

SHARON MOUNTAIN HARMONY

A Golden Ring of Gospel

FOLK LEGACY RECORDS, INC.
FSI-86



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With: Lucy Simpson, Rock Creek (Bill Destler, Wally Macnow, Tom McHenry), Mary Alice Amidon, Peter Amidon, and Caroline Paton

Almost twenty years have passed since we released the first "Golden Ring" recording in 1963, and over a decade since a reunion produced its sequel, in two volumes, entitled "Five Days Singing." People have often asked when we planned another record in that series, and we have tried to explain that the Golden Ring was a concept, rather than a fixed group. As Sandy wrote in 1971, it was "an approach to informal, non-competitive music-making by people who simply enjoyed singing together." It involved, he explained, "a spirit of genuine ensemble singing and playing, conceived and executed with a great deal of affection for the music and for the people with whom it is being shared."

"Sharon Mountain Harmony" is an album conceived and executed in the same spirit as the Golden Ring recordings. The participants are different, but the feeling and the sharing are the same. For this reason, we have given it the subtitle: "A Golden Ring of Gospel."

Lucy Simpson's discovery of the folksong revival was relatively recent and, as this record proves, a great boon to the rest of us. Here is a lovely new voice and some wonderful, fresh material. We will be eternally grateful to her for discovering such gems as "Blessed Quietness" and "Angels Hovering 'Round" in her large collection of old hymns.

Bill Destler, Wally Macnow and Tom McHenry (otherwise known as Rock Creek) are an exciting trio specializing in beautiful arrangements of a wide variety of traditional songs. Wally's dynamic baritone often takes the lead, with Bill's sweet tenor on the high harmony. Tom usually sings bass with the group, but he is one of those remarkable singers who can sing with strength in almost any range he chooses.

Rock Creek had enjoyed singing informally with Lucy at a number of folk festivals and "getaways," and we got the idea that we should invite them to gather at our barn-home-studio on Sharon Mountain for a weekend of gospel singing and recording. Lucy had enjoyed singing with Peter and Mary Alice Amidon at Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and it was decided that they would be the perfect addition to the group. So we all got together—Lucy from Brooklyn, Rock Creek from Washington and Baltimore, and the Amidons from Brattleboro, Vermont. Sandy was busy with the recording, but I got to sing along on some of the choruses, a joyful experience for which I am most grateful. Lucy and Rock Creek took turns leading songs, with the rest of us joining in, and Peter and Mary Alice thrilled us with two splendid duets.

The result is a unique collection of unusual and beautiful hymns drawn from both black and white tradition. We are certain that this record, like its predecessors, will catch you up in its infectious spirit, so that you will feel compelled to sing along. Please don't refrain—that's what refrains are for!

Caroline Paton
Sharon, Connecticut
November, 1982

photo: Suzanne Szasz



Lucy Simpson

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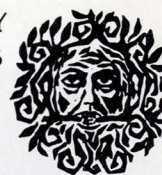


photo: Gail McHenry



Rock Creek: Tom, Wally, Bill



Mary Alice & Peter Amidon

photo: Michael Jerald

Recorded by Sandy Paton

Cover photo by Sandy Paton

Jacket design by Walter Schwarz,
Silver Lining Productions

Side 1:

I've Been Listening	2:12
Glory Bound	2:33
Turtle Dove	2:28
Climbing High Mountains	2:07
Peace Like a River	1:21
Done Found My Lost Sheep	3:48
I Want to Die Easy	2:49
Blessed Quietness	3:47

Side 2:

Oh, He's Taken My Feet	2:33
Lord, I Want More Religion	2:09
Trouble So Hard	1:29
I Will Arise	2:32
Bright Morning Star	2:15
Time Has Made a Change in Me	3:38
Been in the Storm So Long	2:57
There Are Angels Hovering 'Round	3:24

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The Songs:

I'VE BEEN LISTENING
Side 1, Band 1.

Lucy (lead) and group.

The first two verses of this song are in the Rodeheaver Collection for Male Voices (The Rodeheaver Co., 1916), one of my many crumbling old hymnbooks. It is in a section called "Plantation Songs." I copied the third verse from another hymnal in a bookshop. (L.S.)

