

Bok Muir & Trickett

THE FIRST
FIFTEEN YEARS

VOLUME I



Folk-Legacy CD-1003



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The material on this CD was recorded by Sandy Paton from 1974 to
1985 on various analog recorders and with various microphones. We
would like to thank Bob Katz of Digital Domain (NYC) for helping us iron
out the radical differences in the original recordings. A certain amount of
tape hiss will be audible, especially in the earlier material, but we
elected to accept that, rather than sacrifice those elements of the music
that lie within the same frequency range.

The FSI numbers following the composer credits indicate the catalog
numbers of the original Folk-Legacy albums from which the selections
have been drawn. The original recordings are currently available as
cassettes or vinyl LPs.

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1. JOHNNY STEWART, DROVER (Chris Buch; FSI-104)

6:02

Kel Watkins sent me quite a lot of Australian things, just out of the love
of sharing what he loved. This was among them. Chris Buch spent some
time with Johnny Stewart, droving. From the experience came this
outstanding song. (GB)

The mob is dipped, the drive is started out,
They're leaving Rockland's dusty yards behind them.
The whips are cracking and the drovers shout;
Along the Queensland stock-routes you will find them.

Droving days have been like this for years;
No modern ways have meant their days are over.
The diesel-road-trains cannot know the steers,
Or walk them down like Johnny Stewart, drover.

On the banks of the Georgina and down the Diamantina
To where the grass is greener, down by New South Wales,
Johnny Stewart's roving, with mobs of cattle droving,
His life story moving down miles of dusty trails.

The cook is busy by the campfire light;
Above the fire a billy gently swinging.
The mob is settled quietly for the night,
And Johnny's riding slowly 'round and singing.

Johnny doesn't spend much time in town,
Impatient for the wet to be over.
Most of the year he's walking cattle down.
The stock-routes are home to Johnny Stewart, drover.

Dawn will surely find another day;
Sun still chasing moon – never caught her.
The morning light will find them on their way,
Another push to reach the next water.

They're counted in now; Johnny's work is done,
And fifteen hundred head are handed over.
It's into town now for a little fun
And a beer or two for Johnny Stewart, drover.

2. ISLE AU HAUT LULLABY (Gordon Bok; FSI-56) 3:52

The melody of this song was composed one day on a schooner while beating past a small grassy island called Hay Ledge, for Captain Havilah Hawkins who bet me I couldn't write a tune as uncomplicated as the island. The words came together one pretty night going across that same bay in my own boat, for a young one who was asleep below in the cabin, and who never heard it sung. Ed and Annie reminded me of this song over the years, and kept it going while I had all but forgotten it. (GB)

If I could give you three things, I would give you these:
Song and laughter and a wooden home in the shining seas.

When you see old Isle au Haut rising in the dawn,
You will play in yellow fields in the morning sun.

Sleep where the wind is warm and the moon is high.
Give sadness to the stars, sorrow to the sky.

Do you hear what the sails are saying in the wind's dark song?
Give sadness to the wind, blown alee and gone.

Sleep now, the moon is high and the wind blows cold,
For you are sad and young, and the sea is old.

(repeat first verse)

3. GENTLE ANNIE (trad.; FSI-56) 4:04

The original "Gentle Annie" seems to have been written by Stephen Foster in 1856. Like many good songs, it found its way to Australia, where it took on local references and, perhaps, a more ambiguously sensual flavor. Joe Hickerson learned the song from Martyn Wyndham-Read, and I learned it from Joe several years ago. (ET)

The harvest time's come, gentle Annie,
And your wild oats are all scattered 'round the field.
You'll be anxious to know, gentle Annie,
How your little crop of oats is going to yield.

We'll say farewell, gentle Annie,
For you know with you I can no longer stay.
Yes, I'll bid you adieu, gentle Annie,
Till we meet you on another threshing day.

Your mutton's very sweet, gentle Annie,
And I'm sure it can't be packed in New South Wales;
But you'd better put a fence around the cabbage
Or they'll all get eaten up by the snails.

