him." Lightnin' Hopkins existed at the center of an American musical tradition, and his passing leaves that tradition with a gaping hole in it. We are left with fewer and fewer of the pure, unalloyed voices of the blues, and we can only be grateful that that voice was recorded so often. Every Lightnin' Hopkins record I've ever heard has gotten me off -- no filler, no tricks, no pop music disguised as "special materal". Each one is different and each one is great. Lightnin' Hopkins is gone now, but I've been listening to his records ever since I heard the news, and I do believe in ghosts.

The Coop Interview: Rod MacDonald

This month, Brian Rose and Tom Intondi interview Rod MacDonald for "The Coop"

Brian: When and why did you get into music in the first place?

Rod: I've been asking myself that... I started out playing anything I could think of. I've always played music, its always been a big part of my life. I played my fathers harmonica when I was five years old. I had a plastic guitar I used to play. I suppose there was a point in time when I started to take it seriously... I don't know what the breaking point was. When I found myself in 1973 with no commitments for the first time in my life, no school I had to go to, no draft hanging over my head,, no other people depending on me for financial support, I found myself just getting gigs. Though I wasn't getting alot of them, when I had spare time, instead of hanging around the city to do one night a month somewhere, I hitch hiked to clubs just to get more immersed in music. I'd go to places in Chicago or upstate New York, I went to California, just to immerse myself in places and people and music. That led to more opportunities to play. I got asked to do my first gig at Folk City because I went to Chicago and met somebody who was on the way to New York to play Folk City and didn't have an opening act -- here I was living six blocks from Folk City and I'd asked Mike Porco several times if I could play -- he was unimpressed with my lack of a fan club at the time. So, suddenly, whoever it was headlining there would say "why don't you open for me", but it happened more because of them than because I was hanging around here.

B: Before you came to New York, where did you live?

R: Central Connecticut, west of Hartford.

B: Did you ever have some idea of doing something else for a career besides music?

R: Oh, yeah. I was really a late person. I used to fantasize about playing music. It's really amazing to think about it. I always thought I would do something "respectable" like be a dentist. Actually, for a couple of years, I thought I was going to be a journalist.

B: You told me once you used to write for your college newspaper.

R: I was a political columnist. I guess what would be the #2 man on my college paper which was a daily with a circulation of 8,000. It was not a small job.

B: At what school?

R: The University of Virginia. From doing that I got summer jobs with Newsweek. I did two summers of that -- interviewing people and covering whatever beats were open because in the summer they all took turns going on vacation. One week, I'd do the Pentagon, the next, the Federal Trade Commission, and the next week, I would be in swinging singles bars interviewing wife swappers for the leisure section -- whatever they gave me (ha ha). I never used a tape recorder either. This is a first for me.

Tom: Did you have a specific reason for coming to New York at that time?

R: I originally came to New York to go to graduate school, but I got totally fed up with things while I was in graduate school. I had a committment to the military, but I got discharged as a CO from the military...the fall-out in my personal life led me to leave New York for a couple of years. When I came back, it was st-rictly for music. I moved into the Village area.

B: Many of your songs are directly or indirectly political. Did your newspaper writing have a relationship with the kinds of things you started writing about in your songs? Or is that coming from a different place?

R: To be honest with you, I think I got into music for more personal reasons: finding myself alone in the bedroom beating away on the guitar 'cause I couldn't sleep, or hating television because I wasn't into the things other people were into. But I got into music as a career for very political reasons. In my music there's always that tension between personal and political. The other occupational possibilities I had required a kind of acquiescence with a political system I didn't like. In the early 70's, the Nixon years, I took the political climate very personally -- I felt very close to a person like Hunter Thompson -- I found it very hard to think of myself as a decent human being and also as a citizen in this country whose supposed leading citizen was Richard Nixon. I took it very personally in a way I no longer do. I was very involved politically from about the middle of my college years on. I was one of the people at Virginia who went around making speeches to other colleges to tell people to strike when we invaded Cambodia in 1970. I spoke to larger crowds than I probably ever played to as a musician. I wish that I could get the same response sometimes. Back then, I was saying something that their own teachers and their won leaders wouldn't tell them: go ahead and do what you want to do...strike... go out and do that because it does have validity. We didn't change much, but we proved to ourselves that we could take it on and do something. When I started working as a journalist and going to law school in 1970, the whole class was very political. We all had long hair and, deep down, we all were very much changed by the years we had gone through. Most of the class could rationalize working in big time law jobs and still have their political beliefs. I think they decided to work within the system.

T: You would say, then, that there was a strong relationship between politics and music, at least back then?

R: I think there is now, too. Folk music has a lot of different facets, but one of its most powerful aspects is that it enables people to speak directly about what's really on their minds...disco and John Travolta was very representative of a movement of kids in an urban environment.

B: There's a lot of rock and roll influences in your musical style.

R: Folk music includes Marty Robbins and Chuck Berry. You can check out any garage band or neighborhood bar singer and they're doing those songs, too. Those are folk songs.

B: Chuck Berry is a great lyricist.

R: "Johnny B. Goode" is like the Huckleberry Finn of rock and roll. I read an interview with Ernest Hemingway once where

he said he hadn't really done much other than extend himself from Huckleberry Finn. He thought all American literature came out of Huckleberry Finn. I don't know whether you agree with that or not, but I think most rock and roll comes out of "Johhny B. Goode..."many people come from miles around" to see you play guitar...you pick up a guitar...it's that dream.

B: What about the image of the folksinger in terms of Woody Guthrie or whoever else you can think of?

R: I think I'm a folk singer in that sense for sure. Maybe one of the reasons folk music isn't that popular right now is because people seem to think that folk music is something different from what folk singers are actually doing. I don't think what I'm doing is very different from what Woody Guthrie or Jimmie Rodgers did. Quality aside, in attitude and approach to music and life we're giving somewhat the same kind of thing, though I'm cursed or blessed with much more education than either of those guys had. I'm a native son white boy who plays the guitar and sings what he thinks about...not much more or less. The public's perception of folk music is much more like what was in last month's magazine (Voice of the Folk). They're more attuned to media's phrasing of things. The public that thinks of folk music and actually seeks it out, I think, generally thinks of it as Irish or traditionally American...it doesn't particularly think of contemporary things. I think that some out and out rock acts are, in a sense, still doing folk music because it's adopted by people...the oral tradition that speaks for people's thoughts. It's very nebulous. People who come to hear me will say that "Sailor's Prayer" sounds like an old folk song, and then I'll do a song that sounds like a rock and roll song because of the way I strum it. But, really, is the way you strum it or the melody of the song what makes something essentially what it is? I mean, they're both coming from a desire to communicate some basic kinds of values much more than a desire to communicate just the style of the music. Out on the road, I find that people are hungry for something more immediate, particularly people our own age.

T: Do you find anything unique about the music situation here in the Village?

R: Oh yes. First of all, there is a real problem that songwriters have to address more: if you're only at the level where you can play at the open mikes, that's fine, but, if you want to be a professional musician or if you want to think of your music as a long term creative art process, then you really have to seek outlets for it, the opportunity to play for people, the opportunity to record. This is true whether you're a songewriter or a bassoon player...if you're serious about it, you've got to find places to do it. It's hard if you're trying to be more creative and popular at the same time...but the Village provides a real opportunity for songwriters to learn... I think it's a more valid songwriting school here than the classes you would take from hit song writers because those people are writing from a popular cliche point of view; here, most of the people are trying to communicate something new and unusual...different...from the heart...spontaneous... I don't know the words, I'm not an art critic.

B: Do you think we run the danger of writing just for ourselves?

