

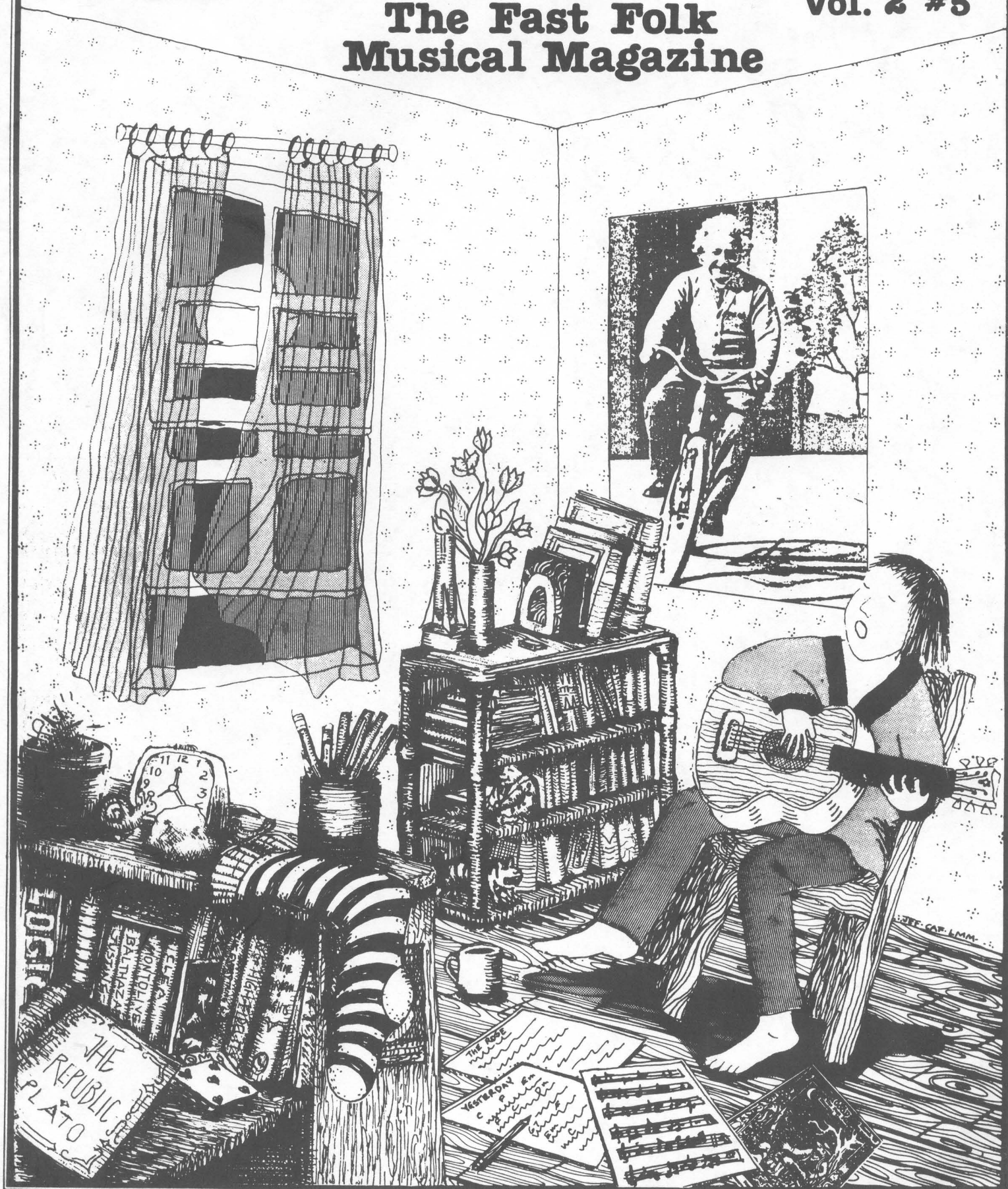
Love Songs

# the COOP

The Fast Folk  
Musical Magazine

June '83

Vol. 2 #5



# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

As a founder and chief promoter of the soon-to-be fashionable "Lower East Side Diet," I was thrilled to see that my diet's theme song, "Cold Pizza for Breakfast," by Christine Lavin was included in April's edition of your fine musical magazine. While reading the typed lyrics to the song (and singing along), however, I was quite disturbed to see a most distressing typographical error. The chorus goes "Cold pizza for breakfast/warm Coke to wash it down," but was typed "warm cake to wash it down." Before the AMA gets on your back about this, let me inform your readers that under no circumstances should you attempt to wash down cold pizza with warm cake because you will choke and then someone will have to do the Heineken maneuver on you ("quick, get him a beer--it's got to be imported in a green bottle or he'll die!"). As a physician, I feel that it is my duty to set the record straight (no pun intended).

There was another strange typo later on in the song--a line that is sung "Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!" but was typed "Yech! Yech! Yech!" When a doctor spends as much time as I have on formulating this diet, you can be sure that I would not want the word "Yech!" associated with it even once, much less three times. It has occurred to me that there may be someone on your staff who is trying to discredit me and my work. Perhaps a stern talking-to is in order.

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Attention: Bonnie Jo Blankinship

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The completed version of the "Lower East Side Diet" will be finished in the near future and I would be most honored if the SpeakEasy co-op would host our publishing date party. It will be a most festive event--my girlfriend Jeanne is whipping up her superlative "Maggot Marinade" (the only dish that eats its own leftovers). I'll call with details later.

I loved the April issue of the musical magazine--especially the educational/medically oriented love song on Side Two. My proctologist friends will be singing it at their next convention.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Heman Tarblower

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# the COOP

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## Love Songs

by Gary Boehm

Love and politics are without a doubt the two most popular topics in folkdom. Even though this is the first issue of The Coop to have a love song theme, many of the songs that we've recorded over the past year and a half have been about love. And to listen to these one would have to think that ours is a very lonely and lovelorn society. All but a few of these love songs are written from the viewpoint of a dejected and/or rejected lover.

Even Dave Van Ronk's "Another Time and Place," which I consider to be one of the more hopeful love tunes, has a melancholy air about it. In it, the singer is content to have had a love even though it's now gone, and he has faith that

We'll meet again when hills are green  
in another time and place.

Van Ronk's expression of bereavement, yet contentedness, is what sets this song apart from so many other love songs. It is not so simplistic as to be either sad or happy; it is hopeful in that it expresses a faith in the value of love.

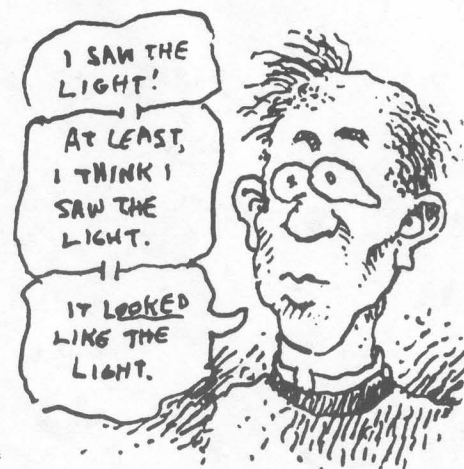
A brief survey of Coop albums turned up songs about jilted lovers, unsatisfied lovers, lovers leaving, unrequited love, lonely would-be lovers, and even potential lovers warning the unwary of the potency of their love. A disturbing aspect of many of these love songs is their aggressiveness. It would seem as though these writers were writing about their hurt egos and pride rather than the love they have lost.

Why so many songs about unhappy love and so few about successful love? While happy love brings contentment, and companionship, the rejected lover has a lot of time on his or her hands. Even non-poets like me seem to seek solace in verse when the object of their love finds a new subject. Every neuron of a jilted lovers over-worked nerves cries out for retribution. The act of writing seems to have a calming effect.

The real question is should these writings from the lonely night ever see the light of day? They are too often full of self-pity and a too sweet sentimentality. A writer's direct confession of guilt and shame, or of the hopelessly romantic notion that you are the perfect one and if you'd just give me another chance, makes me squirm like nothing else can.

David Massengill's "On the Road to Fairfax County" is a love song that deftly skirts the dew-eyed sentimentality of a Hallmark card love affair. Who knows whether or not this song is about the author's own experience? The song is about a person who falls in love with a highwayman. They make their plans to run off and are thwarted at the last minute by the everpresent law. There is grief in this song, but the listener is not led to the experience with large, well-marked cliches. Rather, the story is simply told and we respond as we will.

Writing a good love song is no different than writing any good song. The difficulty of writing a good love song might also point out the strength of the love song. The difficulty lies in getting enough distance from experience to be objective and yet remain close enough to enrich it with all the powers of one's feelings.



## Coffeehouse Capsule: The People's Voice Cafe

by Gerry Hinson

The existence of this Soho cafe/gallery settles the dispute over the degree of political involvement desirable in the modern folk scene: it magnetically attracts left-wing populist artists and public, and repels the apoliticals. Sharing space in the American Indian Community House, it is an aesthetically attractive place, with Native American artwork on display in the well-lit gallery room. Its management collective features progressives with diverse cultural commitments, ranging from veterans like Marian Wade (Pinewoods) and Ray Korona (Sing Out!) to younger firebrands like Marcie Boyd (the musician's cooperative). They are efficiently supported by a roster of committed volunteers. Quoting their descriptive flyer, they "provide a space for a wide variety of humanitarian issues and...the music and culture of pacifists, anti-nuclear activities, feminists, gays, Third World peoples, and others involved in the struggle for freedom." Such clarity of focus evolved during six years of grappling with the ideals and influence of a protean membership; their endurance is both rewarding for themselves and exemplary for other like-minded organizations. Their acoustically excellent stage recently has hosted the likes of Barbara Dane, Serious Bizness, Asian-American Women's Night, and Spider-women's Theater, to name just a few.

In my initial visit on May 14 I heard singers Ruth Pelham, specializing in children's songs and audience accompaniment, and broadsider Deborah Silverman, whose best was a chilling account of the Johnstown flood; most of the enthusiastic crowd (over 100) remained for both sets and provided quite a supportive chorus.

A diverse selection of recordings from both political (e.g., Suni Paz, Bright Morning Star) and nonpolitical artists (Rosalie Sorrels) is sold here; also available are schedules from many other progressive cultural organizations (WBAI Folio; Pinewoods Letter; WIN magazine; other coffeehouses).

Shows take place Saturdays at 8 p.m. Admission is \$4 or TDF; members, \$3 admission. Annual membership is \$10. For information, call (212) 426-2183 or 580-0224; Saturdays after 6 p.m., call 226-7433. The cafe is located at 388 West Broadway, New York City.

# The Coop Interview: Ronnie Gilbert and Holly Near

by Marcie Boyd

When I asked Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert when they first sang together, Holly smiled and replied, "In another life, I'm sure!" After hearing them together in concert on April 13 at Avery Fisher Hall, I believe her. Their voices blend exquisitely, and their joy in singing together lights up a concert hall!

These women represent the best in progressive music of their respective eras. Ronnie Gilbert is best known as a member of the Weavers, the pioneering folk group that popularized "Goodnight Irene," "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine," and "Darlin' Corey." Along with her three partners, Pete Seeger, Lee Hays and Fred Hellerman, she was blacklisted in 1952 for singing out and speaking out about her beliefs. She has worked primarily in the theater since the Weavers split up in 1963, and has never stopped speaking out for peace, freedom and justice. Ronnie was an antiwar activist during the Vietnam era, and has also been involved in the nuclear power protest movement, the women's movement, and the Parisian student movement of 1968. She has an M.A. in psychology and lives part-time in British Columbia where she has started a therapy center, a grassroots theater company, and a women's consciousness-raising group. Her energy, drive, and voice show no sign of abating.

Holly Near has been working for social change through music for the last twelve years. She inspires and challenges her audiences to confront the nuclear threat, irresponsible governments, corporate interests, the New Right, and racist and sexist social structures. This may sound doctrinaire to some, but Holly is in fact a free thinker; her politics are very much her own.