You'll take my advice, gentle Annie,
And you'd better watch your chappie going away
With his packbag flung over his shoulder,
And he stole some knives and forks the other day.

The bullocks they are yoked, gentle Annie,
For you know with you I can no longer stay.
So I'll bid you adieu, gentle Annie,
Till we meet you on another threshing day.

4. SLOW DANCE FROM MACHU PICCHU (trad.; FSI-56) 4:09

I heard this dance from the Machu Picchu area of Peru on a tape made there by a friend. It was played on the local cane flutes and other assorted instruments. Our version is my reconstruction of it from memory. The only conscious change we made was to shorten up the pattern in the first two parts. In the last part (where the whistle duet begins again) you can hear the full pattern as I remember it. (GB)

5. THE WAYS OF MAN (Gordon Bok; FSI-68) 5:04

I wrote this song a few years ago while doing the music for a public television documentary on the maritime history of Maine called "Home to the Sea." It became the theme song, with Ann Mayo Muir singing the full version of the song at the end of the film. If she sounds bitter, remember that the day is late and now the fate of the small fisherman on the Northeast Coast looks even darker than it did before. There's no subsidy here for the "little fellow" – only more paperwork. (GB)

The ways of man are 'passing strange:
He buys his freedom and he counts his change,
Then he lets the wind his days arrange
And he calls the tide his master.

Oh, the days, oh, the days,
Oh, the fine long summer days.
The fish come rolling in the bays
And he swore he'd never leave me.

But the days grow short and the year gets old
And the fish won't stay where the water's cold,
And if they're going to fill the hold
They've got to go offshore to find them.

So they go outside on the raving deep
And they pray the Lord their soul to keep,
But the waves will roll them all to sleep,
And the tide will be their keeper.

Oh, the tide, oh, the tide,
Oh, you dark and you bitter tide.
If I can't have him by my side,
I guess I have to leave him.

I gave you one, I gave you two:
The best that rotten old boat could do.
You won't be happy till I give you three,
But I'll be damned if you'll get me.

Oh, the tide, oh, the tide,
Oh, you dark and you bitter tide.
If I can't have him by my side,
The water's welcome to him.

Ah, Lord, I know that the day will come
When one less boat comes slogging home.
I don't mind knowing that he'll be the one,
But I can't spend my whole life praying.

I gave you one, I gave you two:
The best that poor old boat could do;
You'll have it all before you're through –
Well, I've got no more to give you.

(repeat first verse)

6. JOHN OF DREAMS (Tchaikovsky/Bill Caddick; FSI-104) 5:17

John Murphy, of New Brunswick, Canada, first sang this for me in some dark field near our borders. Said the tune was from Tchaikovsky and the words were, more recently, from Bill Caddick, of England. (Usually it works the other way around – those folks get their good tunes from us-folk.) Oh, and if you think you're hearing “peepers” in the background, you're probably right. They were so loud the night we recorded this that no closed windows could keep them from joining us. Kind of welcome, considering the song. (GB)

When midnight comes, good people, homeward tread;
Seek now your blankets and your feather bed.
Home is the rover; his journey's over.
Yield up the nighttime to old John of Dreams,
Yield up the nighttime to old John of Dreams.

Across the hills the sun has gone astray;
Tomorrow's cares are many dreams away.
Home is the rover, her journey's over.
Yield up the darkness to old John of Dreams.
Yield up the darkness to old John of Dreams.

Both Man and Master in the night are one;
All things are equal when the day is done.
The prince and the plowman, the slave and the freeman,
All find their comfort in old John of Dreams,
All find their comfort in old John of Dreams.

Now as you sleep, the dreams come winging clear;
The hawks of morning cannot harm you here.
Sleep is a river, flows on forever,
And for your boatman choose old John of Dreams,
And for your boatman choose old John of Dreams.

7. NO MAN'S LAND (Eric Bogle; FSI-68) 5:40

Archie Fisher brought this powerful song to the U.S. a few years ago. Helen Kivnick taught it to me after learning it from the author, Eric Bogle. (ET)

Well, how d'you do, Private William McBride?
Do you mind if I sit here down by your graveside?
I'll rest here awhile in the warm summer sun;
Been walking all day and I'm nearly done.
I can see by your gravestone you were only nineteen
When you joined the glorious fallen in 1916 –
Well, I hope you died quick, and I hope you died clean,
Or, William McBride, was it slow and obscene?