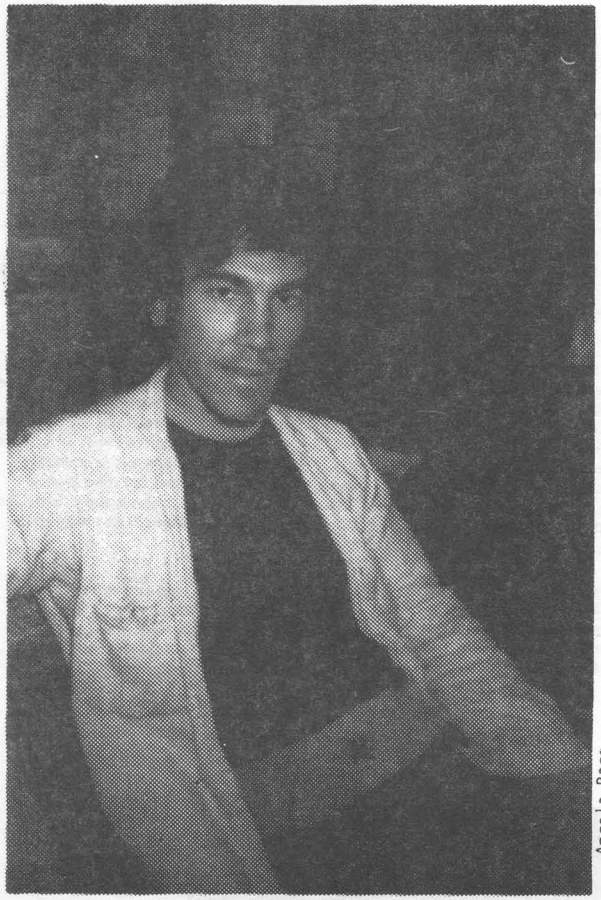
R: Sure. We run all those dangers. We definitely run the risk of being obscure. Gong on the road is something that's been good for me. I think it's a real dose of reality. The songwriter isn't necessarily the person with the best handle on the thing. Plays are very rarely acted out by playwrights. I can take a song like "hard Times" out on the road and I can tell that it's getting across, but I've written a couple of songs that I thought were real masterpieces that never get across -- so it's back to the drawing board with them. It's really important to play in front of strangers as well as friends. I don't necessarily separate the two, but, what I mean is, you can go to Cornelia Street on Monday night with your brand new song and there are times when there is an institutional response to every song -- when everybody claps virtually the same amount for every song, unless there's one that's a real dog or a gem, then they vary it just a little bit. Jack Bailey's applause meter would hardly change from song to song regardless of how good one or the other is; so what you're really getting is the opportunity to try out your new song and not get eaten alive if it sucks.

B: There's a whole kind of political song that can easily be lumped together as one party line. This kind of songwriting has always been difficult for me to swallow, and it's not even that I disagree with politics all the time, but that it has more to do with the narrowness of focus...I never really know which way to go between being a political activist on the one hand, and an artist in general on the other.

R: There is that one party side of politics, as well as the argument that one should say nothing about the state of things. But American society is one party right now...it's no less narrowly focused than the people who write political songs...to simply say "smash the state" isn't what I think, but there are other political issues. The American government governs the country in a way that serves the interest of the governement and the people who are close to it. But I think there is a native outlook that is shared by millions and millions of American people: young, old, black, white, red, yellow, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, atheists, agnostics, and those people are -- I almost hate to use the phrase -- the real silent majority of America. Those are the people who haven't had their say in running the government in years. The government has been run totally in the interest of keeping the economic wheels turning, on the theory that bigger and bigger buildings, or manufacturing and development is the goal...more and more jobs, for more and more people. Though many people are dependent on those jobs for their life support, for their food and rent, their umbilical cord to survival, at the same time, deep down, most of them believe that the present course is very harmful for us as a human race. I do, and I bet you do, too, and I bet you do, also, and I bet you we are not at all a minority. But, for the most part, we have not really communicated that in music in this era. "Way down upon the Swanee River" talked about living on this beautiful river... do you know anybody who lives on a river now in this part of the country? Would you want to breath the fumes that come from any of these rivers? We don't communicate that kind of thing as well as we really ought to. I try. A lot of other people try, but I don't think we've broken through. There are nights on the road and in town here when I sing some tunes that are really what I deeply believe about this country...something beyond the personal songs we all write... and people really turn on fire from it...they can't say enough...I've always been amazed at where we get our national leaders. They're almost never drawn from the segments of society who are trying to do something beautiful...I mean Picassso was probably the leading Spaniard of the 20th Century, and he spent most of his life in exile from his own country... (pause)...maybe they're too busy doing their work to take on that kind of responsibility...(pause)...maybe I should just shut up and play...(laughter)

T: Your song "Honorable Men" is tied to another specific political issue. When did you write that?

R: About December of '76. "Honorable Men" is literally about the Kennedy Assassination. But it's about any assassination really. It's about Sadat. There are people who do that who think they're doing something patriotic. It's Brutus all over again. But the song has a second meaning and that is: what is it in our character as humans that sets up these people as martyrs? It almost seems like a sacrifice ritual.



Angela Page

Rod MacDonald

I don't want to get too maudlin and say that John Lennon is in the great tradition of Jesus Christ getting executed for being a great human being, but isn't that more or less what happened? John Kennedy had a lot flaws, I'm sure. He was both a wealthy man, therefore independent of greed and the temptation of politics, and, on the other hand, he was a compassionate man. It almost doesn't seem to matter who killed him, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy, or John Lennon--they were all people who, by their very presence, encouraged us to aspire to something greater.

B: Would you say it's harder to be a folksinger now than in Woody Guthrie's day?

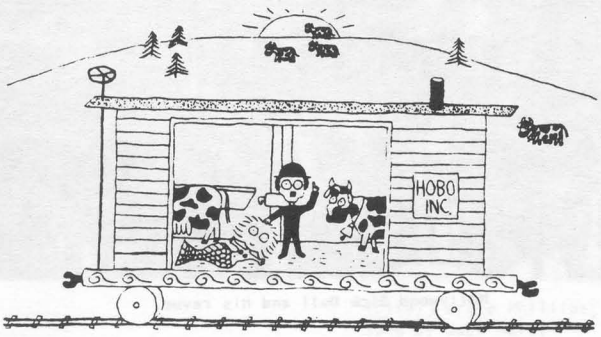
R: Being a professional folk singer in Woody Guthrie's days was probably really hard. How many were there? They all thought he was a revolutionary because he was willing to give up his job on the radio to say what he felt was important. Nowadays, not only can you say almost anything you want if it's not obscene, but there's a whole leisure class of artists that live on government grants or their art or their writing. For folk musicians it seems to me that the very possibility of somebody like me or you or Erik Fransden being able to do this for a living is a very exciting prospect. I have the feeling we've opened a whole new door in American life. In one respect, the folk balladeer has always been part of culture. Homer was no different that you or I except that he was blind, maybe, who knows...Homer probably sat there in front of some king in Greece, if he existed at all, he sat there in fro nt of some king and he's saying: "Oh, let me tell you the saga of brave Ulysses about to scale the Trojan wall," and the king: "Oh, we don't want to hear that shit again, give me another beer. Sing the one about the maiden with no panties, that's the one we like around this court."

B: There are some spicy parts in the Odyssey.

R: Without a doubt...I just was playing a club in Pittsburgh this weekend and the waitress' name was Circe. I said to her, "You're name is Circe? Where did you get a name like that?" She said, "My parents called me that. They wanted to do something different." I said, "Do you know the Greek legend in the Odyssey?" She said, "Yeh, that's who I'm named after." This was while I was packing up...I was sitting there with my mouth open...she talked a half-hour straight, holding this tray the entire time, about Circe and what a good goddess she was and how she didn't really mean any harm to anybody. She really didn't want to change those guys into swine but that's what they were...she even said that...she didn't do anything but change them into what they really were... and I said that a friend of mine wrote a song called Calypso, about one of Ulysses' experiences...and she said, "Really, do you know it?" So I sang some of it for her.

B: How old is that legend?

R: We don't know if Homer even existed as a human..I couldn't tell you for sure if he was a real guy. But they're still women in Pittsburgh being named after characters in his story, and still songs being written about cahracters here and realize the universality of what it was he was really talking about...that's real folk music. That's a folk song. I don't care how long it is or whether he ever played an electric guitar all night... that's a folk song.



David Massengill

A Night to Remember

I went to pick up my date at the orphanage. I'd been out at sea for 29 days. I'd been through typhoon and hurricane and rotten bait. I'd seen the sun come up black and bloody with no moon in sight until the afternoon of the following week. The money was good, the miserable was bad. When we docked in New York the captain said we had 24 hours to get ourselves civilized before shipping out agian. I didn't shave but I did bathe and by the time I got to the orphanage I was near excited.

The orphanage authorities apologized as there were no orphans to spare that night, but they did have a pet ostrich available. So they gave me the bird. I figured what the hell, I've had worse dates. We headed down to the Village and I bought Ostrich some oranges. I could tell by the way Ostrich swallowed that first orange that I was in for a night to remember. A night to forget the sea and wife.

We looked for a nightclub to suit our intentions and wandered into the Speak Easy. They had everything. Wall to wall mirrors and, it was rumered, hidden cameras. There was exotic fish tanks. There was plush red carpets. There was a bar! The entertainment that night was billed as an erotic song and dance contest including poetry and assorted appendages. It was like a dream come true for a man and his ostrich. There was obnoxious scum. There was little odious vermin. There was filth and squalor galore. There was several wrong wongs in right tights. And that was just the audience. Ostrich and me felt right at home.

The show itself was a gross display of all things born in the gutter. Maybe I'm prejudiced. Maybe I have a weakness for that sort of stomach-turning zapudile. But I say hear hear!