Ronnie Gilbert was one of Holly's most important role models. The Nears took their children to see the Weavers when Holly was 8, and she remembers "the woman who threw her head back and sang as if there were no limit to her sound." When Holly recorded her second album in 1974, she dedicated it to Ronnie, and eventually the two met and became friends. They sang together for the first time in this life during the filming of Wasn't That A

Time?, the 1980 documentary about the Weavers' reunion. That experience, and the extraordinary response from the public, led to their decision to do a national concert tour together.

I spoke to them in New York City, shortly before the tour began.

MB: What are you saying to people by performing together?

Ronnie: Among other things we're saying "You have a history."

Holly: And a future.

RG: And a future. And it's time to link up those things. Music is a way of bringing together all kinds of people--people of all ages, people with diverse interests. We are two people who represent both differences and similarities in our social concerns--but we bring them together and we believe that they can go together.

HN: There are going to be people in that audience who were part of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who fought against fascism in the Spanish Civil War, and there

are going to be 13- and 14-year-old lesbians who have had the courage to stand up in their high school and say "I have the right to have a lesbian relationship." Those people are going to be sitting shoulder to shoulder, and the 13-year-old probably doesn't know that there was a war in Spain or what the Abraham Lincoln Brigade was--and the person who fought in the Spanish Civil War probably has never thought that he or she has met a lesbian before.

There will be people there whose only interest is that they saw a movie on PBS about this group called the Weavers, and there was somebody named Holly; they don't know either of us, but they enjoyed the film and they're going to come see what we're up to. And I think it will be very interesting--I don't think you can categorize who we all are, except that we're a pretty nice bunch of people.

MB: Ronnie, has the recent publicity brought you more into the public eye?

Irene Young



Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert

RG: Yes. There's obviously been a generation--at least a generation--of people brought up on Weavers records, because the people that come up to me on the street and in restaurants having seen the film and wanting to say something about are by no means older people. In fact the great majority of them are quite young. And that always amazes me because at the time the Weavers were singing I had no idea what our audience was. I mean, what does it mean to you when somebody says to you you've sold two million records? But when people come up now, as they do...a woman came up to me in a restaurant the other day and said, "I've got two little children and I'm bringing them up on your music" it feels wonderful. It used to embarrass me when people would recognize me in the old days. I felt strange. I don't feel strange about this. The kind of response I've been getting around the film is a different kind of thing than "Oh God, there goes a celebrity." It has something to do with what I was very fortunate to be involved in: the ideas, the survival of the Weavers and what all of that meant. That means something to me and I feel proud of it.

HN: My favorite thing would be if one's music were so well-known that everybody knew it existed, so they could choose whether they wanted to listen to it or not, and yet you would never be noticed. I like to people-watch--it's where I get a lot of my ideas for music--and I used to be able to watch people, listen in on their lives, and they wouldn't notice. Now I have to do it in a different fashion, because if people are watching me, it's hard for me to be watching them. But I agree with Ronnie that the style in which people approach artists like us is different from the way they approach celebrities. People who come up to us usually want us to make some connection around ideas, sentiment, history, or survival. It's not just "Oh, can I touch your sleeve?" So that's very reassuring and energizing. There are times where people have walked up and stood right in front of me and said, "It's her!" And that's very painful to me, it sort of knocks the wind out of me and I have to step back and gather it together.

People sometimes tend to love public figures too much and hate them too much. Everything's on an extreme. And so the praise I get is sometimes greater than I can handle as is the criticism. I've developed a certain detachment from it. But the balance is to try not to detach so much that you stop experiencing the very lives that you start out to write about.

MB: Do you feel that folk music with a political message can reach people in the Eighties the way it did in the Fifties and Sixties?

RG: Many of the songs that I've heard lately--in preparing for this concert--come from people who work in the folk tradition. Wonderful, wonderful songs by people like Charlie King and Ruth Pelham.

HN: And Si Kahn, and Bernice Reagon. "Folk" is a word that's been argued a lot: "What is folk music?" If folk music is music that comes out of folks' working-class experience, then the musical style in which it's presented can be very versatile. If folk music simply refers to the instrumentation--traditional, acoustic instruments, stringed instruments for the most part--then I would not fit into that category. I don't even play the guitar!

RG: Neither do I! But I'm just knocked out by how many songs these people are turning out; and I know we've just scratched the surface. I have a dear friend in the Albany area named Jackie Alper who has a radio show which is largely folk music, and she's been sort of feeding me stuff the stuff that she comes in contact with in that area--upstate New York and New England. So there's stuff going on all over this country and up in Canada. When you ask "Are they being heard?" well, I know that they're being heard by thousands of people although the media may not be involved in it. Are they being recorded by major record companies? No, not as far as I know. But there are small labels: look at your own magazine that puts out a record every month. And Holly's company--Redwood Records.

HN: What I would like to see is

content-oriented music: conscientious, progressive, content-oriented music in every musical style--that there be operas, musical comedies, musical theater, rock 'n' roll, traditional music--the lyrics of which are written from a humanitarian, conscientious place. The Seventies were filled with a new music that came out of the feminist experience. If you ask most of the executives in the mainstream music industry, they will tell you that there was no grassroots musical movement in the Seventies. According to them the Sixties were hot and then the Seventies were just nothing. A lot of them don't even know that women's and progressive music exist. I think they're also afraid of it, but unless they know about it, they don't think it's happened. I feel very sad for them.



RG: There was a period in my life when I had very little to do with music and theater--I wanted to do something else with my life, and I went out West. In 1978, after I had met Holly, she suggested I go to a women's music festival in Portland, Oregon. I felt really stupid and ignorant about not knowing too much about what was going on, but I thought that if there was Holly, then maybe there would be

someone else who was interesting. I went expecting about 10 percent interesting stuff and about 90 percent boring garbage--but it was just the opposite. 90 percent of it was fantastic. I couldn't even stay the whole time--I was so overwhelmed by input--all this going on. It was such a revelation: this was one women's music festival in this one little area. And it had been going on all the time, but you certainly didn't hear it on the radio!

HN: We were part of a festival last year in Washington, D.C., called Sisterfire. It was organized from the grassroots up by a multi-cultural group of people: Jewish women, white women, working-class women, women--and the predominant group was not white middle-class women. The whole quality of the festival was different--it was so much richer--not just from a do-gooder, missionary, "isn't this pretty" perspective, but from a gut-level, soul-wrenching level. And the looks of the festival: Ronnie Gilbert and myself and Ysaye Barnwell stood up and sang together--and we didn't look like what you see on television! And when I got outside of us and looked at it from the audience's perspective, I thought what a delight this must be to this audience to see these three really beautiful, strong, articulate women who are not slick versions of a fashion magazine cover. It must be such a relief to see that--how devastating it is to be constantly looking at billboards and television and movies and seeing people who don't look real.

RG: And to know that that's what's expected of you--to look like that.

MB: Do you have any advice for songwriters and musicians?

HN: To the folk song writers who read your magazine, I would love to say that writing good music takes practice and that you can improve your songwriting by being alert to the details in society and in life. If you write a song that deals with a generality like "I want to be free," you really miss an opportunity. Good progressive songs get past the generalities and right down to the root of the matter, and that takes persistence.

I'd also like to encourage people to let musicians have time to practice. Let them have music lessons. Help a musician in your life to come up with the money and the time and the quiet. If she's a working mother, take care of her kids so she can practice. You have to practice to be a good musician, and there have to be good musicians in society or we'll all die!

RG: In case anybody thinks that Pete Seeger, for example, was born an accomplished genius, let me say this: in all the years that I've known Pete, he was almost never without a banjo in his hands. He could do that because he was given permission to do it--because he took permission to do it. But Toshi Seeger made that possible for him--so did his children, so did his friends. He was accepted as somebody who had to have a banjo in his hands all the time. There's no question that he had that secret thing that has to do with talent and ability: a kind of genius. But that could never have flowered had it not been for the many people in his life who gave him the support and the permission to do it. No one gets there without that kind of help.

HN: And it's not a good service to tell your friends that they're great if you don't like what they're doing. I get tapes from

people who want to be recorded (even though Redwood Records doesn't record other people right now), and many of these people are so unprepared to document their music--they're still in the process. When I hear these tapes all I can think of is how their friends are misleading them and how important it is to find gentle and supportive ways to give each other constructive criticism. But it takes courage on the part of both the critic and the artist to have that kind of relationship.

MB: What keeps you going? Where do you turn for strength--spiritual and otherwise?

RG: To very special friends who ask very special questions--who use their creative power and their energy to articulate the questions that are most pressing and meaningful in life. To people like Holly, to people like Joe Chaikin who put their bodies where their minds are--and where their mouths are.

I don't have a church or synagogue, but for me, every meaningful piece of theater that I tackle is like an act of faith. This concert tour with Holly is an act of faith that looks to the audience, to us, to each other, to Jeff Langley [their accompanist], to the world that we live in as a kind of commu-



Ronnie Gilbert and Kate Millet

Brian Rose



nion. I feel it that way--that's what gives me spiritual strength. I've watched my daughter grow into a kind of woman I always wanted to know, and that gives me faith and a spiritual sense.

HN: It's true that our concerts sometimes feel like church or synagogue--and it's nice because it doesn't always have to be on a Sunday morning! These are opportunities to go and recommit yourself.

I run into people who give me motivation, and it tends to have a spiritual effect because it's not an economic motivation--although one needs to have that as well. But for example, I met a woman who is living in Mexico. She escaped from Uruguay, where she had been in prison. And talking to her about her life and her children, and about the women who are still in prison, still being tortured, and their ability to survive that treatment--to keep going--makes me want to keep going long enough to meet them. And if we don't meet in person, I want to find a way to know them anyway--and music is a way that I will get to know them.

It's very easy to wake up in the morning and forget about El Salvador or Nicaragua or South Africa or Northern Ireland--those are names, those are far away places on the map. But if I know a person who lives there--

even if I make her up in my imagination--and I remember that she's a singer, that she may be about my age, about my height, that she may have the same dreams that I have, that she may be writing the songs that I wish I could be singing if they could be smuggled out of prison--then I wake up in the morning and I don't forget her. Instead, it makes me want to be part of a society that has the courage and the dignity and the creativity to keep pushing, to keep demanding that we seek out that part of human potential.

People's ability to change and grow is a great inspiration to me. I'm my own best example, because I do it every day; I'm walking proof that a person is capable of change. So if I can do it, that gives me faith that anyone can. We artists are in a position to provide an environment and to invite people into this environment and give them an opportunity to discover some part of their better selves. That's a very exciting task. People will come up and say, "You know, your music changed my life," and it's a very sweet thing for them to say, but the fact of the matter is that they were going to change anyway; they just needed someone to either give them permission or to be that last little drop of water that makes the water spill over the bottle--in other words, they were ready. I've seen people grin and say, "Ten or fifteen experiences down the road they're going to be sitting in the front row and staying." But they had to have the ten or fifteen experiences and I'm glad the concert was one of them. People have a right to have time to think about it; you get discouraged if you don't remember that you're part of a chain of events.



The mood at Lincoln Center on April 13 was electric. Sold out over a month in advance, this was not just a concert, but an event. From the opening medley, which chronicled Holly's and Ronnie's musical histories and mutual history, to the second encore--the moving gay and lesbian rights anthem, "Singing For Our Lives"--the evening was a testimony to the power of music to awaken, to educate, to unify, and to entertain. The music was wide in its scope--many of Holly's finest songs were featured, of course, but there were also songs by Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, Brecht and Weill, Rodgers and Hart, and many others, including pianist Jeffrey Langley. Jeff was Holly's songwriting partner and accompanist for 11 years, and it was gratifying to see them working together for this tour. Sign language artist Susan Freundlich was, as always, a pleasure to watch as she used her whole body to express not only the lyrics, but the feeling and intent of each song.

It was a privilege to be part of this unforgettable evening, but those who couldn't make it to any of the concerts on this tour needn't feel bad--Holly and Ronnie are planning a fall tour to celebrate the release of their live LP from this series. There's too much magic to stop now!