I've been listening all the
night long,
Been listening all the day,
I've been listening all the
night long
To hear some sinner pray. (2X)

Some say John was a Baptist,
Some say he was a Jew,
But the Bible does inform us
He was a preacher, too. (2X)

I've been listening...

Go read the Fifth of Matthew,
Go read that chapter through;
It is a guide to Christians
And tells them what to do. (2X)

I've been listening...

There was a search in Heaven
And all the earth around;
John stood in sorrow, hoping
A Savior could be found. (2X)

I've been listening...

GLORY BOUND
Side 1, Band 2.

Wally (lead), Tom, Bill.

This song, from the singing of Estil and Orna Ball of Grassy Creek, North

Carolina, is an example of the best of the white radio-gospel music that can still be heard throughout the South. Estil, who recently died, and Orna have left a fine legacy of white gospel music some of which is available on recordings (e.g., Rounder 0026). (B.D.)

I'm glory bound; I'm on my way
To my eternal home.
I'm going there with Christ to stay
Around that starry throne.
The Lord has healed my sin-sick soul
And set my spirit free.
I'm glory bound,
Won't you come and go along with me?

I'm glory bound
And singing on my way;
I'm going home
Where my soul has been set free.
I'm climbing up,
Going higher every day.
I'm glory bound,
Won't you come and go along with me?

He said for me He would prepare
A mansion in the sky.
He said His glory I could share
In that sweet by-and-by.
As I look forward to that day,
I'm happy as can be.
I'm glory bound,
Won't you come and go along with me?

I'm glory bound...

I'll hear the angels singing there;
I'll hear there harps unfold.
It'll all be glory everywhere
And none will e'er grow old.
But, beat of all, I know someday
He'll bless me facelessly.
I'm glory bound,
Won't you come and go along with me?

I'm glory bound...

I'm glory bound...

TURTLE DOVE
Side 1, Band 3.

eter & Mary Alice.

We learned "Turtle Dove" from David live of Washington, D. C. We've found the chorus to be fantastic for group singing. The last lines of the chorus, Sa so la sa do, on sa la sa ree," sound suspiciously like singing the hapes of a Sacred Harp song. (P.A.) Ed. note: Dave Olive tells us that he, in turn, learned the song from the singing of Bessie Jones.)

*Turtle dove done drooped his wings,
Now, turtle dove done drooped his wings,*

*Turtle dove done drooped his wings
High on Zion's hill to sing.*

Adam and Eve, do, do,

Adam and Eve, won't you tell it to me,

Meet me at the door, won't you tell it to me,

Sa so la sa do, on sa la sa ree.

*When I get to Heaven I know the rules,
When I get to Heaven I know the rules,
When I get to Heaven I know the rules,
Skip on down to the bathing pool.*

Adam and Eve...

*My name is written on David's line,
My name is written on David's line,
My name is written on David's line,
I'll go to Heaven on the wheel of time.*

Adam and Eve...

(repeat first verse and chorus)

CLIMBING HIGH MOUNTAINS (M. C. Durham)
Side 1, Band 4.

Lucy (lead) and group.

I learned "Climbing High Mountains" from one of my favorite secondhand bookstore finds — a disintegrating, coverless, 24-page booklet of gospel hymns that, judging by its copyright lines and credits, was probably published in Chicago around 1939. It is a collection of hymns and spirituals sung by such groups as the Truelight Gospel Chorus, the Terre Haute Gospel Choral Union, and the Famous Five Soul Stirrers. One song

was noted, "As sung by Addie Thomas and the First Church of Deliverance," a Chicago church I had visited as a teenager with my church youth group. The visits were arranged by our pastor, who loved black gospel music. The booklet credits Rev. M. C. Durham as the writer of the song. (L.S.)