There was, however, a spokesman for light and beauty and love. He spoke of love's loftier ambitions: the mingling of souls. The rapturity of purity in spirit, the warmth and comfort and tenderness that love inspires. Naturally short shrift was given that. It was more an evening of songs you wouldn't sing to your mother, unless your mother was Za Zu Pitts, and maybe not even then. It did my poor heart good to hear such monstrosities.

After a particularly hairy pit of a song, a poet pulled rank and offered the audience a rosebud in sonnet form. Now I like how I like my women and my ostrich--enthusiastic; especially if it's disgusting. It helps anyway. I figure it's the poets job to tell me what I'm missing in life. Some things I'd just as soon miss. This particular night, the poets were concentrating on the latter. They chewed that thing to the bone til it was cracked upside down and sideways. It takes alot to shock a sailor. It takes "An Ode to a Deadbeat" to make him cry. It was plum (rotten) elegant.

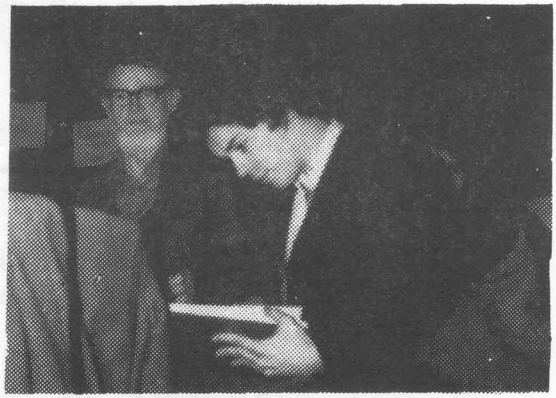
But the songsters were not about to die of embarrassment. They'd seen it all before. They were professionals, and they faught back until the tide of depravity was nearly theirs again. Finally they gave us a last and best shot: they resorted to juvenile humor, and the night was history.

Angela Page

Hollywood Dick Doll and his revue.

Angela Page

The judges: a panel of New Jersey librarians.



Angela Page

McCurdy and Massengill confer.

Ostrich perked up considerably. A climax was nearing. I tried to think about baseball but I couldn't get Za Zu Pitts out of the back of my mind.

Then it hit me--someone had to actually win the contest. Someone had to live with that the rest of their life. The old geezer in a raincoat never showed up. He was the favorite to win but he never showed. My personal choice was the Hollywood Dick Doll Revue featuring Dollbaby and the Assets. But my vote didn't count. They only let librarians from New Jersey vote. You'd think that the average shmoe off the street would have sufficient reputation in all matters crude, rude, and socially unacceptable. But, Noooooooo! Only the librarians from New Jersey! The fix was definately on. This perturbed ostrich and me to no end.

First prize was a pink cake with chocolate tips. And even though the winner was a peckerwood lap lizard from South Doucheland, he still had the good graces to feign nausea (said pink made him sick) and offered the prize to whoever and whatever would have it. It was at this moment that ostrich gave a long sly wink and proceeded to swallow the cake whole. I could take a hint. We hit the street arm in beak. We still had another 12 hours of freedom left before I shipped out. Life was good. If I was lucky, Ostrich would make a civilized man of me before the night was done. Next contest they have there at the Speak Easy, I'm double dating with my brother. He's into porcupines, but that's another story.

-Lips Noodles

March's Song Lyrics

Calypso

My name is Calypso
And I have lived alone
I live on an island
And I waken to the dawn
A long time ago
I watched him struggle with the sea
I knew that he was drowning
And I brought him in to me
Now today
Come morning's light
He sails away after one last night
I let him go

My name is Calypso
My garden overflows
Thick and wild and hidden
Is the sweetness there that grows
My hair it blows long
As I sing into the wind
I tell of nights where I could
Taste the salt of his skin
Salt of the waves
And of tears
Though he pulled away
I kept him here for years
Now I let him go

My name is Calypso
I have let him go
In the dawn he sails away
To be gone forever more
And the waves will take him in again
But he'll know their ways now
I will stand upon the shore
With a clean heart
And my song in the wind
The sand will sting my feet
And the sky will burn
It's a lonely time ahead
I do not ask him to return
I let him go

Suzanne Vega
Sung by Lucy Kaplanski

Go Down

Have you ever claimed you'd be someone famous
You knew what you wanted to be
Staking out a truth not a soul would believe
They laughed, said they'd wait and see

If you go west, bring me the mountains
If you go east, bring me the sea
If you go north, bring me the ice and snow
If you go down, go down

When I was a babe I was called precocious
'Cause I wrote a melody well
Promises and praise took it all out of focus
Pride made a silly head swell

But if you have a dream be prepared to defend her
For an arrow needs a steady bow
Ambition is a force you can never surrender

You believe in love, well I believe in sorrow
Love can make a well run dry
Too much of one and the heart turns hollow
Wisdom is a look at both sides

If you go west, bring me the mountains
If you go east, bring me the sea
If you go north, bring me the ice and snow
If you go down, go down

A puppy loves to play but a cat sleeps the day out
Hunters work best at night
Trapping in the sun will bring you but hunger
Strike when the hour is right

And if you have a dream be prepared to defend her
For an arrow needs a steady bow
Ambition is a force you can never surrender

Listen for a promise, look for an angel
Wish for a wizard's spell
Ask of the augur, learn from the tradesman
You know your boundaries so well

If you go west, bring me the mountains
If you go east, bring me the sea
If you go north, bring me the ice and snow
If you go down, go down

Malcolm Brooks 1973
Sung by Doug Waterman

Young Love

Marvin and Paula, young lovers in sprintime,
Drove down to Texas in a beatup sedan,
Slept in motels, drank cherry-coke cocktails,
Two wild mustangs playin' catch me if you can.
Aha, young love is fine
Aha, young love be mine

Marvin and Paula eloped in the springtime,
Lived in a little white house on the south side of town;
Marvin pulled night shift at his old man's machine shop
Paula watched the late show in her housecoat and gown.
Aha, young love is fine
Aha, young love be mine

Flowers on the table, wilted in the darkness,
Marvin stayed gone for two days at a time
Candlelight dinners lay cold in the garbage
Paula sat up all night drinkin' wine
Aha, young love is fine
Aha, young love be mine

Accusations, verifications
Five o'clock in the afternoon, she lay cryin' on the bed
Don't know how to break up, hopin' not to wake up
Ain't no amount of makeup could cover the bruises on her head
Aha, young love is fine
Aha, young love be mine

Marvin and Paula, ten years have gone by
Seems like yesterday you held hands in the park
Marvin writes letters to his mother from prison
Paula's just a memory carved out in the bark
Aha, young love is fine
Aha, young love be mine

1982 Sammy Walker
Sung by Tom Intondi

side one

Memoria

Giocar col vento
correr con isso
diventare spire
e fuggire

ritrovare la pace degli estremi
assaporare l'erba che accarezzi
all'umido fiato di brezza
muover vita
a vita
a concepir
vita

Riprendi fiato
e insisti
alle porte del Credo
e dipingilo con i tuoi colori

riprendi fiato
e insisti
sull'addome del Peccato
e decifrane riplientezza

Giocar col vento
correr col isso
diventare spire
e fuggire

riprendi fiato
e insisti
alle porte del Credo
sull'addome del Peccato

Batti e ribatti
batti e ribatti
il ritmo

che delibera vita

baciata dai sensi

trattenuta a memoria

Words by Giancarlo Biagi
Music by Germana Pucci

Memory

To play with the wind
to run with him
to become a spiral and
to flee

to unearth the peace found in extremes
to taste the grass that is caressed
with the moist breath of breeze
to move life
to life
to conceive
life

Catch a breath
and insist
at the doors of Faith
and paint it your colors

catch another breath
and insist
on the abdomen of Sin
and envision ripened fruit

To play with the wind
to run with him
to become a spiral and
to flee

Catch another breath
and insist
at the doors of Faith
on the abdomen of Sin

Beat and rebeat
beat and rebeat
the rhythm

that delivers life

kissed by the senses

held by memory

Honourable Men

Upon their honour as Americans
they hired the bullets to fly
straight from a window or some grassy knoll
to the place where people die
and no one was found and no one was guilty
who wasn't dead when he was tried
and the bullets keep ringing their questions out
like shots comin' back in the night

part of the plan
to hide in the darkness
in peace and in war
part of the plan
part of the plan
for somebody to take the fall
and after all
these were honourable men

Somebody had oil, somebody had money
to pay for guns and for lives
somebody had secrets too much depended
on keepin' locked up inside
somebody had time to put away the cops
till killers were safely away
somebody had time to put away a patsy
who never have nothin' to say