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# Muddy Waters, 1915 – 1983

by Peter Spencer

I first heard Muddy Waters in 1965. There was a boy at school who was a big fan of English groups like the Rolling Stones. I really didn't like the English groups, and one day while going through his record collection looking for something at least tolerable to listen to, I found a bunch of LP's at the back of the pile. They were pretty old and beat up looking, his father's rhythm & blues collection, he said. Most of them were on Chess or Cadet Records: Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and The Real Folk Blues by Muddy Waters. Folk blues sounded okay to me; I was into Jim Kweskin, Geoff Muldaur and people like that, but my friend wouldn't let me listen. Too thick, too original, he said. So I stole it; I was not what you would call a well-adjusted teenager. But what happened next adjusted me but good.

The first song on side one was "Mannish Boy," and from that first a cappella "O...well" I was spellbound. This was the greatest blues singer of his generation at the top of his form, ferocious, passionate, magnificent. I could see instantly what was wrong with the English groups: they were simply boys sent to do a man's job.

The talk along the bar at SpeakEasy the night we got the news involved wondering who was left and who would be next (irrelevant really, considering the importance of the man and his work). Muddy Waters was one of those Promethean figures of American music, like Bill Monroe or Louis Armstrong, who could distill the folk music of his native environment into a heady spirit the whole world could enjoy. Actors have written about seeing Brando as Stanley Kowalski on Broadway and how it seemed to open a new range of possibilities both in the theatre and outside it. Nearly every blues fan I know has the same feeling about Muddy Waters. From out of nowhere an astonishing force completely changes one's outlook. The list of people this has happened to reads like a Who's Who of American Music. One song alone has lent its name to a world-famous rock band, a leading pop-music paper, and Bob Dylan's biggest-selling hit record. Waters' music has defined a school of regional music still active and vital today. His story is the story of an entire style.

Muddy Waters ran a small juke joint and played at parties in the country around Clarksdale, Mississippi when folklorists from the Library of Congress recorded him in 1941. He had grown up listening to the great blues singers and guitarists of the Mississippi Delta and was especially influenced by Robert Johnson. There were also commercial blues records by Memphis Minnie, Lonnie Johnson, Tampa Red, and Blind Lemon Jefferson that he heard on a neighbor's phonograph. When the twenty-six year old Muddy heard himself for the first time on tape, he realized that he sounded just as good as his mentors. So he headed to the town the records came from: Chicago.

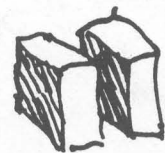


Within two years of his arrival he had an electric guitar and his band was the most popular blues group on the South Side. In the 1950s he made a number of records for Leonard and Phil Chess that became nationwide rhythm & blues hits and eventually gave him a worldwide audience. The rhythm & blues charts at the time were dominated by slick ballad singers like Charles Brown and Nat "King" Cole, singing blues and pop songs with smooth arrangements and a sophisticated, urban finish. The

urgency and directness of Muddy Waters' music and the raw power of his band were very popular among the transplanted southern blacks in cities like Chicago, St. Louis and Detroit. It was the same kind of throwback to an earlier time that made country singers like Willie Nelson so popular in the 1970s.

Muddy Waters' success gave rise to a whole group of country-sounding blues singers in the '50s and '60s. His main competition in Chicago came from Chester Burnett, the Howlin' Wolf, but several members of the Muddy Waters band made records of their own: Little Walter, Otis Spann, James Cotton. There is also a second generation of Chicago-style blues records by people like Magic Sam, Otis Rush, Earl Hooker, Son Seals, Koko Taylor, and Magic Slim—all of them working the still-rich vein discovered by Muddy Waters. Leading white rockers of the last twenty years have also acknowledged their debt to Muddy Waters: Eric Clapton, The Band, Johnny Winter, and the Rolling Stones. Muddy Waters songs like "I'm Ready," "Rollin' & Tumbling," and "Got My Mojo Working" are still staples in the repertoires of countless funky bar bands the world over. Their tight construction, swinging grooves, and evocative lyrics played a large part in the development of rock 'n' roll's greatest poet, Chuck Berry.

Muddy Waters died in his sleep, at a ripe old age, in a suburban house, survived by children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. That's not the usual end of a great blues singer, dying at home in bed. But the greatness of Muddy Waters made a profession out of what was once just a form of anti-social behavior, revealing the art that lay behind the boozy facade. And a lot more of America's great musicians will die easy, at home in bed, because he did.





# The SpeakEasy Benefit, March 31

by John Kruth

Having just returned from a tour of the South, between engagements in New York and Washington, D.C., John Hammond found the time in his hectic schedule to play a benefit for the SpeakEasy co-op on Thursday, March 31.

Opening the show that night was the New England Express with a light, breezy set full of two-part harmonies and tasteful guitar playing. Following the Strachan brothers was Frank Christian. Joined by Mark Dann on bass, Frank performed a variety of slinky blues and traditional folk melodies. His delicate touch on the guitar and understated vocals are the trademarks of his inimitable style. Along with his own compositions, Frank offered smooth renditions of "Makin' Whoopee" and Mose Allison's "Your Mind Is On Vacation But Your Mouth Is Working Overtime" (which seemed to be directed at a certain heckler in the crowd). Without a doubt the highlight of the set was a duet for four hands and one guitar. Sharing the instrument, Frank sang

and comped the chords while Mark criss-crossed bass patterns from over his shoulder. The duo broke into an upbeat swing tempo and played wonderful solos without getting in each other's way.

John Hammond took the stage acknowledging the warm applause from the packed house and immediately got down to business. Pounding his foot on the SpeakEasy stage, he hammered out Chicago and Delta blues classics on an old Gibson with a lethal dose of pure emotion. By the second number, there was a long stream of sweat running down his neck. He seemed to be exorcising demons. Growling lyrics in his "mouthful of marbles" style, Mr. Hammond ran through a set of popular blues standards including stirring renditions of Willie Dixon's "You Can't Judge a Book by Looking at Its Cover," Jimmy Reed's soulful "Honest I Do" and Robert Johnson's classic "Come On In My Kitchen."

John Hammond's command of the harmonica is fantastic. Even with his hands

busy on the guitar and the harp in the rack, his abilities far exceed most of today's harp players. He moans sax-like tremolos and wails sharp heart-stabbing notes filled with intense pain and passion. Quite often his style recalls the great Jimmy Reed.

With a socket dangling on his pinky, John picked up his National Steel guitar and banged out a relentless rhythm, accenting his vocals with hot slashes of slide work. At times his patterns became random when he added extra measures to the song. Surrendering to the hypnotic spirit of his boogie, the crowd stomped and hooted and clapped for more until their hands hurt.

Over the course of the evening, the crowd had the opportunity to sample three distinctly different styles of folk and blues, ranging from the New England Express's lilting ballads, to Frank Christian's artful guitar picking to John Hammond's mad mojo blues rambling. Indeed, it was an evening to remember.

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## On the Road :

# — Notes from the Wild Blue Yonder

by Rod MacDonald

April 27,

The last days before leaving town are always the hardest. Partly it's trying to remember everything that must be done; partly it's the feeling of close connections that are, at best, put on hold, and at worst, severed altogether. Once a woman told me, "When you said you were going away again I knew I had to find someone else, someone who'd be there for me all the time." Thoughts of parting flood the mind, until there's a mad scramble of time, links in the transportation chain: walk to the subway, train to the plane, confront your reservation, walk to the gate, sit down, fasten your seat belt.

Oh no, the thumping says, what am I doing?

And then, like doors being snapped shut, the amazing transformation begins, and all of New York City is splayed out below: the late afternoon sun streaks the triangle of Jamaica Bay, the ocean, and the Hudson River. Tiny boats herringbone the water like jets writing in the sky, and one solid layer of clouds gives way to another on an immense plain of pillow stuffing. For a moment I remember how frail we are in presuming to conquer all of this; then, plunging into the plane's magazine full of hotels, rental car ads, and impeccably groomed young execs smiling rapaciously from every page, I realize I have, at least so far, not really even left the ground.

April 28, Calgary, Alberta

Calgary looks like Texas: flat, sprawling, the look of new money everywhere. And sure enough, it's Canada's oil center, and all those skyscrapers were built in the last ten years while the city grew from 100,000 to 600,000 people. According to Vic and Bob (who run a local folk club called the Nickelodeon), it's also a bustling music town, with six venues meeting every two weeks. They're a bit amazed when I tell them SpeakEasy runs every night, seven nights a week, and in a couple more beers I'm getting the real run-down. Were my bags searched? No. Just wait till you go back, says Bob. The Americans search everything.

The next day I exchange my money into Canadian dollars, which, unlike the old greenback, come in red, blue, and

rainbow-trout colors. Although Canada has been independent since 1867, they still put Queen Elizabeth on the \$1 bill, a pretty portrait I mistake for Grace Kelly.

"Who's this guy on the ten?" I ask the teller.

"John D. McDonald, first Prime Minister," she says proudly.

"I remember him," says Bob. "He was a lush."

Calgary even has its hip area, where the lanky guys in denim jackets lounge around the doorways eyeing the high-school girls who come there to shop. The stores are different: instead of felafel you get smoked Montreal sausage, instead of junk jewelry it's canoes and fleece-lined parkas. I buy the local paper and read it in the movie-theme cafe (nice poster of Liz Taylor in that slip) and two hours later I'm on the bus to Banff, watching the sun set over the Rockies as we tool along through mile after mile of green trees and snow-covered peaks. It is 10 p.m. before there's enough darkness to see the first star.

April 30

The Northern Circuit is a collection of small-town coffeehouses, each run by local people. The biggest city, Price George, has 50,000 people, and some, like Endako, have a couple hundred. I wake up in Invermere, my first concert, and walk into my host's backyard to find a ten-mile-long lake, sky blue and calm as glass, spread out at the foot of the hill. Nearly everyone has dogs, a horse in the backyard, and the sound of small children running around the dirt streets; and in every direction are the mountains, trees bleeding into jagged rock formations buried in white. I stand there quietly for several minutes, and for the first time in months, start the day with something other than coffee.

The coffeehouse is in an old wooden box of a hall, with no running water and great acoustics. The day has inspired my first new song in two months,

I'm gonna find me a blue-eyed gal  
Someone to love me so well  
I'm never gonna say goodbye,

and blue-eyed, three-year-old Sacha

draws a picture of me with one huge eye and one small one. Even signs it.

The next day we drive to Fernie, a mining town to the south. It was founded by some guy named Fernie, who got the Indian chief to tell him where the copper came from by promising to marry the chief's daughter. Once he found the copper he welched, and the chief's curse on the town has since been blamed for two major fires and a series of storms that have destroyed it every few years. The current local chief lifted the curse in 1964, but even so, the mine has closed and unemployment is high.

The coffeehouse is in a curling club complete with a wall of trophies and shag carpeting in the lounge. Curling is to Canada what bowling is in the States: one slides a 40-pound block of granite across 100 feet of ice toward a bulls-eye while his partner runs in front of it with a broom, sweeping away (to speed the throw) or throwing snow in front (to slow it down). Needless to say, it helps to drink a lot of beer with this one.

The next day we drive twelve miles up a dirt logging road to a hot springs, one of the many places in B.C. where the springs emerge from the ground at 150 degrees. There is a little shack and then a rock pool, from which the water, now a luxurious 110 or so, runs into the river. We spend three hours soaking up the warmth while it alternately sleet and shines on our faces. Back at the house where I'm staying, I think of my friends in New York who say, "How can you stand having to go out into the hallway to use the bathroom?" as I take a flashlight and weave through 100 yards of pine trees to the outhouse. It's quite pretty, with pictures on the wall, a styrofoam seat (best in all temperatures), windows, and a handmade macrame toilet paper holder. It does not have a half-moon on the door; in fact, it has no door at all: one side is completely open.

"Doesn't it get a little cold in January?" I ask politely.

"Oh, well, the wind never blows in that direction anyway," says my host.

May 10

The bus from Banff to Jasper, 180 miles, takes eight hours, while

stopping at every tourist site ("here's the beautiful Lake Louise coffee shop") and elk, sheep, or goat on the road so the Japanese tourists can pile out and take each other's picture ("here I am with an elk"). It takes three days to reach my next concert, in Ft. St. James, a frontier town at the northern end of the road.