Did they beat the drum slowly, did they sound the fife lowly?
Did the rifles fire o'er you as they lowered you down?
Did the bugles play "The Last Post" in chorus?
Did the pipes play "The Flowers of the Forest"?

Did you leave a wife or a sweetheart behind?
In some faithful heart is your memory enshrined?
And, though you died back in 1916,
In some faithful heart are you ever nineteen?
Or are you a stranger without even a name
Enshrined forever behind a glass pane
In an old photograph, torn and tattered and stained,
Fading to yellow in a bound leather frame?

The sun's shining down on these green fields of France;
Warm winds blow gently, and the red poppies dance.
Trenches have vanished under the plow;
There's no gas and no barbed wire, no guns firing now.
But here in the graveyard that is still No Man's Land,
Countless white crosses in mute witness stand
To man's pained indifference to his fellow man
And a whole generation that's butchered and damned.

I can't help but wondering, poor William McBride,
Did all those who died here know just why they died?
Did you really believe them when they told you "The Cause?"
Did you really believe that the war would end wars?
Oh, the suffering and the sorrow and the glory and the shame,
The killing and the dying, was all done in vain,
For, William McBride, it all happened again
And again, and again, and again, and again.

8. CAROLAN'S CONCERTO (trad.; FSI-104)

3:35

Learned from Al Stanley of Prince Edward Island. A delicious tune with a hint of the classical. (I played it in the car for a friend once, and he was about to bet me that Bach had written it as a flute concerto.) Paul Schaffner and I agree that it is probably the #1-most-recorded-Irish-tune in recent years, but here it is again – at a slightly slower, more savory speed.

Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738) was a blind Irish harper.

9. I KNEW THIS PLACE (David Mallett; FSI-68)

3:57

Written by David Mallett, of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine, about visiting a farm quite like the one where he was raised (although the original one burned). I first heard the song during a period in my life when my own childhood home was being sold. The song stirred my memories, focused my feelings, and helped me deal with the curious internal trauma – a trauma which I've since discovered many listeners share with me. (AMM)

I knew this place; I knew it well: every sound and every smell,
And every time I walked I fell for the first two years or so.
There across the grassy yard, I, a young one running hard,
Brown and bruised and battle-scarred and lost in sweet illusion.

And from my window I can see the branches of an ancient tree;
Reaching out, it calls to me to climb its surly branches.
But all my climbing days are gone, and these tired legs I'm
standing on
Would scarcely dare to leave the spot upon which they are standing.

And I remember every word of every voice I ever heard –
Every frog and every bird – yes, this is where it starts.
My brother's laugh, the sighing wind: this is where my life begins,
This is where I learned to use my hands and hear my heart.

This house is old; it carries on like verses to an old-time song,
Always changed but never gone. This house can stand the seasons.
Our lives pass on from door to door, dust across the wooden floor,
Like feather rain and thunder roar, we need not know the reason.

And as these thoughts come back to me, like ships across the
friendly sea,
Like breezes blowing endlessly, like rivers running deep –
The day is done, the lights are low, the wheels of life are
turning slow,
And as these visions turn and go, I lay me down to sleep.

I knew this place, I knew it well: every sound and every smell,
And every time I walked I fell for the first two years or so.
The day is done, the lights are low, the wheels of life are
turning slow,
And as these visions turn and go, I lay me down to sleep.

10. THE FINAL TRAWL (Archie Fisher; FSI-68)

4:20

Archie Fisher said he wrote this song after seeing a couple of perfectly good steel trawlers rusting away on the ledges (skerries) outside a harbor in northern Scotland, and was told by fishermen that they had been dove there by their owners because, even with the government subsidy to help the fishermen, the fishing was so poor they still couldn't make a living, and the men didn't want to see them cut into scrap by the ship-breakers. (GB)

Been three long years since we made her pay,
Haul away, my laddie-o,
And we can't get by on the subsidy,
Haul away, my laddie-o.