(chorus)

They bring the bodies back home in coffins
draped in American flags
to stand for the cameras one last time
for tv and photograph mags
and with every slain leader the soul of a people
goes a little down in the well
and in darkness and hiding these honourable men
are satisfied with themselves

(chorus)

Come All Ye Fair and Tender Maidens

Come all ye fair and tender maidens
Take warning how you court your men
They're like the stars on a summer morning
First they appear and then they're gone

Had I'd a knowed before I courted
I never would've a-courted none
I like my heart in a box of golden
Sealed it with a silver pin

I wish I was a little sparrow
And I had wings and I could fly
I'd fly away to my false lover
And when he'd speak I would deny

But I have not a little sparrow
Nor have I wings nor can I fly
But I'll sit here to weep with sorrow
And let my troubles pass me by

Traditional
Sung by Paul Siebel

March's Song Lyrics

Old Factory Town

as i was sleeping the rain fell down
washing the streets of this old factory town
i dreamed of the watchman making his rounds
as the rain fell on this old factory town

when i awoke my wife was gone
down to the kitchen at the break of dawn
i could hear her humming our favorite song
when i awoke at the break of dawn

i kissed her waving frame in the door
to rustle the kids and tend to the chores
last night she whispered let's have one or two more
rustling kids to tend to the chores

i punched in at seven at j.t. mctell
iron and brass hotter than hell
where i cast the clappers of church steeple bells
iron and brass at j.t. mctell

the whistle at four to the bar for a round
quenching the thirst of this old factory town
the lights come up as the sun goes down
over the bars in this old factory town

as i was sleeping down the rain fell
strike in the streets scatter pell mell
oh i dream of the clamor of all the church bells
cast in iron and brass at j.t. mctell

Sung by Gerry Devine

Wolverines

Wolverine, he's no namby-pamby mammal
Wolverine, he will kill you if he can, and he can
There are people who like to go out drinking
With a Wolverine, a Wolverine

Wolverines are mating in my basement
Hairy Genes handed down from Dad to Son
He's the one to deliver his people from out of bondage
To the Wolverines, the Wolverines

Wolverines taking shop class at my high school
Wolverines in the yearbook and on the bus, that was us
They will chew you if you say a word against them
Those Wolverines, Wolverines

Submarines with a toothy, hairy cargo
Wolverines to be left on secret shores fighting wars
They're the meanest little buggers in creation
Those Wolverines, Wolverines

Sound of your Strings

It would be good to see you again
it's been much too long, my friend
I know I didn't write, but when have I ever
at least I phoned every now and then
I know it was three AM
what does that matter anyway

chorus:
I miss the sound of your strings
and the joy your voice would bring
on all those days when I felt cloudy
you'd be there when I'd call
and stand by me through it all
I owe you all I have
I owe you so much more

I think of you every day
and of that special way
you'd smile, and I'd feel good all over
I can't imagine good-bye to you
what a hard thing that would be to do
now you're gone, and I long

For the sound of your strings...

Sung by Mary Reynolds

side two

Life On The Run

Training in the mountains
Always with a gun
Keeping things in motion
Life on the run

I remember '81
When it all begun
They tore the world in two large parts
Life on the run

And I'm tearing up the highway like an eagle
My claws slicing through a worn out flag
I've got to get away from all these natives
Now that Ahab has them playin' tag

Life was hard all over
Life had lost it's fun
Life lost in depression
Life on the run

They cursed and jeered the enemy
As if the battle won
They stared at Ahab's gold doubloon
Their lives on the run

And Ahab was known as quite an actor
He had a winning way with his eyes
With the shipping merchants filling up his pockets
His smile seemed to win over the guys

They cheered and marched in lockstep
In the early mornin' sun
Salutin' all those generals
Life on the run

To eliminate dissention
Even priest and nun
They put 'em in a red arena
Life on the run

Of course most were loyal subjects
Most believed Ahab's "hows" and "whys"
They were subject to the promised good conditions
They were subject to believe his schoolboy lies

They never knew what happened
Eyes of fright and stun
Destruction was so swift, Lord
Life on the run

Choo-Choo

Broke down, waiting in Penn Central
Running behind, 25 minutes late.
Union boys take their time,
Saturday night, drink their wine,
And get their double pay.

I'm just an engineer from Denver.
Hate to hear my customers complain.
I'm sending a letter to my senator,
"Treat this railroad like it were a saint."

Chorus: Get that choo-choo on the track,
Put some steam in your smoke stack.
Grease and wheels, burning steel.
Put the throttle in your hand.
Get that choo-choo on the track.

Washington got real defensive.
Making friends, sending them AWACS
Boarding up thos e Amtrak stations,
Citizens have to pay the tax.

They're crying the blues in Chicago
Detroits not blowing any horns.
You can hear it said,
"This railroads almost dead."
Yet they're going ahead with Westway in New York.
(Chorus)

Goodnight Loving Trail

Too old to wrangle or ride on the swing,
You beat the triangle and curse everything.
If dirt was a kingdom, then you'd be the king.

Chorus: On the Goddnight trail, on the loving trail,
Our old womans lonesome tonight.
Your French harp blows like a lone bawling calf.
Its a wonder the wind don't tear off your skin,
Get in there and blow out the light.

With your snake oil and herbs and your liniment, too.
You can do anything that a doctor can do.
Except find a cure for your own god damned stew.
(Chorus)

The cook fires out, and the coffee's all gone,
The boys are up and we're raising the dawn.
You're still sitting there all lost in a song.
(Chorus)

I know someday that I'll be just the same.
Wearing an apron, instead of a name.
But no one can change it and no ones to blame.
(Chorus)

'Cause the deserts a book wrote in lizards and sage,
It's easy to look like an old torn out page,
All faded and cracked with the colors of age.
(Chorus)

Sung by Jack Hardy

The Village

The New York-Greenwich Village club owner, like most small businessmen, just attend to numerous details during their business day. While I was at the Bottom Line, it took three hours of pausing between phone calls to get fifty minutes worth of tape. The secretary said that that was a slow day. So it is with great appreciation that I thank the owners and managers of Gerdes Folk City, Kenny's Castaways, The Other End, and last (but certainly not least) The Bottom Line. Thanks Robbie, Don, Paul, Stan and Alan. I hope they are satisfied with the final copy, and I hope it proves as interesting to all the readers and as educational to all the artist and industry people as it was to me.

Conversation with Alan Pepper and Stanley Snadowsky

We spoke in the office of The Bottom Line, which isn't much more than a cubby hole, but more activity goes on in that little space than on a whole floor of the World Trade Center. Of this, I am sure.

Alan: Can we have that (a copy of "The Coop")?

Frank: Sure

A: What are they selling it for?

F: Well J&R is selling it for $3.99. I think it's $6.99 through the mail. At the clubs it's $2.00.

A: That sounds like a very expensive project. Is it a subscription thing?

F: The total cost comes to approximately $1,200.

A: $1,200 for the magazine and record?

F: I think in the future it may be a bit cheaper. Nevertheless, it necessitates selling a certain volume...

A: It's great. I mean it's a great idea.

F: Of course the basic thrust is promotional, to get the artists across. Plus information about these people that otherwise wouldn't be covered.

A: It's a great idea, but where's the money coming from? Do you have investors?

F: No. It's all borrowed with the anticipation and hope of getting a grant eventually.

A: A grant. Well this is nice because what happens ultimately is you can have a musical...of writers and...

F: The second one has had all the tracks laid down and awaits pressing. They are just about completed.

A: The way you should do it is...you should sell it to subscribers for x amount of dollars which entitles them to a bunch of them, like twelve of them. And that would be somebody who would want to support the thing. A hundred bucks you could get anyway.

F: That's a great idea.

A: You could get $1,200 by selling $100 subscriptions to 12 people.

F: Yeah, cover your costs right there. Anyway, let's talk about another "Bottom Line". You were never exclusively a folk club, but when you opened you did have a greater percentage of folk-oriented performers; Tom Rush, Eric Anderen, Taj Mahal.