"You have to create your own trip up here," says Bob, who trains dogs to hunt pheasants. Since he also raises pheasants, he has a great thing going if you like hunting: you buy ten birds, he releases them in a field, and you and your dog go a-hunting.

Bob and Monica are from Colorado (it got too crowded there); like many of the younger folks up here, they are from somewhere else. In fact, British Columbia seems to be Canada's answer to Colorado, a place where a young couple can move for a cleaner, saner life. (The cowboys, on the other hand, move to Alberta.) Perhaps for that reason the people I meet and sing for are very cosmopolitan for their rural lifestyles, and especially like the songs about "nuclear power, ecology, or spiritual growth." Everywhere there are health foods, meditation groups, and people studying dreams or Indian philosophy or Buddhism; the newer generations of North Americans are still on the road in a way, searching restlessly through new spheres of thinking for a means of surviving this

age of relentless materialism and self-destructive use of the landscape. Even the folks in Endako, laid off when the pulp mill was closed, don't seem to mind, having learned to hate the smell of the mill.

After each concert the local pickers take me out for beers and more music; each coffeehouse seems like a local cooperative effort, a small-town SpeakEasy. Sometimes I play tourist for them.

"How do you spell this 'A', as in 'good beer, A'?"

"No, it's E-H, as in 'all the way from New York, eh?'"

There were 150 people in Endako when the mill closed; now it's hard to tell. There are nine of us in the bar at closing time, and six are playing guitars, mandolins, harmonicas, and spoons, whittling away on old polkas and dance tunes from the forties. Neal works six weeks at a time as a logger, then builds his lakeside home for three weeks. At closing time he buys twelve packs of beer and says, "You come by anytime, eh? Just drive that dirt road over there sixteen miles till you find me." Murray works as millwright in a sawmill thirty miles away, but "Murray's different, he writes them songs," say the locals. Eight people show up for the coffee-

house, though one woman brings her two small children.

The road west--in fact, the only road in the region--winds along the Skeena River, swollen with spring (though the mountain snows have not all melted), through canyons and mountain passes full of firs and white birches, past fields full of dandelions shining yellow in the afternoon sun. Small villages pop up in the mountain crevasses, but mostly the road is empty of traffic until we reach the city of Terrace. Here it is truly spring, gloriously sunny and warm, as I sit on my host's back porch beside the river, surrounded by red, yellow, and purple flowers, watching the occasional cloud drift slowly past the snow-peaked mountains. Tonight I will reach the Pacific, the other ocean that surrounds this great continent, and stand on another shore; but already I can see why everyone I have mentioned British Columbia to has answered, "B.C.? Oh, you'll love it, it's very beautiful there. In fact, you'll be a different person by the end of this month, eh?"

## - Busking in Paris

by Grant Orenstein

Paris is a beautiful city: architecture, museums, trees, art, but very little folk music. As for American music clubs--Paris loves jazz, urban blues and musicals. There is one country music bar, which is the closest to a folk club I could find.

However, Paris seems to be the busking (street singing) capital of the world. There are plenty of opportunities for singing in parks, at tourist attractions, in metro tunnels, and on the trains. Some people say you need a street-singing license, but I didn't find that to be true.

I played my banjo by the Eiffel Tower and the Champs deMar, an adjoining park. The tourist buses rolled in, the lines formed and I did pretty well. If you get too close to where they line up, or if the cops feel bad that day, you could be told to move away. But if they like your music you usually can stay. At Sacré Coeur, another place

tourists frequent, there are lots of steps up to the church with terraces

and great views of Paris. As people leave the church they sit on the steps to rest and look out at the city. They make a nice audience.

In the Metro people walk by so fast that most experienced Buskers have a helper to ask for money. On the trains the helpers go around collecting while the buskers play. Although the tunnels echo nicely, I felt confined playing in the Metro. I also felt that playing on the train was a bit of an imposition.

If you want to sing on the streets of Paris, the place to find out more is a cafe called "Mazet." I don't know the name of the street, but it's one block from the Odeon Metro stop. It's where the buskers hang out and find out what's going on. Some people sit at their tables singing and playing guitars. I found it a friendly place where you can get in on the action. So, if in Paris, give it a whirl.



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WHO SHOULD KNOW

We say farewell, you board the train  
I glimpse your face, as true as flame  
The girl I knew, our youngest years  
I look to see reflections there  
By this song I pledge to thee  
Who should know better than me

The rains will pass, evoke your voice  
And I walk alone by my own choice  
This esplanade where lovers walk  
To taste new wine and truly talk  
By this song I pledge to thee  
Who should know better than me

And if your arms where I did lie  
Should hold again, should find new eyes  
In them reveal the worth of you  
Sweet levity, the core of you  
By this song I pledge to thee  
Who should know better than me

And when we pass in autumn streets  
The densest sky, the swiftest streams  
I find repose within your gaze  
Delight with you, yes, in old love play  
By this song I pledge to thee  
Who should know better than me

The wind begins, and this song is done  
And lovers dream in sweet restraint  
But I find repose within your gaze  
Delight with you, yes, in love play  
No sweeter joy, I think it's true  
Who should know better than you  
Who should know better than you

©1979 by Geoff Bartley

DUBLIN FAREWELL

i carried your memory on a chain around my neck  
as i walked the streets of dublin all alone  
and everywhere the people asked what was it that you fled  
what was it brought you here so far from home  
but all i could tell myself was little bits of lies  
and try to build myself into a man  
there's nothing like love to cut you down to size  
and show what you can do and what you can't

i met a girl with green eyes who teased me for a while  
and showed me just how desperate i am  
but when all i see is blue skies for so many miles  
how can one cloud cause so much rain  
but i'm clutching to a memory that has no right to live  
that has no right to call itself by name  
wanting to share my dreams with nothing left to give  
but love knows no alibis or shame

with my hands in my pockets and my collar inside out  
i walked through county kerry in the rain  
watching the fishing boats fight an angry sea  
a tiny dot of strength in so much pain  
there is a phantom lighthouse draws the sailors to their deaths  
whatever life gives it also takes  
but still they find a need to sail the sea they're just fools like me  
i guess we never learn from our mistakes

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DOWNTOWN TONIGHT

Dodging the blues  
But the blues were gainin' fast  
Riding the news  
Knowing news just doesn't last  
Heaven comes seven  
With the rollin' of the bones  
The winner never feels like going home

It's thick at the bottom  
Thin at the top  
Like a Bible shakin'  
With a cork that wouldn't pop  
Pretending and descending  
To the land of woe  
Life's not what you think, it's what you know

So take it downtown tonight  
And when nobody's lookin'  
You can slip it out of sight  
Since you're devil bound  
It's hell downtown tonight

It's beard, bone and gristle  
The rest is mostly mule  
He's running from the whistles  
He's running as a rule  
Pretending and descending  
To the land of woe  
When you give your hand to fate, she don't let go

So take it downtown tonight  
And when nobody's lookin'  
You can slip it out of sight  
Since you're devil bound  
It's hell downtown tonight

Dodging the blues  
But the blues were gainin' fast  
Riding the news  
Knowing news just doesn't last  
Pretending and descending  
To the land of woe  
Life's not what you think, it's what you know  
And when you give your hand to fate, she don't let go

©1983 by John Gorka

SOME JOURNEY

If I had met you on some journey  
where would we be now  
if we had met on some eastbound train  
through some black sleeping town

would you have worn your silken robes  
all made of royal blue?  
would I have dressed in smoke and fire  
for you to look through . . .

ah. . .

If we had met in some darkened room  
where people do not stay  
but shadows touch and pass right through  
and never see the day

would you have taken me upstairs  
and turned the lamplight low?  
would I have shown my secret self  
and disappeared like the snow

ah . . .

LYRICS  
side 1

Oh I could have played your little girl  
or I could have played your wife  
I could have played your mistress  
running danger down through your life

I could have played your lady fair  
all dressed in lace like the foam from the sea  
I could have been your woman of the road  
as long as you did not come back home to me

ah . . .

But as it is, we live in the city  
and everything stays in place  
instead we meet on the open sidewalk  
and it's well I know your face

we talk and talk, we tell the truth  
there are no shadows here  
and when I look into your eyes  
I wonder what might have been here

cause if I had met you on some journey  
where would we be now?

© 1981 by Suzanne Vega

BABY ARE YOU LOOKIN' MY WAY

Argentina wants the Falklands  
And the British want it too  
Right now all I want to think about  
Is being with you  
They're fighting in Lebanon  
The marines are in it too  
My best girlfriend loves Ireland  
What are we going to do

And there's trouble most every day  
Baby are you lookin'  
Are you lookin' my way

The angels wept  
As the beggar cried alone  
And when he'd drawn his last breath  
The angels carried him home  
Sister Berry  
She sings out on the streets  
Mickey Mouse ears, a lot of tears  
She knows who she's going to meet

And there's trouble most every day  
Baby are you lookin'  
Are you lookin' my way

There stands T-Streets on the corner  
Selling his chippy pies  
He hasn't hit the big time yet  
But he's gonna give everybody a big surprise  
And that pretty girl behind the counter  
She smiles so sweet to me  
I'd like to take her out sometime  
But she's only fifteen

And there's trouble most every day  
Baby are you lookin'  
Are you lookin' my way

There she sits like a queen upon her throne  
Smiling so casually  
She enjoys being on her own  
And if I could ever reach her  
You know I'd surely say  
Baby are you lookin'  
Are you lookin' my way

Baby are you lookin'  
Are you lookin' my way

© 1983 by John Trent

LAUGHING/SCARED

Mystery is in the air.  
Rituals protect our prayers.  
If ghosts exist,  
I wonder where:  
So I leave the stairway lit--  
Turn around when breezes hit  
I'm just looking for what might not be there.  
I'm just looking for what might not be there.

Windows rattle and rhyme.  
Sleeping I can't tell time.  
I taste a tear,  
Break my mask and face the mirror--  
I dream water I dream wind  
I dream women into hymns  
When I wake to find a lover she's not there.  
When I wake to find a lover she's not there.

Chorus:

So why am I laughing-scared?  
Afraid to touch the Earth  
Afraid it might be there.  
With no way to find out now--  
Who's got the last laugh anyhow  
So look who's laughing scared.

A woman brushes her hair.  
The sun on her bed warms no one there.  
If love exists,  
She couldn't care:  
Still her lovers all confess--  
They undress as if possessed.  
In her head a clock is ticking off affairs.  
In her head a clock is ticking off affairs.

Chorus

I move while mystics stand.  
As our age expands.  
Sun 'lights the moon.  
My fingers scratch for room--  
Old people say again  
What older people told to them.  
As dust sugars the dead, those legends stand.  
As dust sugars the dead, those legends stand.

Chorus

© 1983 by Richard Meyer

# LYRICISM

## side 2

### CELIBACY

(Intro)

Everybody's always singing love songs, turtle-dove songs,  
moon-up-above songs  
Everyone's exclaiming or proclaiming or declaiming  
on the subject of maintaining a romance  
But have they really entertained  
an impulse to remain restrained  
When all the world is falling in a trance?

(Part I)

1. Celibacy, there's something to be said for celibacy  
It's nothing to be dreaded  
Try it and see  
That you're fun to be alone with  
(It's not a myth!)

2. Celibacy, its joys are quite unparallelibacy  
Though when its passion seems unquellibacy  
It's a helluva situation!

Bridge:

But what a vacation from your pair bond, or your paramour,  
or your serial monogamy  
Or your wild oats, or your wedded bliss  
Or your unchecked promiscuity

3. Celibacy, no nights in seedy old motelibacy  
There'll be no messy infidelibacy, or jealibacy  
Or tearful farewellibacy  
Try celibacy today!

(Part II)

4. In a nutshellibacy  
Although it shouldn't be compellibacy  
A certain kind of personnelibacy  
Thrives on celibacy  
It's true, so don't feel blue (or weird!)