*Lord, I'm climbing high mountains
trying to get home,*

*Lord, I'm climbing high mountains
trying to get home.*

*Lord, I'm climbing high mountains,
climbing high mountains,*

*Lord, I'm climbing high mountains
trying to get home.*

(Similarly:)

*Lord, I'm bearing my burdens
trying to get home...*

*Lord, I'm having hard trials
trying to get home...*

*Lord, my way's sometimes weary
trying to get home...*

*Lord, I'm climbing high mountains
trying to get home...*

PEACE LIKE A RIVER

Side 1, Band 5.

Wally (lead) and group.

Bill originally learned this song from a friend who had heard it at a Friends Yearly Meeting, and for several years we assumed it was a Quaker song. Then, on the day before Christmas, 1978, a black gospel group wandering the streets of south Baltimore sang the very same song, standing outside Bill's door.

*I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river
in my soul.*

*I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river
in my soul.*

(Similarly:)

I've got pain like an arrow...

I've got joy like a fountain...

I've got peace like a river...

DONE FOUND MY LOST SHEEP

Side 1, Band 6.

Lucy (solo)

You provide the harmony on this one!
"Done Found My Lost Sheep" is in James
Weldon Johnson's *Book of American Negro
Spirituals* (Viking, 1925). I lead a
fairly hectic city life and I like this
song's reminder that sometimes the best
way to get things done is to sit still
and let them happen. Sometimes. (L.S.)

*Done found my lost sheep,
Done found my lost sheep,
Done found my lost sheep.
Hallelujah, I done found my
lost sheep,
Done found my lost sheep,
Done found my lost sheep.*

*My Lord had a hundred sheep;
One of them did go astray.
That just left him ninety and nine.
Go to the wilderness; seek and find.
If you find it, bring it back,
Across your shoulders, across your
back.
Tell the neighbors all around
That lost sheep has sure been found.*

Done found my lost sheep...

*In that resurrection day,
Sinner can't find no hiding place.
Run to the mountain and the mountain
move,
Run to the hill, the hill run, too.
Sinner-man travellin' on tremblin'
ground;
Poor lost sheep ain't never been
found.
Sinner, why don't you stop and pray?
You might hear the shepherd say:*

Done found my lost sheep...

I WANT TO DIE EASY

Side 1, Band 7.

Wally (lead), Bill, Tom.

This is also from Johnson's *Book of*

American Negro Spirituals. (B.D.)

*I want to die easy when I die,
I want to die easy when I die,
I want to die easy when I die,
Shout "Salvation" as I fly,
I want to die easy when I die.*

*I want to see my mother when I die,
I want to see my mother when I die,
I want to see my mother when I die,
Shout "Salvation" as I fly,
I want to die easy when I die.*

(Similarly:)

I want to see my father when I die...

I want to see Jesus when I die...

I want to die easy when I die...

BLESSED QUIETNESS

Side 1, Band 8.

Lucy (lead) and group.

"Blessed Quietness" was collected for me by my subconscious in the summer of 1975. I was attending my first Folk Music Week at Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth Massachusetts, and had reached the fifth day of frantic feasting on classes, workshops, concerts, all-night singing, and non-stop tunes drifting through the woods as musicians practiced, swapped, and jammed. I had hardly slept a wink and was definitely on the verge of collapse. I tried to nap in my cabin, but was overstimulated and unable to relax. Reaching for something to read (I had brought only songbooks), I started to learn "Blessed Quietness." I didn't notice until the next day how exactly appropriate it was to the situation. It has been my favorite hymn since then. The hymnal was *The Golden Trumpet*, published by the Christian Witness Co. of Chicago. No date of publication is given, but the song copyrights range from 1882 to 1906. Mrs. Manie Payne Ferguson is cited as writer of the words, and William J. Kirkpatrick is credited for the music. I've seen it in other hymnbooks with another (far less satisfying) tune. (L.S.)

*Joys are flowing like a river
Since the Comforter has come;
He abides with us forever,
Makes the trusting heart His home.*

Blessed quietness, holy quietness,
What assurance in my soul.
On the stormy sea, speaking
peace to me,
How the billows cease to roll.

Like the falling rain from Heaven,
Like the sunlight from the sky,
So the Holy Ghost is given,
Falling on us from on high.

Blessed quietness...