A: Well, we were never exclusively an anything kind of club. And that's really the way we wanted it to be. It was a very well-thought-out thing. We were aware that we were involved in music where audiences are very fickle and so what happens is if you become any kind of a club, like a rock and roll club or a jazz club, what happens is you're supported by the purists and then what happens is the purists themselves are never very flexible so... we had experiences where very famous jazz clubs who had presented the very best jazz over the years and where they were at a point where they couldn't get artists of name value. They had to use artists of lesser name status...not a whole lot of people showed up...and they started to lose money when they started to try and do related things like blues or blues-rock or stuff like that. A whole lot of people wouldn't have anything to do with the club because they took the attitude that they were selling out, that they were changing. And so, we said that the joy and the challenge would be to do a music club where there would be a different kind of music every night and the focus of it would be quality. And so we have different kinds of music...The reason that we may present as many folk people as of late is that like anything else, circumstances are dictated by as many as they can sell, and if people are upset by the fact that they don't see more folk artists performing not only here but anyplace else, the blame or the burden lies on those people because the club owner or contractor is an entrepreneur. He's in business to make money...to sell tickets. If he presents a certain type of music and people turn out in large numbers, then he will continue to present more of that music. If he presents a certain type of music and people don't turn out, then he's left there with just himself and a couple of other people. He will cease to present that kind of music, otherwise he will go out of business. Now we have presented a lot of folk...over the time we've been in busines. We've presented, obviously as you've mentioned, Eric Andersen, Taj Majal (also), The Roches, Loudon Wainwright, The Song Project, Jack Hardy, Steve Goodman, John Prine, Tom Paxton, Ringer-McCaslin... We've probably presented more folk music than any other club in town including those who profess to be nothing but folk music.

F: Is there any element that you could point to where you could attribute folk music to be slipping away from its audience?

Stan: Folk music is a form of music that is always around. It has been around since the early English troubadours. It doesn't go away. It's always with us. I personally feel that folk music is about to have a resurgence. What happens is something happens like a war and there is an outcry. It's the folk singers who are writing about it. Right now we have a situation where El Salvador is being... It looks very much like Korea where advisors, military advisors are sent in and then more and then we're in a war.

A: We run a mini folk festival right here at the Bottom Line. I think it will be consistent with what it was last year which was over Labor Day holiday. So we've tried to do it in that way. And we try to put them, in this case the Song Project, on other musical shows, e.g., with John Hall which is a rock band but has a more sophisticated audience. They

Club Circuit

did very well under those conditions. Whereever we can we'll take artists like George Gerdes or Jack Hardy, some of the up and coming people and put them on shows hoping that they will reach more people who will ultimately buy tickets to see them. I know The Song Project was working on a number of occasions where people who have seen them here have gone over to Folk City to see them there.

F: Does your audience pull depend entirely on the name act or do you have certain amount of regulars?

A: We have people who come here whenever their favorite rock bands come here. That is they'd rather see those acts play here than at other places around because they like the sound or the way the room is laid out or the food or it's just familiar. But, those same people would not come when we have an avant-garde jazz group.

F: Can a folk scene be manufactured along the lines of what we see here (Speak Easy, The Coop)? That is from what Stan was saying before I wouldn't think so. You (Stan) seemed to feel that it had to happen out there somewhere, revolve around an issue.

A: That's right. You can't make it happen, but this can be a way of showing that there is a response that might get people interested.

S: The scene won't happen like before with coffee-houses and all of that. This isn't a criticism of that. I went through those times and it was great, but it will be different this time. But there has to be a scene and there has to be someone like a Bob Dyland who can be the center of it.

F: Someone like Tom Rush hasn't had a record contract in many years, or hasn't had a record out. How does that affect his popularity with audiences? His draw?

A: It has an effect. Each year without an album less people come. We respect Tom as a man and we respect what he does.

David Massengill

S: A record helps bring new people in. His old fans are getting older. They may not be going out to listen to live music. They may have gotten married and had kids and forgot about it, but if they hear a new record it might renew interest as well as bring in new fans who might also go back and buy the old albums.

F: Robbie Wolliver down at Folk City has great praise for you and The Bottom Line. He referred to it as the premier music club in the city. Other owners seem to resent you and each other. How do you feel, what is your relationship to the other owners?

S: I think the reason Robbie likes us is because he's come to the club a lot and he sees this in operation very much the way Alan and I admired the way Bill Graham managed the old Fillmore. It's the essence of quality. The epitome of taste, and that's what we try to do. We try to fill that goal every day that we're here. I think Robbie tries the best he can at Folk City. Alan and I feel he's done an incredible job. Some acts play there that would have never played there. We cooperate. Eppi, Delsener...We certainly cooperate with everyone, but we do it on our terms. We don't play the party games. We run a busines. We're not interested in socializing with the stars, in going to parties, drinking, taking drugs, taking advantage of a female act, womanizing. We're pretty straight in terms of the drug scene. People who are very much into drugs resent people who aren't. My attitutde is, "I don't really care. People can do whatever they want." I don't give a damn, but I do what I want too.

F: You obviously have to have some contact with the artists. I think there's a stereotype of the owner as some bastard with a cigar, ready to beat down the poor sensitive artist. How do you feel about that and the way artist deal with you if and when they have that in mind?

S: Well, the simple answer to that question is, you're right. All entrepreneurs are stereotyped. The very simple sterotype is if the artist wants something and the management says "no", then the manager's a lowlife, and they're no good and they never were, and that's the whole thing up and down. The truth of the matter is the club owners are human beings and some of them are real nice and some of them are lowlifes. There are some I'd love to have dinner with and some I wouldn't want to be in the same state with. They're just like artist. There are some lovely artists and there are some lowlife artists. So the truth of the matter is, it's just a cross section of human beings. I think the ironies come into play when an artist wants something the club owner is not willing to give him and the artist feels it's necessary, the club owner feels it's not, and there's a conflict, and how that conflict is resolved generally in both their eyes determines what they think of one another. If an artist wants a certain amp and he wants the club owner to pay for it, the club owner says "you can have the amp but I'm not paying for it" and the artist plays without the amp. The club owner says "how badly did he need the amp if he's not willing to pay for it", and the artist says "the lowlife--I'm gonna do a bad show".

F: That happens?

S: Sure it happens.

F: But that just hurts himself.

S: Sure it will hurt the artist.

F: He'd have to be pretty simple-minded not to realize that.

S: A lot of them do it. I've seen lots of situations where I've seen artists make request, request, request, and when he doesn't get it he says "OK, I tried." That attitude. On the other hand there are some club owners who'll make an artist go up ona stage that leaks, give him a microphone that was passed over hand over fist, that's not a good sound system, terrible lights, terrible dressing room, and the artist has every right to be upset, to be angry at a club owner like that. So it goes both ways...When we opened the Bottom Line eight and a half years ago, we set down certain rules, and these rules won't be varied. You heard me saying on the phone. We do it our way or we don't do it, and we like to think that our rules are reasonable, intelligent. We provide a fair sound system, we provide a very good monitor system and we provide an excellent lighting system...Every act that plays the Bottom Line gets a sound check. We've had three or four occasions where major headliners have walked out saying "we don't want the opening act to have a sound check." We say if the opening act does'nt have a sound check, "clear out of here." They say, "you mean you're going to cancel a sold out show for that guitar player?" And the answer is "yes." And it always has been. They don't believe it, but you want to know something? We were told to go fuck ourselves, so we cancelled. We have a very strong integrity level on the things we believe in. One thing that everyone should get is a sound check. We're not going to sacrifice the artist on the way up for the artist who are established.

Conversation with Don Hill at Kenny's Castaways

Much of Don's talk was lost when the band started playing. Don is an extremely good natured guy who, many of the artists describe with warm praise. He deserves more extensive coverage then he received.

Don: We feature two acts, two bands, whatever... mostly, we develop our own talent. We offer good experience.

Frank: Have you been with Kenny's for a long time?

Don: Yes. I've been here (the Bleeker St. location,) since it was opened, and before that, at the East Side location.

Frank: The people who play here, did they initially start as bands, or were they solo?

Don: Most of them start as solo acts, or as a musician from somebody elses band. This was true of Willie Nile, Steve Forbert....its the artists themselves who want to put together a band. Most who come try for awhile, then they leave, or they stick it out and go on to other things. (Except in the case of Paul Seibal, who's more established, you know.) Sometimes he'll play solo, sometimes he'll use a bass...but he's more established. Lucy Kaplanski soloed here, but now she's put together a band. We're always looking for new talent....

Frank: Is there any particular element of the artist that you look for when you book them?

Don: Yeah, Basically, what we're looking for is the material. You've got to have something...We do have people, Shawn Colvin, who do cover material, but most of the people here do their own material. Some will do a few songs that meant something when they were younger, A Neal Young song or something like that, but thats not primarily what they do.

Frank: Is it hard for a solo act to open for a band?

Don: Sometimes we have a situation here where the band will want the opening act to be solo, which is a problem too, because what if the opening act wants to present itself as a band. Why should'nt they be able too? Willie Nile opened once as a solo for a week for different bands. Just to do it...blew everybody away.

Frank: Don't many of the folk oriented musicians use inter-changing band members?

Don: Yes. That often happens...Yeah, Lucy and Rod may use Mark Dann on bass, but then they'll use different drummers. They do experiment with others more in touch with their individual style.