5. Take it from me, I once thought love was immortelibacy  
But now I know that was a fallibacy  
Only celibacy endures  
Of this I'm sure

Bridge:

So if your co-unit is tired of doin' it  
Or she's grossed out by your fantasies  
Or she wants to, but not with you  
Or maybe one of you has got a disease

6. It's just as wellibacy  
The future's always unforesellibacy  
So make the present really swellibacy  
Get mellow-bacy  
Celebrate, don't delay!  
Try celibacy  
You might as wellibacy  
Try celibacy today!  
(You can always change your mind tomorrow!)

© 1983 by Marcie Boyd

### SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK

Walk along the block  
Stop and have a talk or a beer  
What do you have in mind  
Looking wasted all the time  
Washed in tears

I'll tell you what you already know  
But there really wasn't much of a show  
On the sidewalks of New York  
But for a bit of old now and again  
With a lot of loose worries to send on their way

And coming down the line  
There's a dear old friend of mine  
On his ear  
Up against the Post he said  
The one he loved the most up and gone

That emotional machine was breaking all her dreams  
On the sidewalks of New York  
But for a bit of old now and again  
With a lot of loose worries to send on their way

Looking back on harder times  
When the dollars turned to dimes  
What is fear  
With money in the jar  
I wonder where you are far from here

I've been looking from left to right  
On the buses late at night on the sidewalks of  
New York

For a bit of old now and again  
With a lot of loose worries to send on their way

© 1983 by Dave Bolger

### ANNA MARIA

Anna Maria, with eyes that are warm and steel-blue.  
Walkin' toward Sloane Square, on her way from La Cage Aux Folles Deux.  
London is hung with a mist, which she wears like a veil.  
Anna Maria, it's magic the streetlamps reveal.

It's autumn in Sydney and summer is coming to Rome.  
One is your homeland, the other one more like your home.  
The Kings Road is quiet, except for your breath in my ear.  
Anna Maria, it's so good just having you near.

Anna Maria, the Mediterranean winds  
Have captured my heart as your kisses have captured my skin.  
Italy calls with a voice that's as clear as a bell.  
Anna Maria, my love is as deep as a well.

Anna Maria, with hair that's as fine as the sand.  
Tilt your head sideways and let the grains run through my hands.  
The Thames is as still as a child who's lost in a dream.  
Anna Maria, we'll let the dawn pass by unseen.

© 1983 by Richard Chanel, Wingèd Lion

APRIL FOOL'S LANDSCAPE

Three men drift passing in a lifeboat  
Three men drift passing in a fog  
Three men are searching for a savior  
On a river that's wide and long

There's people still dwelling on the mountain  
There's people still dwelling on the past  
There's people expecting something to come down  
And the first are following the last

The prophet is standing on the corner  
His pockets are empty yet full  
The tide of the crowd rushes by him  
And he feels its mighty pull

An old man lies dying in a desert  
An old man lies dying alone  
An old man is tempted by a devil  
Who appears in a guise unknown

The children are playing in the garden  
They're playing grow up to be  
The children believe that real life happens later  
But it goes on constantly

And Socrates sat week days by the roadside  
And thought about all that he saw pass  
And he knew too much to throw a stone  
And he drank from the poisoned glass

Some men are orbiting the planet  
Some men have walked upon the moon  
But no man is certain of the future  
Will the end be long coming or soon

And Johnny plants apples by the roadside  
And Albert builds castles in the sky  
And my son John has only one sock on  
And only he knows the reason why

The writer is scribbling in a corner  
The song is life itself  
Love is a paranoid schizophrenic  
While logic lies a vestige on the shelf

© 1982 by Judith E. Ficksman

WILL YE NO COME BACK

(Chorus from the Scottish Jacobite  
ballad, "Bonnie Charlie")

As he packed his things to go  
She stood beside the open door  
Said, love, I'll miss you; that you know  
Knew that she could not do more  
As he opened the narrow gate  
Toward dreams too large, left still too long  
That he might think of her someday  
She sang to him an old song

Chorus:

Will ye no come back again  
Will ye no come back again  
Better loved ye can'na' be  
Will ye no come back to me

THE APPLE OF MY EYE

Once when I was all alone on a mountain by the sea  
I eyed a one eyed cyclops looking straight at me  
Her head was green and hairy, she had a dozen toes  
And her one eye looked as scary as the warts upon  
her nose

Oh, I must have looked forlorn when I saw she had  
three arms

I feared that I was gone, I knew she meant me harm  
I tried to run away from her, but I was losing ground  
She was coming faster and faster at me, screaming a  
horrible sound

Chorus:

A SHIGGIE BA GE BA BA BE BE BA A SHE BA BE BA BE BA  
BAY  
A SHIGGIE BA NAY BA GA NAY BA BE DE DE BA BA BE BA  
BE BA BE BA BAY

It was hopeless if I ran, we were standing head to  
head

Then she grabbed me in her hand and turned to me  
and said

"I wish you wouldn't run so fast, I think you're  
kind of cute"

"Not only that," she whispered low, "I think that I  
love you"

"You are the apple of my eye," she said, and then  
she gave me a wink

"Sweet as a cherry pie," she said, though maybe she  
just blinked

Then she kissed me on the face and I know that I  
turned red

But you know what they say, hey, "Better red than  
dead"

Chorus

Well it happened oh, so fast, it sounded oh, so weird  
And though her mouth had a funny taste, well, it was  
nothing as I feared

You know I always did like blue eyed girls — she's  
the perfect one for me

I married her and you know she even likes poetry  
And I see now what I feared was what I did not know  
And I guess you can love someone with warts upon  
their nose

'Cause I live up on the mountain now, bordered by  
the sea

With a half a dozen cyclops kids, who almost look  
like me

Chorus

©1975 by Barry Louis Polisar

But some leave to find their dreams to be  
Further away the more they roam  
Through friendless towns; cross storm-tossed seas  
Hard his times and e'er alone

Endless days and cold, cold nights  
Down countless roads, in restless sleep  
Her song would come so pure and light  
A quilt of down, him warm to keep

Now when longer grow the nights  
Chill the autumn winds do blow  
He'll watch the geese in quiet flight  
Who o'er the brown-gold meadows go  
While round the crackling hearth they be  
He'll think how cold and hard it was then  
And oh, how well this one here loved me  
He'll say, love, then sing me your song again

©1983 by Scott Alarik

# How Folk Music Saved My Life

by Alan Beck

It was over a late dinner and coffee with Bill Neely, Marcy Boyd, and Paul Kaplan that I first told this unusual tale that Paul suggested I should write as an article for The Coop.

It all started back in 1965 when I was roaming, haunting, and playing all the coffeehouses along MacDougal, Bleecker, and Third Street in the Village, when the letter came. Personal greetings from President L.B.J., inviting me to participate and lend my body to grand and glorious service of the U.S. Army. Another young folksinger plucked from the scene. This was at the time when the Vietnam War escalation was in high gear, and they were grabbing anyone who could walk, crawl, or slide. I technically failed my abduction, I mean my induction physical in Philadelphia, but they took me anyway. Gee, thanks.

Off I was shipped to Fort Jackson, then to Fort Gordon in Georgia for basic training. During preliminary interviews they asked what I could do and what my training and talents were. I told them I was a singer, a musician, had art school training, and did some photography work. They said, "Fine, we'll send you to signal school." Signal school? How did they ever arrive at that? In basic training they sort of lock you up at nights in the barracks while they teach you how to march and kill folks during the day. So in the evenings you got no beer, no candy bars, no P.X., and no T.V. This routine usually lasts about 4 to 5 weeks, much to the delight of the "gung-ho" drill sergeants and officers of the company. However, my first week there I saw a notice that the brigade had a small combo and needed volunteers. So I volunteered and became part of the little band. This got me out of the barracks every night to rehearse and play N.C.O. clubs and officers' clubs. So I was able to get beer, candy bars, and other necessities and smuggle them back to my captive bunk mates.

Near the end of my basic training I guess the Army, realizing my art and music background, told me I wasn't going to signal school. They said I was going to Texas to become a medic. A medic? But a week before I was to leave they changed their mind again and told me I was going to stay at Fort Gordon as permanent personnel.

One of the jobs available was a chaplain's assistant. So again I volunteered, and got the job. Not too bad a job either. I had my own jeep, my own office, and an extra day off during the week because I worked on Sunday for an hour and a half. Now getting back to how folk music saved my life, Fort Gordon was outside of Augusta, Georgia. I started doing some gigs there and got scheduled to do a concert at the Bell auditorium in town on Easter Sunday in 1966. Things were going O.K. for me and I was just putting in my time and counting the days till I got out. At least I wasn't one of those thousands of faces I saw passing through on their way to Nam.

Then it happened. On April 8th, Good Friday before my concert, I was informed I was going to Viet Nam. I believe someone else was hung up and nailed this day a long time ago. Easter Sunday came, and I gave my performance. A farewell performance? Then on Monday morning, I got word that I was being sent to Atlanta to join a soldiers' show. RESURRECTION! What happened was that General Louis W. Truman, Commander of the Third U.S. Army at Fort MacPherson in Atlanta, was in Augusta that weekend for the Masters Tournament. Now the general saw an article about me and my concert in the Augusta newspaper, and decided he wanted me for his little traveling soldiers' show. So off I went to Atlanta. When I got there I told the director of the show, who was a civilian, that I had orders to go to Vietnam. "Not any more," he told me. Talk about dying and coming back alive. The general was proud of his show and let the director have a free hand to do anything he wanted. Our director did not want any of his performers to look military, so we had a special directive to let our hair grow out to normal length. I was issued Levi's and sweat shirts for rehearsals, and never had to wear a uniform. We traveled around in an air-conditioned "Trailways" type bus complete with card table and john. This is the Army? We had a 6-piece band, 4-man tech crew, a 19 member cast including 5 WACs. We carried 2 full sets of stage scenery, full stage lighting, and complete sound system. We traveled all over the southeast playing Army, Navy, and Air Force bases. We did show tunes, pop tunes, and yes, even folk music. We also had a smaller show unit that consis-



ted of 8 of us that did mostly folk music, and played the smaller installations and V.A. hospitals. Our smaller unit had quite a bit of talent. One of our banjo players, Dave Osborn, took a week off and went to participate in the National Banjo Picking Contest, and came in third behind Earl Scruggs and Eric Weisberg.

Inasmuch as I was "discovered" by the general, I performed before him and his wife many times in officers' clubs and other functions. Every time I performed before the general, I had to sing his wife's favorite song, which was the Kingston Trio tune, "Scotch and Soda." So I'd like to publicly thank Dave Guard for writing that song and helping me to save my ass. That song kept the general's wife happy, and that kept the general happy, who kept me happy.

Throughout the remaining months of my military gig, I performed before as many as 13 generals at one time, to hundreds of recruits who needed just a few hours of diversion to get their minds off the hell they were going through. I didn't consider what I did was really contributing to the war effort. I never got to Vietnam, but I saw the fresh results of it in the many hospitals I played in. I saw a lot of broken guys who were glad to hear a song, shake a hand, or just talk to someone as we strolled through the beds that overflowed the base hospitals we attended.

As I was discharged from the Army in July 1967, I was awarded an Army Commendation Medal. I guess the song "Scotch and Soda" contributed to that as well. Thanks again Dave. ■



# Update on 1983 Folk Festivals

by Nancy Talanian

The June '83 issue of *The Coop* contains brief descriptions of the activities planned for several North American folk festivals to be held this spring and summer. Names of some performers that were unavailable at press time for the June issue are listed below.

**THE WINNIPEG FOLK FESTIVAL**, Winnipeg, Manitoba, July 7-10.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the festival, which was attended by 40,000 people last year. It will be held at Birds Hill Provincial Park, 19 miles northeast of Winnipeg on Highway 59, and will feature 13 concert acts each night from 7 p.m. to midnight; workshops on 10 stages, which change hourly, from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; dance program; kids village; and crafts area. The festival's over 120 acts will include Eric Bogle and John Monro, Tony Bird, Bryan Bowers, Jethro Burns, Vassar Clements, Doug Dillard Band, The Dillards, Steve Goodman, The Dave Grisman Quartet, John Hartford, Queen Ida, Leo Kottke, Tom Paxton, The Red Clay Ramblers, Don MacLean, Son Seals, Corky Seigel, Taj Mahal, Koko Taylor, Dave Van Ronk, The Roches, Loudon Wainwright, and Robin and Linda Williams.