Then heave away for the final trawl;
It's an easy pull, for the catch is small.

So stow your gear, lads, and batten down,
And I'll take the wheel, lads, and turn her 'round.

And we'll join the *Venture* and the *Morning Star*,
Riding high and empty towards the bar.

For I'd rather beach her on the skerry rock
Than to see her torched in the breaker's dock.

And when I die you can stow me down
In her rusty hold, where the breakers sound.

Then I'd make my haven the Fiddlers' Green,
Where the grub is good and the bunks are clean.

For I've fished a lifetime, boy and man,
And the final trawl scarcely nets a cran.

11. JOHN (Larry Kaplan; FSI-104)

4:16

Larry Kaplan worked on some of the same vessels I did, and wrote many fine songs about them. This is about a friend of ours who devoted his life to a schooner he loved (not his own). He stayed with her summer and winter over the years, while we part-time sailors went our various ways when the year got dark.

The idea for the song came one late autumn when Larry had made the agonizing decision to leave the boats forever and go on with medicine (he is now a children's doctor in Connecticut), and he saw John down on the docks in the fading light, staring at the boats with their covers on, making his old decision all over again. (GB)

Foggy harbor, cold and wet and not a soul;
The boats are lying crooked in the mud.
All about, the sounds of life are chilled and distant;
The kerosene lamps flicker in the night.

Rub your hands together, pull your collar up,
We'll drink another round before the night is done.
Then it's to your chances, boys; soon we'll all be leaving,
And not a word about the times to come.

John comes home to his old boat, all alone.
(He's got his stocking cap pulled down around his ears.)
Ten years going, and he's worked his hands to stone and leather;
Tonight he says he's got to get away.
Busted, broke, no place to go, that's what he says you get
For putting all your time into the sea.
Then a man gets old, he says, too late to settle down, he says,
Too late to find a place for company.

Hear the hulls a-creaking, hard against the rocky bottom;
Hear the hungry, lonesome singing gulls.
Curse those winter winds, the empty dreams that took you in:
When you're young enough, you never get your fill.
Turn your lanterns up and throw the big hatch open wide:
No man is a stranger in the cold.
Throw another log into the stove; the night is young enough,
And good friends keep a man from getting old.

12. TREE OF LIFE (Eric Peltoniemi; FSI-104)

3:33

From a wonderful play entitled *Plain Hearts: Songs and Stories of Midwestern Prairie Women* by Lance S. Belville, with music and lyrics by Eric Peltoniemi. "Tree of Life" was written as part of the play, and I appreciate Eric's willingness to allow us to record it. The first two verses are comprised entirely of the names of quilting patterns. (ET)

Beggar's Blocks and Blind Man's Fancy,
Boston Corners and Beacon Lights,
Broken Stars and Buckeye Blossoms
Blooming on the Tree of Life.

Tree of Life, quilted by the lantern light,
Every stitch a leaf upon the Tree of Life:
Stitch away, sisters, stitch away.

Hattie's Choice (Wheel of Fortune), and High Hosannah (Indiana),
Hills and Valleys (Sweet Woodlilies) and Heart's Delight (Tail of
Benjamin's Kite),
Hummingbird (Hovering Gander) in Honeysuckle (Oleander)
Blooming on the Tree of Life.

We're only known as someone's mother,
Someone's daughter or someone's wife,
But with our hands and with our vision,
We make the patterns on the Tree of Life.

13. I DREW MY SHIP (trad.; FSI-56)

4:13

This beautiful song was taught to me by Joe Hickerson. It appears in *Northumbrian Minstrelsy*, edited by Bruce and Stokoe. The first verse comes from Stephen Sedley's book *The Seeds of Love*. (ET)

Oh, I will put my ship in order and I will set it on the sea,
And I will sail to yonders harbor to see if my love minds on me.

I drew my ship into the harbor; I drew it up where my true love lay.
I drew it close by unto her window to listen what my love did say.

"Who's that who knocks loud at my window? Who knocks so loud and
would come in?"