Frank: Isn't this often done to give the appearance of a band?

Don: Well, yes, often it is, but they use different members for different instrument, alot has to do with trying to get a record contract.

Conversation with Paul Colby at the Other End

Paul Colby has been the most stationary of the managers and owners I've spoken to. His club, however, has gone through some changes which he speaks of herein. Paul has a new partner, Pat Kenny, who also owns Kenny's Castaways.

Frank: What are the possibilities of a folk revival?

Paul: None...its not reviving....certainly not like before. All we have is a lingering scene. When you say folk, what are you talking about? Michael Row your boat Ashore? Contemporary singer songwriters are something else. People think a guy who gets up there with just a guitar is folk, but as soon as that guy starts making it, he puts a band together, which makes sense. Its the next logical step. Once he puts a band behind him, its not folk anymore. Its rock. He can do the exact same songs, the same way, but with a band, and its rock. I don't blame him for doing it. It makes sense. An act must sustain itself. It does that through records, publicity, etc. Image making is very important. I can't play folk acts anymore..except Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee. They still fill the place. Tom Paxton does, they (the audience) are all the old timers. Folk performers are not gaining any new fans. You can't do it again. It has to do with economics. I would like to see a list of all the folk clubs that have opened and closed here in the village (names at least seven of them) If you, (as a performer) can't bring people in, what good does it do me? Theres got to be something for both of us- I gave alot of people a shot who could'nt draw. People like Don McLean, Melanie, and Garland Jeffreys. After they made it, they would'nt play here again. That kind of thing hardens me. You can't just give. You've got to get something

back. Thats what its all about. You've got to. Thats what love is, isn't it? Steve Forbert, Alro Guthrie, and Curtis Mayfield came back, and thats great! It creates excitement. People would say you could sell out the house twice if you split the bill, but I like to see lines around the block. You were there when I gave Johnny Paycheck a shot at New York. He brought in, what, 10 people? He said, "Paul, I'll make it up to you". As soon as he had the hit, (Take this job and shove it) he's at the Bottom Line and I don't hear from him again. You see what I'm talking about? Another thing that gets to me about folk songwriters is the hypocrisy. They write all these words about making the world better, but when it comes to their pockets? Don McLean wants to clean up the river, he did a guest appearance when Mickey Newberry headlined and said, "Paul, let the people in free!" I told him I could'nt, I asked him how I was going to pay Mickey. But he kept on with that let them in free stuff .Another thing that hurt the folk scene was whiskey. I'm the last club owner to hold a coffeehouse license. It doesn't exist anymore.The coffee-house license meant you could have entertainment without whiskey. We served coffee, ice cream etc. The folk scene was not into whiskey. In '75, everybody got into whiskey ,and that was that. So put a flower in your hair and say goodbye. You can't creat a market. It happens out there somewhere.. on some street in North Dakota. Some DJ picks up a record, it gets alot of calls and takes off. Its a test market. If a record gets calls, they go with it. Economics has alot to do with audience demand.

Robbie Wolliver at Folk City

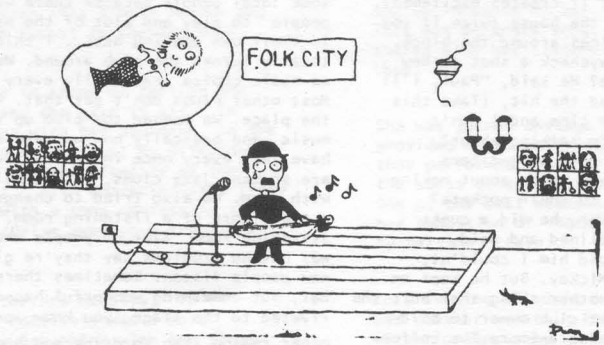
I talked with Robbie in the Folk City dressing room, which is downstairs from the music room. This conversation took place amidst hissing pipes and clanging boiler noise. Nevertheless, it was relaxed, revealing, and very open.

Frank: What improvement have you felt you've made in the club since you took over?

Robbie: When we first took over, I think Folk City was at probably its lowest ebb. It had gone for a number of years with alot of local bands. Let me back track, I think Mike Porco took to bands later than he should have and when he finally did let bands play, it was too late, and the bands that he was getting were unproffessional, garage type bands, and Folk City sort of got a reputation as not being the best place to play. He would'nt hire National Acts. The club itself was controlled by a cliquesh group, and the acts were not, for the most part, really quality acts.. There were some good people playing, like Rod MacDonald, David Massingill, Frank Christian, those were the quality acts, and they were good, but for the most part Mike was not in the place anymore. He was tired, and he had done more than his share. He just let it slide by. So, one of the things that we felt was a very important thing was to bring the national acts back, to give more creedance to the local acts. The local acts could play as often as they wanted and be as good as they were, but if they were to play with so and so, you know, if a critic would somehow walk in and hear an awful band, then they would say this is what the whole place is like, Its not as if we don't make mistakes. Every once in a while there are bands that don't live up to their tapes, or solo acts that don't live up to their albums, and some national acts that don't live up to rheir reputations but we just felt it would be better for the locals people if national acts played. Then, we got alot of flack from some local people because there were less spots for local people to play and alot of the national acts were bringing in their own opening acts.. I think it works out, and its totally turned the club around. We get a New York Times pick as music choice practically every month, and thats very rare. Most other clubs don't get that. Physically, we've changed the place. We opened the club up to different typex of music, and basically now we have everything but jazz. We have jazz every once in awhile, but not often because there are so many jazz clubs, it ridiculous to even try to compete with them. We also tried to change the place from a bar to a club. More of a listening room. Inheritantly, the club is a listening room. Alot of people who've played when Folk City was having problems say they're glad they're back because now people listen. Sometimes there will be murmering at the bar, but something wonderful happens when suddenly they are riveted to the stage, you know, people who came here for no other reason than to drink and socialize are suddenly watching the performer. I think the way the chairs are set up (we don't have chairs around a table, so its harder for people to talke.) The room is a nice, cozy room. As a customer, I used to like coming here. Maybe it has a reputation for beinga music room. Bringing in different types of music, having happenings. We tried the two night happening bit, (We 'd have two nights every other week for a couple of months. Whatever is beyone new wave. The step after New Wave. You know, art rock, or whatever. People who never heard of Folk City before were coming down. And Soho News, which had never acknowledged Folk City before...happen-ings! That brought new people in. Now we're doing a whole series on Irish Music. The ads at one point were embarassing. Mike used to call in the ads to a middle man, and the middle man used to write the ads according to the way they sounded. Mike had this very thick accent, and one night he said something like Kingy Fleeman or something.. Changing the way the ads were done was an important step. Just changing the look of the place, we still have alot of things we want to do. We've been wanting to change the room around and do alot of murals. Theres lots of physical things we want to do outside.

Frank: Do you see the club as still a folk place, or would you rather not label it that way?

Robbie: Its basically not a folk place. I thinks its a place where people can see good folk acts. I also am confused as to what folk is. I tend to think its a singer songwriter act. I think alot of people who hear the term folk music picture a traditional folk sing with a guitar. Gordon Light-foot may even be a more contemporary image than people expect. The general public, I think, are anti-folk. Its just a term that they're afraid of and they don't realize that alot of what they listen to on the radio or in a concert is basically folk music. Alot of people who go see Steve Forbert in concert don't realize they're listening to folk. If you told them, "you just saw a folk act!" They'd laugh. During the New York Folk Festival, we had a night of rock music. I feel VERY strongly about alot of the punk music. The original stuff that came out of England was angry, political music. Its Folk Music. Just because it had alot of noise behind it, did'nt in my mind change it from being folk music. I think that alot of people think of folk music as boring. Some young lady with blonde hair and flowers in her hair. I think theres just this stereotype in peoples heads, and its unfortunate, because they're missing out on alot of good talent. Like you said, a record company man could get a tape of Frank Christian as a solo and throw it aside and then get a tape of Frank Christian and his band and say "Where have you been all my life?" The singer songwriter term is just a euphemism for folk music, and I think that is the term people use now. Folk music is the traditional "Michael Row Your Boat Ashore". Elizabeth Cotton. Eric



David Massengill

Anderson, he wrote some of the best folk songs, but theres no way I could classify him a folk musician. He's basically a rock performer. Its interesting to see how terms get thrown around. One of the things that was a big concern to us was the name "Folk City" It turned alot of people off. It took a long time for us to let the public or at least the music industry, who most of these people direct themselves to anyway (most of the performers are trying to get record or publishing deals) to let them know that its not Folk that they have in mind. That its much more ecletic. That it wasn't somebody standing there with flowers in their hair.