Accommodations include campsites located  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from the festival site, and hotels and motels in Winnipeg. There will be an International Food Village on the site (no alcohol is permitted).

Advance tickets for the entire festival are \$35 (Canadian dollars); purchased at the gate, they are \$38. Tickets for evening concerts only are \$5 for Thursday, July 7; \$13 for Friday, July 8; and \$15 each evening for Saturday and Sunday, July 9 and 10.

For Tickets and further information, contact:

Winnipeg Folk Festival  
8-222 Osborne Street South  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 1Z3  
Canada  
(204) 453-2985

**VANCOUVER FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL**, Vancouver, B.C., July 15-17.

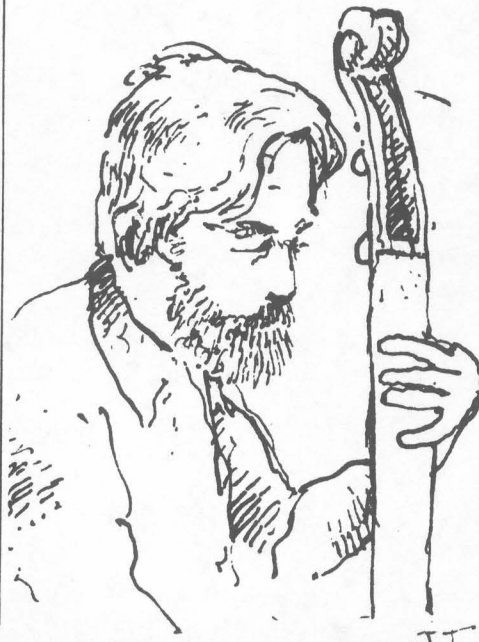
This festival, in its sixth year, attracted 21,000 people last year. The festival will be held at Jericho Beach Park, Vancouver. Activities will include three evening concerts and workshops on five stages. Perform-

ers will include Frankie and Doug Quimby, Sweet Honey in the Rock, The Golden Eagles, Sparky Rucker, Memphis Slim, Nancy White, Connie Kaldor, Heather Bishop, Jane Sapp, Terry Garthwaite, Jim Payne, Kelly Russell, Rufus Guinchard, Len Snow, Anita Best, Geoff Panting, Blowzabella, Richard Thompson, Dave Swarbrick, Simon Nicol, John Renbourn, Leon Rosselson, Frankie Armstrong, Roy Bailey, Alex Epler Group, Zenska Pesna, Vasili Gaitanos, Riders in the Sky, Skyline, Charged Particles, Magpie, Orrin Star and Gary Mehalick, Mel Brown, J. P. Nystroms, Eritage, Messi Martin and Los Camaroes, Jean Ritchie, Rosalie Sorrels, Bim, Bryan Bowers, Dave Essig, and Eric Bogle and John Munro.

Accommodations include a nearby hostel. There will be 16 food concessions, with the emphasis on international cuisine. Weekend tickets covering all concerts and workshops are \$35 until June 18; \$40 June 19 through July 14; \$50 at the gate. Separate tickets for concerts will be \$15 for Friday, July 15; \$22 for Saturday and Sunday, July 16 and 17.

For advance tickets and further information, contact:

Vancouver Folk Music Festival Society  
3271 Main Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V5V 3M6  
Canada  
(604) 879-2931



**SUMMERFOLK**, Owen Sound, Ontario, August 12-14.

This festival has been in operation for eight years, and was attended by 6,000 people last year. This year's activities at Owen Sound's Kelso Beach will include evening concerts each night of the festival (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), and continuous workshops Saturday and Sunday. Some of the performers who will be present this year are David Amram, Brahan Seer, Mike Cross, Eclectricity, Shirley Eikhard, Kate and Anna McGarrigle, Maria McLaughlin, J.P. Nystroms, Odetta, Mose Scarlett, Gamble Rogers, Utah Phillips, Grupo Aymara, and Alain Lamontagne.

For accommodations, there is "Rock-springs" camp, which takes reservations, and several motels and hotels. There will be food concessions on the festival site.

Summerfolk expects a sellout this year, so advance tickets are advised. Advance tickets for the whole weekend are \$24; at the gate they will be \$30. Single day tickets are \$15.

For reservations and information, contact:

Shirley Price  
Georgian Bay Folk Society  
P.O. Box 521  
Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5R1  
Canada  
(519) 371-2995

**PHILADELPHIA FOLK FESTIVAL**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 26-28.

This year, performers will include Tom Paxton, John Hartford, Robin and Linda Williams, De Danann, Jonathan Edwards, Mike Cross, Mike Seeger, Michael Cooney, Queen Ida and the Bon Temps Zydeco, Bryan Bowers, The Boys of the Lough, The Son Seals Blues Band, Sally Rogers, Priscilla Herdman, Bill Staines, The Hot Mud Family, Skyline with Tony Trischka, Cranberry Lake, and Nevard and the Barrelhouse Boys.

Tickets will go on sale June 1. The full three-day program, including camping, is \$50; afternoon tickets are \$10. Purchase tickets or send for brochure from:

Philadelphia Folk Song Society  
7113 Emlen Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19119  
(215) 247-1300

# How To Succeed in the Record Business, Even Though It's Trying

by Barry Louis Polisar

"Commercial art," William Saroyan once said, "was art with a motive." That statement applies not just to the visual arts but to almost every other art form so packaged and bottled by what we in the alternative biz like to call "the industry"--an industry that does not talk about songs or records but, rather, "hits" and "product."

I began making records for children almost eight years ago. I began because consistently after performing songs I had written people would always want to know where I had learned them--indeed where they could hear them again. I decided--as a terribly naive, yet ultimately terribly sensible idea--to make a record.

I knew nothing of the recording industry, nothing about how one goes about making a record, and almost nothing about playing guitar (having just learned basic chords little more than a year earlier). I did not know much about art....but I knew what I liked. And what I did not like.

What I did not like was what, with few exceptions, was going around as "children's music": flowery sweet songs of love and trees and birds and happy smiling families. Very little about the darker side: mean teachers, nagging parents, not liking your brother. (My wife says I have two main themes in my songs: "Sibling rivalry and underwear.") Folk songs are supposed to be honest.

In the beginning, I approached a few record companies. I was told that my songs were funny, lyrical, and quite witty. But my subjects were too hot to handle. "A songwriter who JUST performs for children????? Can't package it!" One record company told me they wouldn't touch a new folk-singer with a 20-foot pole, which was topped only by a record company executive in a major company who when presented with my first record, I Eat Kids and Other Songs for Rebellious Children, named after the title song about being a vegetarian, was told they couldn't distribute it because of the sexual implications of the title. "New York!!!!" I thought.

But mostly, the comment I got was "Great stuff but we could never sell it to Middle America." Lesson Number One: Middle America loves almost anything big record company executives think would be too controversial for them.

But what to do? I pressed 1,000 record albums and when they arrived from the pressing plant, slowly began carrying them up the flight of attic stairs that led to my home. Lesson Number TWO: You do not have to live in an attic or basement to be a songwriter, but if you plan on eventually making records, count the number of stairs you must climb when picking out a home. You make a record hoping that, like Newton said, every record that goes up the stairs must also make its way back down--for a concert or to the post office. At last count 53,000 records of mine climbed the stairs. All but 2,500 of present inventory have come back down.

But How??? That first 1,000 record albums sat in the corner of my living room that first night and I just stared at it, thinking of how Thoreau was forced by his publisher to buy all 800 of his UNSOLD first book. (It later went on to be anthologized in most High School English texts.) "I have a very large library," Thoreau wrote, "though most of my books have the same title." A thousand records is a lot of records. I had a big record collection but the selection was limited.

Lesson Number THREE: Recording and making a record is the easy part. Once you get drawn into the business and learn about all the different kinds of record covers you can get (direct to board, fabricated jackets) and all the recording industry jargon (mothers, lacquers, plates, test references), you still have the problem of getting your songs off your shelf and into peoples living rooms and ultimately in their hearts.

I was lucky. When I began I was one of few who was "JUST a songwriter for children." I was easy to package. I started out doing exactly what I said I would do. I carried my records in a box and announced at the end of my shows that if anyone wanted to hear my songs again, they could talk to me afterwards. This is a tradition I still carry on, though now that I

have six different albums, I can't help feeling less and less like a sensitive singer/songwriter for children and more and more like a great-grandfather, carrying my wares on my back like a portable record store. Lesson Number FOUR: Don't give in to guilt. If your "people before profit" record company begins to make money, that's okay. Success is not selling out. Selling out is when you put profit before people. Selling out is when you decide not to record a song because it might alienate people in Middle America. I have not done that, because I saw Citizen Kane and remember when Joseph Cotten takes Orson Welles' "statement of principles" and hurls it back at him in disgust. I wrote too many words on my early liner notes. I've got to be careful.

But my goal of wanting my songs to be heard and sung was still the same. I was writing about kids' feelings, thoughts and ideas--the good, the bad and the ugly. (One of my most requested songs is called "Never Cook Your Sister in a Frying Pan." Another: "Don't Put Your Finger Up Your Nose.") Eventually, I began exploring other avenues rather than just selling records after concerts--an especially difficult thing for a children's singer since most of my concerts are in elementary schools and your average 8-year-old doesn't carry album money in his Darth Vader lunch box. I began putting my records in stores--distributing them myself till I had a proven track record. Little by little I began finding out about the network of independent distributors who take your records for a lesser price. Records that are independently and frequently artist produced and recorded. You have to keep after these folks for payment and to make sure your records are always stocked in the stores, but ultimately if you are a singer and a writer, chances are you don't want to be a distributor also--at least not forever. It's still up to you, though, to make sure people want your records. Most distributors handle so many independents, you will just be another one.

I've had it pretty good. My songs and album titles are catchy. I sell to a lot of schools and libraries--an especially ironic thing since I sing a lot about mean teachers and principals who don't want to go to school.

But the record biz is always a frustration. There is always the record store that owes you for 100 records and then goes bankrupt. Or the store that is sold to a new owner and even though you have sold 400 records in six months there, he doesn't want to carry anything by an "unknown" or an independent. You'll occasionally also get the store owner who feels your material is too controversial, despite the fact that she carries the latest AC/DC, Black Sabbath, and Kiss albums. (Am I dating myself? Are they still around?)

Remember what Ambrose Bierce said: "A man who has no enemies has no friends." I firmly believe that creating a song, a poem, or a record is a very strong political statement, if you want it to be. It doesn't have to be a political song, but the mere point of doing something yourself is part of that alternative wave that ebbs and flows around the tidal wave of commercial art. It too has a motive, but hopefully a deeper one than just selling product."

## record review

by Kirk P. Kelly

Folkways has released five new records this month with music ranging from the Tex-Mex sounds of Los Polkeros de Ben Tevera King to the unique piano styles of "Jelly-Roll" Morton.

Border Bash is a collection of Tex-Mex music by Ben Tevera King. For anyone not familiar with Tex-Mex music, this record offers a good cross-section. Included are a number of polkas, cumbias (a type of Tex-Mex rhythm which originated in Colombia), a good sampling of rancheras (a 4/4 polka with lyrics),

## New Folkways Releases

and other Tex-Mex rhythms. Accompanying King are Los Polkeros with Louis Gonzalez playing banjo-sexto, Jim Beal on bass and Alex Medina on drums and percussion.

Also among the new releases is The Red Allen Tradition, a fine selection of bluegrass recordings. Here Folkways has captured the progressive style which Red Allen first brought to the Osborne Brothers in the 1950s and later to the Kentuckians. On this album, Red Allen has gathered such top-notch musicians as Josh Graves on dobro and Vasser Clemens on fiddle. The record combines a number of bluegrass standards with some less traditional songs like Bob Dylan's "Nashville Skyline Rag," and a song popularized by the Monkees during the late 1960s, "Last Train to Clarksville."