"It is your true love who loves you dearly; then rise, love, and
let me in."

So slowly, slowly got she up, and slowly, slowly came she down.
But before she got the door unlocked, her true love had both
come and gone.

He's brisk and braw; he's far away, he's far beyond the raging main,
Where bright eyes glancing and fishers dancing have made him quite
forget his own.

(repeat first verse)

14. HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING (trad.; FSI-56)

3:23

I learned this song from Vince and Kathy DeFrancis in Denver in 1966. Pete Seeger got the song from Doris Plenn, who now makes her home in Sharon, Connecticut, not far from Folk-Legacy. Mrs. Plenn had the song from her North Carolina family. It has now become fairly well-known in the folk revival and has been published in *SING OUT!* (ET)

My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation.
I hear the real, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.
Above the tumult and the strife, I hear its music ringing;
It sounds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?

What though the tempest loudly roars, I hear the truth; it liveth.
What though the darkness 'round me close, songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is lord of Heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble, sick with fear, and hear their death knell
ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile, our thoughts to them are winging.
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing?

(repeat first verse)

15. TURNING TOWARD THE MORNING (Gordon Bok; FSI-56) 5:22

One of the things that provoked this song was a letter one November from a friend who had had a very difficult year and was looking for the courage to keep on plowing into it. Those times, you lift your eyes unto the hills, as they say, but the hills of northern New England can be about as much comfort as a cold crowbar.

You have to look ahead a bit then and realize that all the hills and trees and flowers will still be there come Spring, usually more permanent than your troubles. And if your courage occasionally fails, that's okay, too. Nobody expects you to be as strong (or as old) as the land. (GB)

When the deer has bedded down and the bear has gone to ground,
And the northern goose has wandered off to warmer bay and sound,
It's so easy in the cold to feel the darkness of the year
And the heart is growing lonely for the morning.

Oh, my Joanie, don't you know that the stars are swinging slow,
And the seas are rolling easy, as they did so long ago?
If I had a thing to give you, I would tell you one more time
That the world is always turning toward the morning.

Now October's growing thin and November's coming home,
You'll be thinking of the season and the sad things that you've seen.
And you hear that old wind walking, hear him singing high and thin;
You could swear he's out there singing of your sorrows.

When the darkness falls around you and the Northwind comes to blow,
And you hear him call your name out as he walks the brittle snow:
That old wind don't mean you trouble, he don't care or even know,
He's just walking down the darkness toward the morning.

It's a pity we don't know what the little flowers know.
They can't face the cold November, they can't take the wind and snow:
They put their glories all behind them, bow their heads and let it go,
But you know they'll be there shining in the morning.

Now, my Joanie, don't you know that the days are rolling slow,
And the winter's walking easy, as he did so long ago?
And if that wind should come and ask you, "Why's my Joanie weeping so?"
Won't you tell him that you're weeping for the morning?

Gordon Bok, Ann Mayo Muir & Ed Trickett

The First Fifteen Years

VOLUME I

When we started singing together in 1974, it was perhaps more of an experiment than a commitment. We'd known each other for quite a while by then, but we had separate musical lives. Since then we've toured and recorded regularly, if not frequently. Every year in one way or another more music comes our way, and we've continued to craft it to our liking and pass it on. During our first fifteen years we recorded six albums available on record (remember them?) and cassette. With our seventh – "And So Will We Yet" – we acquiesced to the present and issued it as a CD in addition to cassette.

We have often in recent times thought about putting together a collection from those first six recordings covering our first fifteen years together. This collection includes most of our favorites from that time. We started out with one CD in mind, but couldn't make the hard choices. Our musical collaboration has been a wonderful mixture of art, friendship, and indulgence. For all our friends who have supported and nurtured us as our adventure has unfolded, a heartfelt thanks. Let the experiment continue!

G.B.

E.T.

A.M.M.

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Total time: 66:47

Enclosed booklet includes notes on the songs together with their texts.

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Recorded by Sandy Paton

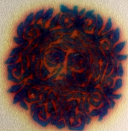
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