Frank: Is your rent going to be increased at a reasonable rate?

Robbie: Very reasonable. At one point, we were going to relocate to some place bigger, but the lease is too good to give up. We're going to redo the music room, the bar area, move the pictures. We want to get rid of the wall paper.. We want to keep the same feeling, the same tones, but we will change the lighting. Also, I'd like to add on to the sound system..and get more space.

Frank: How is it among the club owners? Do they encourage each others business, or are they out to cut each others throats?

Robbie: I have very strong theories abut this. The theory is: The more clubs there are, the better it is for business, thats the old theory about a scene happening. Probably one of the most supportive people, from the beginning, for us, has been Alan Pepper. He's been great. I have learned more from him than anybody, and he is encouraging.He is, as I would like to think of Joe, Marilyn and myself, artist oriented He's true to his word, He's wonderful! He's helped us, and alot of musicians out. He's taken people from Folk City, The song Project has played ther (the Bottom Line) and Judy Castelli. To me, its still THE class club. We;ve had a few acts that have played there, and theres no problem. If somebody was in direct conflict, or somebody he really wanted, he'd call us up and say "Please don't use them." No problem. Or we'd have someboyd and he'd book them two weeks later. We did that with the Song Project. On the other hand, theres one club that had such a tight hold on one performer that no matter how the performer wanted to play elsewhere, he just could'nt. They felt obliged to play there. Thats something we don't care about.. If somebody has a job, thats great, but that one club was a problem. In fact, there was one artist that played there who told us "I just want you to know I think your doing a great job, everybodys talking on the circuit, and if theres anything I can do to help, let me know." I said "Yeah, you can play here!" He said he was sorry, but he could'nt because etc....but..he eventually played here. The only clubs we're in direct competition with is the Bottom Line, The Other End, and The Lone Star. Kenny's is a band bar.. We have problems with local acts at Kenny's as far as we feel we have to wait awhile before, say, Rod MacDonald plays here after playing Kenny's. Our Ads are different. Our ads describe. We attract a different crowd.

Angela Page

Joe, Marilyn and Robbie pose at the Folk City bar.

The Songwriters Exchange

By Suzanne Vega

well, I like you
and you like him
and he likes me
and we all love each other...
we like to sit in the cafe
and eat and drink and talk all day
and watch the sun
we like to read the newspaper
and talk about him and her
and who's getting along with who
these days
and when the sun goes down
we walk along the cobblestone ground.

from "The Boulevardiers"

Jim Salzano

Of particular interest to the songwriters in the Village is the Monday night songwriters exchange, which has been going on for five years now at the Cornelia Street Cafe.

Every Monday night, beginning at about 7 P.M., songwriters gather and sign up to sing a song they have written the previous week. The rules of the workshop are simple. You are asked to attend one Monday night without participating, just to observe, if you are here for the first time. After that you can sign up to sing every Monday night if you like, as long as your song was written, or at least revised, in the previous week. Each week someone volunteers to be the next week's host. The workshop runs no later than 9:30, usually with two or three sets in the evening.

There are many types of songwriters who meet here: intellectual songwriters with intricate lyrics; jazz-influenced guitar players with less complicated lyrics; basic old-fashioned folk-song writers, and song-singers with no music accompaniment at all. The cafe is a forum; a place to hear what people are thinking about and being influenced by; a place to meet other writers and talk and listen to them. Some people come once or a few times and never return; others come faithfully for years. If a person comes consistently and works hard, they are not overlooked.

It has been nearly two years now since I came to my first Cornelia Street Monday night. At first the idea of getting up and singing a newborn song to a group of other possibly more talented and critical songwriters was enough to keep me away for months -- I felt sick when I finally attempted it -- but it's not really like that. The songwriters exchange is meant to be non-competitive; you don't get criticism unless you specifically ask for it (usually from your friends), although people will comment if they particularly like a song. The worst that can happen is no reaction at all. This is not a hoot; this is not the place to come and try to impress the management with a high-powered rendition of one of the latest top 40 hits. (The woman upstairs will pound like hell if you do. She pounds anyway.) It is not "performance-oriented", but is aimed at providing an atmosphere in which to perfect your craft of songwriting.

In 1980, eight participants of the Monday night songwriters exchange were included in an album produced by Stash Records. This album is available at the Cornelia Street Cafe for $6.99.

The cafe was started in 1977 by Robin Hirsch, who is responsible for the performing at the cafe; Raphaela Pivetta, who is responsible for the art; and Charles McKenna. Robin Hirsch came here fourteen years ago from London, with a background in English and Theater.

Since its opening, the cafe has been a success. It is open seven days a week, between 8 A.M. and 2 A.M. It's a great place to work in -- small and atmospheric with white brick walls, and it is an art space as well, which means there are usua-ly interesting paintings, sculptures, drawings, or photographs for sale on these walls. It was expanded recently, and now has a separate room for special Sunday night performances and the Monday night workshops.

Continued on the next page.

Voice of the Folk

Friday, February 12th Frank Mazzetti and Angela Page questioned passers-by on Wall Street for their definition of folk music. Capitol letters indicate further questions.

EXCUSE ME, CAN WE HAVE YOUR DEFINITION OF FOLK MUSIC?

Folk music? Traditional music from the people.

My definition of folk music? It would have to do with expressing a cultural bias in a particular setting...to an agricultural setting.

Folk Music? How about Pete Seeger or something.

Whatever is popular music, whatever age, whatever place, Popular! That's what I'd say.

(smile, long pause) No. (long pause) I don't know. Woody Guthrie, Peter, Paul and Mary maybe off hand. I haven't thought about it for a long time. IT WERE GOING ON NOW WOULD YOU GO TO SEE IT? Sure, I would.

Folk music is John Denver, a bit of Neil Diamond and Joan Baez...who else? uh...Arlo Guthrie, some country. SEEN ANY FOLK MUSIC LATELY? The last time was John Denver at the Garden. IF YOU KNEW OF A CLUB NOW WITH ALL FOLK MUSIC WOULD YOU GO? I'd go. Is there one?

I like rock and roll

I don't know. I haven't thought about it. A while ago I did, 10 years ago I thought about it.

I don't like folk music. I listen to rock.

I really have no opinion. I think its past.
I thought about it 10 years ago. I liked it then.
I would'nt go to it now.

What magazine? Come here Mike, we're going to be interviewed. Go ahead. I love it. Folk music, I love it. I think of Kenny Rogers, Ronnie Milsap and Juice Newton. Milsap and Newton are my favorites right now. Its relaxing music and you can understand what they are saying. My acid rock days are gone (laughing) along with my brain. Folk is a nice opposite to the pace I live during the day, and you can't get arrestted for that. My friend here only likes Chinese folk music. Let me ask you some questions now. What is this magazine? WE EXPLAIN. CAN WE USE YOUR NAME. No, but you can send me a copy. YOU CAN BUY ONE RIGHT NOW, THEY ARE ONLY TWO DOLLARS. I'm interested in the one I'll be in. Where can I get it? MACDOUGAL Oh, I know where you are. I'll be down. CAN WE USE YOUR NAME? Yeah, put Bill Holden H O L D E N. Like the actor, and He'll be Bill Holden #2, We will know what that means, OK?

Ithink folk music is songs with a good story. Like the old days when they did'nt just write about dance and stuff, they wrote about life.

I don't know. I have no idea. We are from a different generation, I guess. I don't know if I've ever heard of it. DOES SIMON AND GARFUNKEL MEAN ANYTHING? no BOB DYLAN? No JOHN DENVER: No Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby maybe, the old school, pop music it was called in my day.

Indigenous to a town, guitars, tea and coffee, Am I being recorded?

I really don't have time. I'm on my way to a meeting. The thought never occurred to me

The kind of music folks like to listen to.

Me? Folk? I guess its hard. I think the peace movement is involved in it. YOU THINK FOLK IS TIED INTO POLITICS? Basically, its tied to a deep underlying ongoing process of people and their jobs or people trying to get jobs and realizing its difficulty. Its a fact in our daily lives of phone bills and con ed, we are not able to escape our fate, the possibility of destruction. Its terrible. Some people feel helpless ARE YOU SAYING FOLK MUSIC IS A MICROPHONE TO THAT OR THAT PEOPLE AVOID it is useful and has been used to evoke feelings of people who are gathered together. I take part in many protest marches. It allows people listening to connect with what they are doing. Twice women have marched on the Pentagon. They have different ideas. In court, in jail, you are still a person. You don't have to follow a rule. We think of how we think about that rule. Anyway, last time in court a woman sang a Malvina Renolds song. "It isn't nice" Do you know it? She said she would sing the words she wanted to say in a song. As they listened, everybody cried.