See, a fruitful field is growing
Blessed fruits of righteousness,
And the streams of life are flowing
In the lonely wilderness.

Blessed quietness...

What a wonderful salvation
Where we always see His face;
What a peaceful habitation,
What a quiet resting place.

Blessed quietness...

OH, HE'S TAKEN MY FEET
Side 2, Band 1.

Lucy (lead) and group.

Who could ignore a song with such a title? It is in another of my all-time favorite hymnals, *The Revivalist, Revised and Enlarged Edition*, compiled and published by Joseph Hillman in 1872. Hillman was a merchant and a Methodist layman who established a camp meeting at Round Lake, New York. He traveled in New York State and New England with his "praying band" during the religious revivals of the 1860's. The songs were probably first printed on separate sheets and passed out to the people attending Hillman's meetings. No writer's name is given in the hymnal for this song. (L.S.)

Oh, He's taken my feet
From the mire and the clay
And He's placed them on the
Rock of Ages. (2X)

I'll praise Him while He gives
me breath;
I hope to praise Him after
death.

Oh, He's taken my feet...

And I will praise Him when I die;
Shout "Salvation" as I fly.

Oh, He's taken my feet...

And I will tell to sinners 'round
What a dear Savior I have found.

Oh, He's taken my feet...

LORD, I WANT MORE RELIGION
Side 2, Band 2.

Wally (lead) and group.

I found "Lord, I Want More Religion" in George Korson's *Pennsylvania Songs and Legends* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1949). Korson states that it was sung to him by Hiram H. White, in Greene County, Pennsylvania, in 1930. It has only one verse. The hardest thing about singing this song is knowing when to stop. Wally thinks I never sing it enough times through, so he learned it himself and leads it here. (L.S.)

Lord, I want more religion,
Lord, I want more religion,
Lord, I want more religion
To get me unto God. (2X)

Religion makes me happy
And then I want to go
To leave this world of sorrow
And trouble here below. (2X)

Lord, I want... (etc.)

TROUBLE SO HARD
Side 2, Band 3.

Lucy (lead) and group.

The recording sessions for this album were such a pleasure that I forgot to stick to the songs I had planned to record. "Trouble So Hard" just popped out because I suddenly wanted to sing it then, with these good singer/friends. Only weeks later did I think about the fact that I had learned the song from Dwayne Thorpe while singing harmony on his record (Minstrel JD-209) and that recording it myself was perhaps not in good taste. Dwayne says it's fine with him: "That's what I like to see happen - more people singing the songs." Dwayne

learned it from the singing of Vera Hall Ward.

Oh, Lordy, trouble so hard,
Oh, Lordy, trouble so hard.
Well, there ain't nobody knows
my trouble but God,
Ain't nobody knows my trouble
but God.

Well, I woke up one morning
And there in the bed,
Oh, there was brother,
My brother was dead.

Oh, Lordy, trouble...

Well, he'll fix your foot
Till you can't walk;
He'll lock your jaw
Till you can't talk.

Oh, Lordy, trouble...

One of these mornings,
It won't be long,
You'll look for me
And I'll be gone.

Oh, Lordy, trouble...

I WILL ARISE

Side 2, Band 4.

Bill (lead on verses), Wally (lead
on choruses), Lucy.

Learned from the singing of the
legendary autoharp player, Kilby Snow,
who, appropriately enough, was born in
the hills of Virginia on the waters of
Rock Creek. The song may also be found
in George Pullen Jackson's *Spiritual
Folk Songs of North America*, although
with completely different verses.

I will arise and go to Jesus;
He will embrace me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
Oh, there are ten thousand charms.

Come, thou fount of every blessing;
Move my heart to sing Thy praise.
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

I will arise...

Teach me some melodious songs
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Here's the Mount; I'm fixed upon it,
Songs of Thy redeeming love.

I will arise...

Here I'll raise my songs in praises;
Hither, by Thy help, I'm bound.
And I pray, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

I will arise...

BRIGHT MORNING STAR

Side 2, Band 5.

Mary Alice (lead), Peter.