Piano Classics, 1923-24 is Folkways' new "Jelly-Roll" Morton release. The nineteen songs on this album, all but three written by Morton, were originally released by various labels during the early twenties. On this album are ragtime and blues songs on which "Jelly-Roll" illustrates his original jazz-hall style.

Another piano selection made available this month is George Hicks, Ragtime: Tickled Pink. On this album Hicks (of Hicksville) presents a masterful rendition of traditional and contemporary ragtime pieces.

Finally, there is the southern mountain music of Dock Boggs. This release contains the twelve original recordings made by the Brunswick and Lonesome Ace record companies during the 1920s, before the depression of the '30s forced Boggs to sell his banjo and return to the Virginia coal mines. Folkways has reproduced the recordings made at the height of Dock Boggs' folk music career. He is accompanied by Hub Maheffy and Emry Arthur on guitar.

These records and a catalogue of all Folkways records are available from Folkways Records, 43 West 61st Street, New York, New York 10023.

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# The Music Glut

by Bill Neely

I called my broker the other day to talk about my portfolio. Granted, struggling musicians aren't supposed to have brokers, but I figure that my money ought to be out there working for me instead of vice versa. With an annual income well into four figures, you can understand why I don't want all that idle cash just laying around--and my guy Selloff at Budget Brokerage is a genius when it comes to small investments.

"Selloff," says I, "I see where record sales are up for the first time in five years, and I wonder if now isn't the time to put some money into music futures."

Selloff groaned that groan that brokers reserve for laymen who have reached the Point of Low Return. "Wrong move, Willy. That uptick in sales you've been reading about is a passing thing--a mirage. Long-term investor confidence in the music business just isn't there."

"But CBS and RCA and Warner Bros. and MCA are all painting a rosy picture. Shouldn't we jump on it?"

"Don't believe everything you read in an annual report. Big Music is in trouble for the same reason as Big Oil: over-production in a time of weakening demand. There's an enormous Music Glut that's not going to go away. They're going to have trouble giving the stuff away."

"But there's always a shortage of good music," I protested. "If sales are up that means there'll be more money to spend on exploration--looking for the Next Big Thing."

"Wrong again--nobody spends money on exploration in a soft market like this one. They'll stick with what they have, simply because they can't afford the risk. And as for the quality of the product, that just doesn't enter into it. A hit song is one that sells a lot of units--that's a function of quantity. Hit songs are good songs to these people: not the other way around. And what demand there is seems to be for bad music. Pardon me if I sound like a hard-hearted philistine, but we're talking business here, not aesthetics."

He had a point there. Selloff is fairly perceptive for a craven, greedy capitalist. After all, he's my craven, greedy capitalist. But I wasn't ready to give up.

"But Selloff, what about all the optimism about new technology? Digital mastering, lasers, video-discs, compact discs--we don't want to miss the boat."

"In my humble opinion, technology is what got the music business into this mess. Home-taping is the most obvious example--made possible by the availability of moderately priced, hi-fidelity cassette decks. It's a big problem. Technology is behind the incredible proliferation of music--music in the home, in the car, in the supermarket, in the bank even. Is nothing sacred? The value of anything is lowered when there's so much of it around. Why should people pay good money for something they can't get away from? And why should people invest big money in expensive new hardware systems when they're not particularly interested in the programming that's available? It's a typical American approach--technology will save the day. But it ain't gonna happen."

I was beginning to catch his drift. "So what incentive is there to produce more music? Or any music at all, for that matter?"

"None whatsoever, from an investor's point of view. Inventory liquidation is the only sensible approach--increasing production could be considered downright irresponsible. Wall Street won't stand for it."

"You mean there could come a time when the only people making music will be doing it purely for musical reasons?"

"That's right, kid. Low-overhead, low-tech and low-risk; and it probably won't be a bad thing. You can take more chances when your production budget is not the size of Brazil's National Debt."

"Sounds attractive to a small investor like me."

Selloff lost all patience. "You haven't been listening to me. Now

just forget all about CBS, RCA and MCA and think MTA. Let's take your liquid assets--about \$6.00, right?--and put that money into eight NYC Subway Tokens. Within a year fares will be raised--you'll be looking at a yield of at least 33 1/3%, and that ain't chopped liver. Forget all about music futures: there ain't no such thing."



Well, I had to leave it there. It's useless to argue with your broker when he gets surly. After all, that's what brokers are for: to tell you what to do with your money. Now if I could just find somebody to tell me what to do with all this music I have lying around the house.

## Joe Heukerott at the "Good"

by Benjamin Seibert

The Good Coffeehouse, commonly referred to as the 'Good,' is one of a few rooms in New York City with good acoustics. Located in the Ethical Culture building at Prospect Park West and 1st Street in Brooklyn, it seats fifty to sixty people comfortably, and the coffee is indeed good though there's usually not enough for a large crowd through an entire evening. Donuts and cookies are the traditional fare at a quarter a shot, to be paid on the honor system. At three dollars a head, admission is low for the calibre of performances usually offered there. One high-quality performance was given there on April 1st of this year in the person of Joe Heukerott. Overall it was an exciting evening of great songs performed with a rare spark of life. However, due to four guest sets it was a long evening, especially the first set, which was almost ninety minutes long. Folks were squirming by the time intermission came, but only because it had been a long time sitting, not because of any stale performing.

Many of the audience were members of the Hudson River Sloop Singers, of which Joe is also a member. The evening opened with two Sloop Singers, Ruth Rosen and Ilene Friedman, doing a song from Australia about the plight of a retired rail worker who loses his integrity; they were followed by Sloop Singers Jon Stein and Janie Spencer performing two original love songs (lest this become a full-fledged Sloop Singer review, no critique shall be given of these guest sets). Joe's opening number is composed specifically for this type of gig; it is a disarming greeting, funny, and states clearly that he's glad to see his audience, remembers seeing them before, and expects to see them again. This song set the stage for the rest of the night, which was a constant interplay, give and take, between Joe and the audience. He immediately went into "Will You Go, Lassie, Go" a capella, and there was suddenly lush four part harmony resounding about the room. Having wasted not a second between these two songs, Joe had drawn in the audience with his charm and wit and fully hooked them with the realization that they must be an integral part of the music. He was in full control.

Now that he had a firm grasp on us body and soul, he laid back a bit and did a couple of hobo songs, one by Don McLean (which I had never heard and don't remember the name of now), the other Goebel Reeve's "Hobo's Lullabye." "The Dutchman" was the best this writer has ever heard aside from Mike Smith; there have been many fine technical interpretations with no soul, a few well intended but lousy versions by kids on the streets, and one or two that were just despicable. This alone endears me to Joe for life!

Three Sloopies were brought up for Shel Silverstein's "Sing for the Song," another wonderful rendition of an often abused song. Ned Treanor, Bobbie Wayne and Dan Mozell were solid in filling out the harmonies. In Joe's "Half of the Time You Rob Me Blind" there is a verse with an allusion to Shel's song:

I remember when I learned my trade,  
On Bleecker Street where no one paid,  
We'd often wait all night long  
to sing for free.

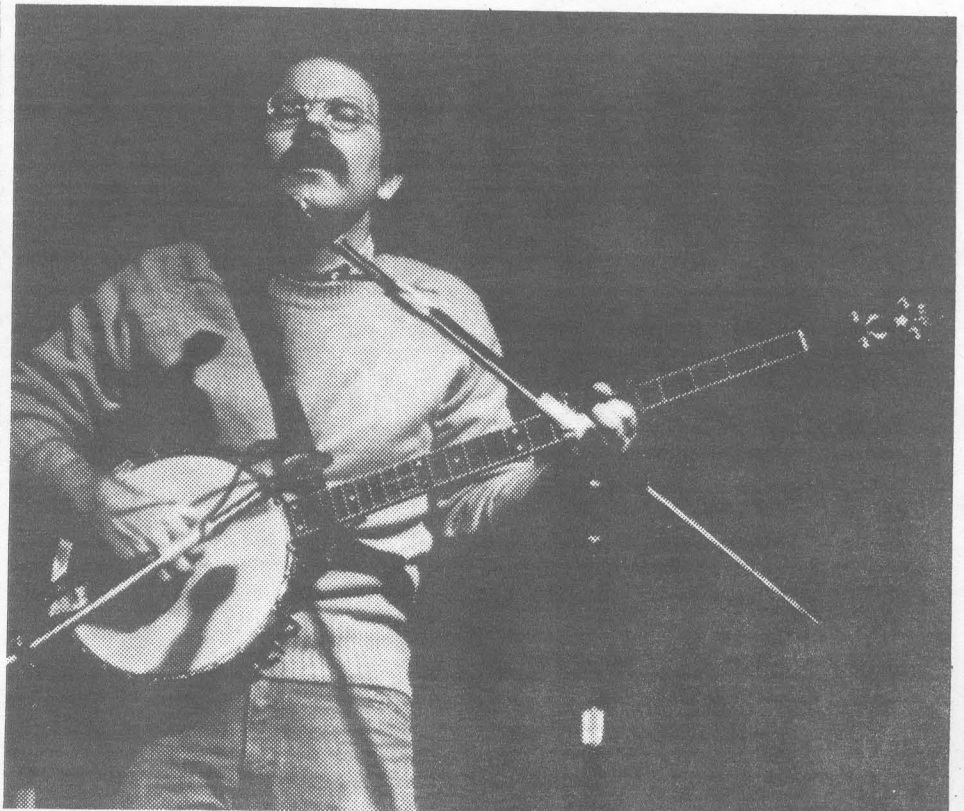
With all the people long since gone,  
We'd sing for nothing but the song,  
I'd sing for them and they would sing for me.

"Peddler's Lament" is a bittersweet tale of a traveling salesman whose job has become an anachronism with the end of the post-WWII baby boom:

It just ain't gonna work, Molly,  
We go from door to door.  
Electrolux was bad enough,  
But no one wants to buy encyclopedias no more  
'Pedias no more.

"Different Tune" is bleak and haunting, an account of someone whose life has grown cold and desolate although they have acquired great wealth. The chorus offers hope for the future by remembering love and warmth in the past:

And I think of an evening in June,  
When the moon was a yellow balloon,  
And we whistled a different

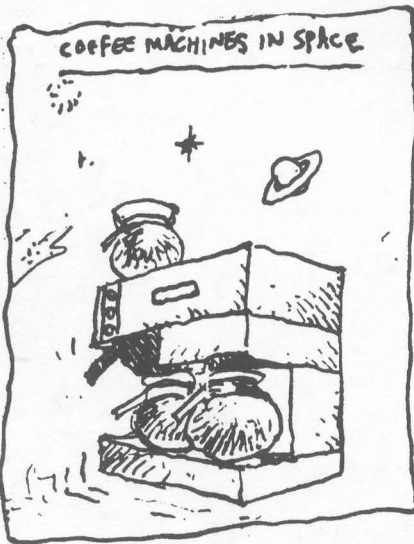


tune,  
From the tune we are  
whistling now.

With the rapier wit and charm of the best Tom Paxton parodies, "Looking Out" is a brilliant spoof of how-to and self-improvement books. After bowling over the audience and apparently ending the song, another verse is added as the applause subsides:

Would you like to learn to play  
a fine guitar  
Write some songs and maybe be a  
star?  
Well there's this little book I  
wrote,  
And I will grab you by the  
throat,  
As I sell it to you later from  
my car.