Speak to my grandfather here. You mean old folk music? Well, I don't know what you mean. I think of the Kingston Trio, but you have to remember, thats my perception. I enjoy it. I think of the Kingston Trio and thats about it. Actually I've hears songs that I consider to be folk on the radio. Some of John Denvers stuff I'd say is folk. It tells a story in an intelligable way with no loud guitars. At least to my ear, its pleasant.. I go on a cruise every year. We have Bob Crosby and bands like that in one room and rock in the other. Some of the younger people choose the big band sound over the rock. I think there is going to be a revival and Charlie will get off the M.T.A. or whatever.

Songwriters Exchange continued from preceding page.

As I write this, there is piano music in the background from the radio, and people talking as they wait for this Sunday night's performance to begin. In February, there was a prose reading, a bawdy puppet show, comedy, and the latest version of a new play.

And there is food. Bread and butter with jam is a dollar, a glass of wine is $1.25; there are quiches and croissants and cafe au lait and mulled wine and fruit. Also cheese, and soup...I could go on. It's a little expensive, but very, very nice.

Playing here on Monday nights won't help you get a gig at Folk City or the Other End or the Bottom Line, but it is an important part of this supportive community -- important to the spirit and the souls of people who are trying to create and not just repeat what has been done. The songs and singers are not always polished, and the material is usually highly personal. I don't know of any other place like it anywhere. It has the atmosphere of the local meeting place of an old tribe or village, a gathering place for those with a song in their veins that they must express. And everyone is welcome.

On the Record

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.

JOEY GEORGE and JUDY O'BRIEN met on safari in March 1978. They sing. They laugh. They like trains.

PAULA "TUFFY" ELDRIDGE, born in Harlem, moved with her mother to Muskogee, Oklahoma as a child. While studying children's theater at Oklahoma City University she began a career writing and singing her own songs. Since that time eight years ago she has appeared on radio and TV and at arts festivals, one of which she organized herself. She is living in San Francisco now.

MARY REYNOLDS was brought up in Norman, Oklahoma. She began her performing career in 1976 just after a year of VISTA service and while she was still studying voice at the University of Oklahoma. She organized several bands and concerts and worked in Tuffy's all female band as lead guitarist and backup vocalist. She moved to New York in 1981, where she is currently learning to type.

DOUG WATERMAN left the University of Virginia in 1981 to become a New York street singer, a move he calls "the sanest decision I ever made".

MALCOLM BROOKS left a prominent East Coast band in 1981 to become a New York street singer. "I can't believe I'm doing this", he said. Brooks, who wrote his first song at the age of 5, currently lives and writes in Paris, France.

TOM INTONDI, a native New Yorker, is a former high school English teacher and classical scholar. A founding and current member of the Song Project, he is in the words of The Village Voice, "a seminarian gone splendidly wrong".

SAMMY WALKER, from Norcross, Georgia, first arrived in New York in 1975, where he came to the attention of Broadside Magazine and the late Phil Ochs. He has several albums out on Folkways and Warner Bros. Records. He now lives with his wife in upstate New York and makes infrequent trips to the city to perform.

UTAH PHILLIPS is one of the most colorful and well known singers on the folk circuit today. While not on tour, playing festivals and clubs, he lives on a farm in Spokane, Washington with his wife and two small children.

GERMANA PUCCI, born in 1955 in Pietrasanta, Lucca, Italy to a family of farmers who were known in the area as singers. Her mother and grandmother led the singing in the fields and every year they were hired to sing the Maggio (peasant's opera) after the harvest. Her brother followed the tradition, alla "rock", forming a band and performing throughout Italy. Germana moved to the States in 1975, traveled in the West, and settled in New York City in 1977. She loves to cook.

PAUL SIEBEL was raised in Attica, New York and has lived for many years in New York City. He has recorded two albums for Elektra Records. We are happy to have his first recording in many years here in "The Coop".

JACK HARDY -- see the letters to the editor for two divergent viewpoints.

GERRY DEVINE is 25 years old and hails from Delaware, where he sang and played in numerous rock bands. He was an original member of the Song Project. Currently, he is is writing and performing songs, most notably with the Floor Models.

LUCY KAPLANSKI, 22, is primarily an interpretive singer, concentrating on local writers, both in her solo career and as a member of the Song Project. She arrived in New York City three years ago from her native Chicago. A featured singer on the Cornelia Street Songwriters Exchange album, she also is a member of the singing group, The Roomates.

FRANK MAZZETTI was raised in New York's Hell's Kitchen. He is 37 years old, married and father of two young sons. He is currently working as a high school teacher at a vocational school in New York City.

ROD MACDONALD, 33, is a folksinger/songwriter from Connecticut. He lives in Greenwich Village, where he works in several local clubs, both with and without a band. Rod tours extensively in the South, Midwest, and New England.

PETER SPENCER is from Erie, Pennsylvania and lived in Atlanta, Georgia before coming to New York in 1979. He has a folkloric approach to playing blues, jazz and ragtime guitar, in addition to writing his own songs. He has traveled this country extensively and will shortly release an album on a small blues label.

Let us state here that nothing herein is meant to be a definitive statement, neither in the 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 should never become stale. With a monthly time table, no one magazine issue will have to stand as a definitive statement. Collectively, they may begin to define the process called folk music.

-The Editor

SPEAKEASY 107 macdougal NYC 10012
598-9670
MARCH, 1982

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
all shows 9pm until ? unless otherwise noted	1 OPEN MIKE with PETER SPENCER 8 15 22 29	2 DOLLAR NIGHT with DAVE VAN RONK &/or JACK HARDY 9 16 23 30	3 POETRY & ~MUSIC~ Sheldon Biber, m.c. 8pm $1	4 musical magazine night paul kaplan, m.c. $1	5 6 Frank CHRISTIAN Suzanne VEGA Tom INTONDI $4	
7 the METROPOLITAN 14 Opry ↑$2.50↓			10 NEW FACES frank mazzetti, host $1	11 JIM LUCAS & friends $2	12 13 dave MASSENGILL bill MORRISSEY susan BREWSTER $4	
21 THE 28 JUMBO STRINGBAND			17 MORE POETRY WITH SHELDON 8pm $1	18 $1 nite w/paul kaplan	19 20 $4 the CooP is 6 months old! big party! »» an all-star weekend ««	
			24 NEW FACES steve brandt, host $1	25 SOLDIER'S FANCY featuring DEBRA CERUTTI MARIE MULARCZYK HAZEL PILCHER 8PM $3	26 27 $4 the SONG PROJECT PAUL KAPLAN MARY REYNOLDS	
			31 POETRY & MUSIC w/ Sheldon Biber 8pm $1	coming in April: THE CENTRAL PARK SHEIKS Erik FRANDSEN Rod MacDONALD and a brand new Musical Magazine !		

side one

1. Calypso (Suzanne Vega)

   Vocal & guitar: Lucy Kaplanski
   Bass: Mark Dann

2. Go Down (Malcolm Brooks)

   Vocal & guitar: Doug Waterman
   Harmony & Mandolin: Jack Hardy
   Bass: Mark Dann

3. Young Love (Sammy Walker)

   Vocal & Guitar: Tom Intondi
   Lead guitar: Frank Christian
   Bass: Mark Dann

4. Memoria (Germana Pucci & Giancarlo Biagi)
   Vocal & guitar: Germana Pucci
   Mandolin: Jill Burkee
   Bass: Mark Dann
   Harmony: Tom Intondi

5. Honorable Men (Rod MacDonald)

   Vocal & guitar: Rod MacDonald
   Bass: Mark Dann

6. Come All Ye Fair and Tender Maidens (Traditional)

   Vocal & guitar: Paul Siebel
   Bass: Tony Markellis
   Lead guitar: Bill Bachmann

side two

1. Old Factory Town (Brian Rose)

   Vocal & Banjo: Gerry Devine
   Guitar: Mark Dann
   Pedal Bass: Mark Dann

2. Wolverines (Peter Spencer)

   Vocal & guitar: Peter Spencer

3. The Sound of Your Strings (Paula Eldridge)

   Vocal & guitar: Mary Reynolds
   Lead guitar: Mark Dann
   Bass: Mark Dann

4. Life on the Run (Frank Mazzetti)

   Vocal & guitar: Frank Mazzetti
   Lead guitar: Frank Christian
   Bass: Mark Dann

5. Choo Choo (Joey George)

   Vocal & guitars: Joey George
   Harmony: Judith O'Brien
   Bass: Mark Dann

6. Goodnight Loving Trail (Bruce Phillips)

   Vocal & guitar: Jack Hardy
   Harmony: Lucy Kaplanski
   Harmony: Priscilla Herdman
   Bass: Mark Dann