Mary Alice remembers that we learned
"Bright Morning Star" from a record in
the New World series entitled *I'm a Long
Time Traveling Here Below*. It is sung
by a man and a lady, accompanied by
guitar. Mary Alice took to the song
and introduced it to me; I worked out
the harmony. We love the uneven phrasing
of the melody and the powerful imagery
of the words. (P.A.)

We are the true-born sons of Levi;
We are the true-born sons of God.
We are the roots and the branch of
David,
The bright and glorious morning star.

When Joshua and I crossed the Jordan,
Two leaves of corn were lifted high;
To the high priest and the grand
master
We bore the ark of God and Son.

Come all ye Knights, ye Knights of
Molite,
And learn to do what we have done.
You might have been a guard much
brighter,
When in the new Jerusalem.

When Moses planted the rod of Aaron,
And in one night that rod did bud;
When Moses smote Egyptian water,
That very night it turned to blood.

(repeat first verse)

TIME HAS MADE A CHANGE IN ME (H. Freye)
Side 2, Band 6.

Lucy (lead) and group.

This song is being sung by many Northeasterners these days, thanks to Richard Moss, a shape-note singer from Shooting Creek, North Carolina, who was on the staff at Pinewoods Camp in 1976 and 1977. He told us in 1976 that "dad" Speer had written the song, but in 1977 he somehow left some campers with the impression that he had written it himself, and others with the notion that he didn't know who had written it. (Moss was 82 that summer and may have simply forgotten the song's origins.) During a morning of research at the Archive of Folk Culture in the Library of Congress, I learned that "Time Has Made a Change" was written by Harkins Freye, a "West Virginia boy" who wrote and published gospel music in the 1920's. Several of his songs are in my three 1950's Stamps Music Co. hymnals. The song is referred to in *The History of Gospel Music* (K & S Press, 1971) as one of the "classics" recorded by the Speer family, early pioneers of radio and television gospel music. "Dad" and Lena Speer are in the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. (L.S.)

*Time has made a change since my
childhood days;
Many of my friends have gone
away.
Some I never more in this life
will see.
Time has made a change in me.*

*Time has made a change in the
old home place;
Time has made a change in each
smiling face.
And I know my friends can
plainly see
Time has made a change in me.*

*In my childhood days, I was well
and strong;
I could climb the hillside all
day long.
I am not today what I used to be.
Time has made a change in me.*

Time has made a change...

*When I reach my home in that land
somewhere,
With my friends who wait to meet
me over there,
Free from pain and care I'll
forever be.
Time has made a change in me.*

Time has made a change...

BEEN IN THE STORM SO LONG
Side 2, Band 7.

Wally (lead), Bill, Tom.

This song, one of the most moving in all of American traditional music, is from the singing of Mary Pinckney of Johns Island, South Carolina. We first learned it from Merle Schlesinger. (B.D.)

*Been in the storm so long,
Singing: been in the storm so long.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time
to pray.*

*Singing: feel like a motherless child,
Singing: feel like a motherless child.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time
to pray.*

*Singing: this is a needy time,
Singing: this is a needy time.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time
to pray.*

*Singing: Lord, I need you now,
Singing: Lord, I need you now.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time
to pray.*

*Singing: been in the storm so long,
Singing: been in the storm so long.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time
to pray.*

THERE ARE ANGELS HOVERING 'ROUND
Side 2, Band 8.

Lucy (lead) and group.

I found "Angels" in *World Wide Revival Songs No. 2* (title page missing; probably published around 1921). It is a favorite among my friends, because it is beautiful and easy to sing along with, even if you haven't heard it before. It had no composer's name in that hymnal, nor in any

other in which I've found it. I like the fact that, sometime during the years I've been singing it, my feminist consciousness unwittingly changed "Let him who heareth come" to "Let all who heareth come." (L.S.)

*There are angels hovering 'round,
There are angels hovering 'round,
There are angels, angels hovering
'round.*

(Similarly:)

To carry the tidings home...

To the new Jerusalem...

Poor sinners are coming home...

Let all who heareth come...

We're on our journey home...

There are angels hovering 'round.