Another humorous song is "The Incredible Shrinking Man," relating of course to the movie, in this instance referring to the benefits of being tiny in the midst of the stagnant economy ("Livin' in a modified mailbox, ridin' on a motorized skate"). But Joe uses his humor not just for parody and hilarity. In much the same fashion as he draws in an audience and hooks them with his calm reassuring manner, many of his songs use subtle humor to draw a person inside it, to make the song their own, then he delivers a punch that leaves one dazed. The best examples of this are "Mary Elizabeth" (the closing song on The Coop's March "Story Song" album) and "Hungry." Many images in "Mary" brought laughter, such as "Then Mary Elizabeth made love to Thomas, under the crucifix over her bed." The irony is obvious, and there are other similar images: but when it becomes clear that Mary



Elizabeth has been doomed by the guilt-ridden moral platitudes of her Catholic upbringing, one feels almost guilty for having laughed earlier. (Joe points out that he is not criticizing any particular group or organization, but is rather making comments on the extremely complex emotional issue of abortion.) "Hungry" is Joe's tour de force and must rank among the best of songs. Again one is drawn in by humor, ("I am hungry for a cigarette/I could use one now/'cause my hands are in a cold, cold sweat, just from standin' here right now). This intimate insight is attractive; then two verses later we get this:

I have seen my generation,  
Go from rags to fashion jeans,  
Trading in their expectations,  
For their once rejected dreams.

They are hungry for success I  
guess,  
They're contented with it now,  
Just the very best of food and  
dress,  
Nothing less will do somehow.

God bless my generation!

Following verses tell of leaders who are hungry for the guns of war (shall we feed them anymore?) and the starving children whose pictures are in magazines, who are hungry for a piece of bread (shall we leave them there for dead?).

Joe also did "The Wind Is High," "The Farm," and "School Song," all of which he wrote, and all of which are excellent. Now that this review has drifted away from the immediacy of the performance to describe the songs, it must be brought back: I've seen Joe perform on other occasions, and he's always given a good show. There have often been many dead moments between songs as he retunes, which he has to do often. His Martin guitar has a good, full sound but it's not a big sound; he plays it hard, always in control, and thus has to tune it often. On this night, however, these otherwise dead moments were utilized to the maximum for telling jokes and anecdotes, which added tremendously to the whole show.

Bobbie Wayne and Dan Mozell did two songs at the end of the first set. It had already been a long sit, and people were fidgety. Bobbie sang "Motherless Child" to Dan's guitar accompaniment, then played the Irish harp as Dan played and sang his "Sail on the Good Sloop Clearwater." Their exquisite mixture of voices and instruments put all fidgeting to an end.

The second set opened with Lydia Davis performing her own "Gift of Story" and Billie Holiday's "God Bless the Child." Lydia and Ned Treanor joined Joe for "Hungry;" They did vocals on his recently recorded album and make a great addition to Joe on stage. Lydia also went up to do harmony on "Different Tune." Joe got to show off his talents on brace harp on his "Lucky Gambler;" the night closed with "Goodnight Irene" as an encore.

When queried afterward, Joe said he shouldn't normally have had so many guests, but that he has so many friends that are great musicians and wanted everyone to share their stuff. This informal attitude helped make the evening as enjoyable as it was, and helped loosen himself up, too. I've seen Joe be tighter musically but it's the emotional impact and spark of keen insight that are really the strength of his songs, and that's what we got plenty of.



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# on the record

SCOTT ALARIK performs both traditional ballads and his own songs at folk clubs, college coffeehouses, and folk festivals all over North America. He has also been a frequent performer on National Public Radio's A Prairie Home Companion, hosted by Garrison Keillor.

GEOFF BARTLEY, a songwriter and performer, lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

THE BELLES OF HOBOKEN is Marcie Boyd, Susan Lewis, and Janet Stecher. They discovered each other in the winter of 1982. Marcie was writing women's and political songs, Susan was pursuing dance and Janet was running international exchanges. Their repertoire combines their joy of making music with political concerns.

DAVE BOLGER, 31, has been singing country music and folk songs since age 12. He plays coffeehouses in New York and New Jersey and writes poetry.

RICHARD CHANEL has been born twice; imagine the labor pains. Early on he contracted an incurable disease. It

was diagnosed as 'romanticism.' Later on, he accidentally got on a plane and ended up back in New York. He acquired his last name in exchange for a silver ring. This took place at the bar in The Other End, but that was a while ago. When informed Arthur Rimbaud never sang with the Miracles, he replied, "(Heh heh) I must have been thinking of Baudelaire and the Pips."

JUDITH FICKSMAN usually performs her songs with her sister, CAROL. The sisters collaborate not only musically they are currently working on an album which they hope to have produced by the end of the summer, but also as an author/artist team creating children's books.

JOHN GORKA is an intense white guy from New Jersey who currently lives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

JACK HARDY has released five albums on the Great Divide label, some of which have been reissued by First American in this country and Pastels abroad. For the past year he has been the Editor of The Coop.

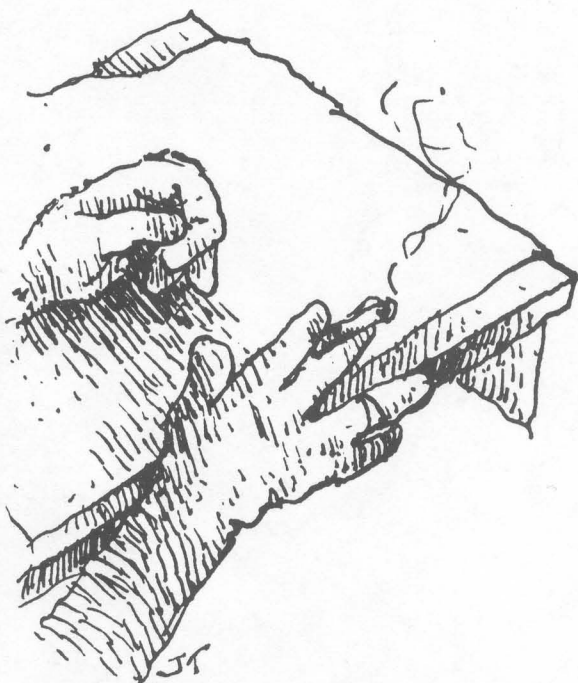
RICHARD MEYER pursues songwriting and painting as well as theatrical design and technical direction. He is a founding member of Shakespeare & Co. of Lenox, Massachusetts, and is presently writing a book of philosophy for theatre technicians. Richard has performed his music in and around New England and Los Angeles where he spent the last three and a half years. He is back in New York now.



BARRY LOUIS POLISAR is a singer and songwriter for children who lives in Silver Spring, Maryland. He makes his living doing concerts for children and has released six different record albums for kids on his own Rainbow Morning Music Alternatives label. His records include: I Eat Kids, My Brother Thinks He's a Banana, Naughty Songs for Boys and Girls, Songs for Well Behaved Children, Stanley Stole My Shoelace and Ribbed It in His Armpit and Other Songs My Parents Won't Let Me Sing, and Captured "Live" and in the Act.

Born in Ardmore, Oklahoma, JOHN TRENT came to New York with a couple of guitars and a Volkswagen Bug. He played out on the streets for awhile and anywhere else where people would listen. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1977. He has played different clubs in Tulsa and Norman, Oklahoma.

SUZANNE VEGA is from New York City. She is a Barnard College graduate and is 23. She has been active in dance and theatre, writing, and staging a production on Carson McCullers.



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# JUNE 1983

W T F S

<b>WEDNESDAYS - OPEN POETRY</b> 7 P.M.		<b>NEW SONGS NIGHT</b> \$2		<b>3 FIRST ANNUAL MUSICIANS CO-OP OPEN HOUSE</b> \$3		<b>POETRY - 2ND &amp; 4TH SATURDAYS 4 TO 7</b>																										
<b>1</b> GWAMEL THE CAMEL TOM MCGEE \$2 PETE STATHOPOULIS	<b>2</b> DONNA MACARONI PETE GARDNER & Debra MICKEY & JEANINE	<b>3</b> FRANK CHRISTIAN Bernie Shanahan \$5	<b>4</b> Left Field JOEY GEORGE & JUDY O'BRIEN \$5	<b>5</b> KATH BLOOM LAUREN MAZZACANE \$3 BOB MCGRATH	<b>6</b> OOOO PPPP EEEE NNNN MMMM IKKK EEEE ON MONDAYS WITH ERIK FRANDSEN SIGN UP: 7:30 P.M.	<b>7</b> LATE For DINNER \$3 DARRYL CHERNEY	<b>8</b> D.A. JONES RAPHAEL RUDD ANDY JUKIS \$2	<b>9</b> XSEAMEN REUNION CONCERT 8:30 P.M. \$4	<b>10</b> FRANK CHRISTIAN Bernie Shanahan \$5	<b>11</b> Left Field JOEY GEORGE & JUDY O'BRIEN \$5	<b>12</b> MARY ELLEN McCABE \$3 JAN HENSHAW	<b>13</b> BOBBIE MCGEE LARRY PENN \$3	<b>14</b> DAVE LIPPMAN ALAN BELKIN	<b>15</b> D.A. JONES RAPHAEL RUDD ANDY JUKIS \$2	<b>16</b> Cliff Eberhardt Jimmy Bruno \$3	<b>17</b> TONY BIRD \$5 ERIC WOOD	<b>18</b> CAROLYN HESTER IN SPECIAL performance	<b>19</b> Laura Wetzler \$3 Susan Graetz	<b>20</b> BOBBIE MCGEE LARRY PENN \$3	<b>21</b> BOBBIE MCGEE LARRY PENN \$3	<b>22</b> VINNIE DEAN \$2 JOHN HODEL PAM DRAKE	<b>23</b> John Roberts \$4 MIKE AGRANOFF	<b>24</b> JACK HARDY JUDY GORMAN-JACOBS \$5	<b>25</b> JACK HARDY JUDY GORMAN-JACOBS \$5	<b>26</b> JOHN BELL \$3 CYD SOTOROFF	<b>27</b> DENNIS BANKS \$2 SHERWOOD ROSS PAUL CLARKE RICHARD MEYER	<b>28</b> DENNIS BANKS \$2 SHERWOOD ROSS PAUL CLARKE RICHARD MEYER	<b>29</b> SHERWOOD ROSS PAUL CLARKE RICHARD MEYER	<b>30</b> JOEY MISERABLE AND THE WORMS \$3 SKIP BARTHOLD	<b>31</b> JOEY MISERABLE AND THE WORMS \$3 SKIP BARTHOLD	<b>ALL SHOWS 9:00 P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED</b>	<b>FREE FOLK FESTIVAL IN CENTRAL PARK HAS BEEN RE-SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY JULY 24 1983 1-4 P.M. 72ND ST. BAND-SHELL</b>

## credits

### side one

- Who Should Know (Geoff Bartley)  
 Geoff Bartley/Vocal & Guitar  
 Mark Dann/Bass
- Downtown Tonight (John Gorka)  
 John Gorka/Guitar & Vocal  
 Mark Dann/Bass, 12-string, Drums
- Dublin Farewell (Jack Hardy)  
 Jack Hardy/Vocal & Guitar  
 Jeff Hardy/Bass  
 Mark Dann/Guitar
- Some Journey (Suzanne Vega)  
 Suzanne Vega/Vocal & Guitar  
 Mark Dann/Bass
- Laughing/Scared (Richard Meyer)  
 Richard Meyer/Vocal & Guitar  
 Mark Dann/Bass, Keyboards, Vocal
- Baby Are You Lookin' My Way (John Trent)  
 John Trent/Vocal & Guitar  
 Mark Dann/Bass, 12-string & 6-string guitars

### side two

- Celibacy (Marcie Boyd)  
 The Belles of Hoboken:  
 Janet Stecher/Vocal  
 Marcie Boyd/Vocal & Guitar  
 Susan Lewis/Vocal  
 Mark Dann/Bass & Guitar
- Sidewalks of New York (Dave Bolger)  
 Dave Bolger/Vocal & Guitar  
 Mark Dann/Bass
- Anna Maria (Richard Chanel)  
 Richard Chanel/Vocal & Guitar  
 Mark Dann/Bass & Guitar
- April Fool's Landscape (Judith E. Ficksman)  
 Judy Ficksman/Vocal & Guitar  
 Mark Dann/Bass & Guitar
- The Apple of My Eye (Barry Louis Polisar)  
 Barry Louis Polisar/Vocal & Guitar  
 Mark Dann/Bass & Mandolin
- Will Ye No Come Back (Scott Alarik)  
 Scott Alarik/Vocal & Guitar