Folkways Records FA 2428

# JEAN RITCHIE OSCAR BRAND DAVID SEAR A Folk Concert in Town Hall, New York



### **FOLKWAYS FA 2428**

Poor Howard Randall, My Son Henry, My Son Inniskillen Dragoon Trip Trap Talking Atom Aiken Drum Fair and Tender Ladies Blackeyed Susie Short'n Bread Ha Ha Thisaway Shady Grove The Rolling of the Stone Pretty Polly The Admiral Drinhin My Boy, Willie Jenny Jenkins

# DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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## JEAN RITCHIE OSCAR BRAND DAVID SEAR A Folk Concert in Town Hall, New York

It might seem to the uninstructed observer that, since the three folksingers programmed for Town Hall that November evening were of remarkably different temperaments and backgrounds, the program would have little cohesion. Jean Ritchie, youngest of the fourteen children of Abigail and Balus Ritchie of Viper, Kentucky, is a singer in a tradition that began with the first Ritchie who came ashore from an English sailing vessel in the early 18th century. Oscar Brand, born in Winnipeg, Canada, has been mainly concerned with the remarkably varied songs sung by lumberjacks, short order cooks, soldiers, sailors and marines met in his long journey through the midwest, the American Army, to the honor of having the longest-running folkmusic program in the world--broadcasting since 1945 for New York City's Municipal Station. Dave Sear is a New York-born boy, who fell in love with folkmusic at an early age and has maintained this affair requited and glowing -- to the present day.

Despite the disparity of background, the three have already performed together on record, on radio, on television, onstage, in motion pictures and at many private parties. Jean Ritchie's simplicity in depth, Oscar Brand's rural urbanity, and Dave Sear's dedicated insouciance, all combine to make a remarkably complete picture of varying styles in American folkmusic. And besides, they enjoy working together.

PO HOWARD: The song was a Southern Negro game song, but, as a result of the Weavers' arrangement, it has taken on some of the characteristics of a square dance banjo tune.

LORD RANDALL: (Child Ballad 21) This is probably one of the best known and oftenest-sung ballads-sung in every language in the world. The form is constant; a young man is poisoned and comes home to die. The version sung at the concert was first heard by Oscar Brand in Mineheart, Georgie, in 1942.

THE INNISKILLING DRAGOON: Oscar Brand's first Christmas in New York was spent as a boarder with an Irish family possessed of an extensive repertory of old folksongs, vaudeville dialogues, and musical comedy gems. Years later, he discovered that the town in the song was really Enniskillen, a lovely North Irish community.

TAIKING ATOMIC BLUES: Written originally by Vern Partlow, newspaperman practicing his trade in California, the song was recorded in 1946, banned from the network, and sung about in the well-known traditional manner. It came to Oscar Brand's attention in 1949, he made some minor additions and has been chanting it since.

FAIR AND TENDER LADIES: Each singer chose the version of this song he enjoyed singing--that night. Oscar Brand's version owes most of its form to the Carter Family's recorded performance.

BLACKEYED SUSIE: There are enough verses to Blackeyed Susie to keep the dancing alive until dawn. And that, of course, is the function of such a song. It's a banjoed-up play party song which, although it has enough verses of its own, has borrowed from "Dan Tucker", "Joe Clark", "Eliza Jane" and many other similar songs.

HA HA THISAWAY: Cecil Sharp has a British version of this children's game song, but Leadbelly's American paraphrase has more life, verve, and power in one phrase than the British song has in seven verses.

THE ROLLING OF THE STONES: Sojourning through a singing world, one hears many fragments of songs, distorted stories, and weird melodies. Oscar Brand admits that he doesn't remember where he heard this song, which is probably the old Scottish ballad that originally told of the brothers who loved the same beautiful woman.

THE ADMIRAL: Jean Ritchie taped the singing of Howard Mitchell, who had just been discharged from the Navy. Among the songs was this enlisted man's plaint. Oscar Brand learned the song and, subsequently, "collected" many new verses from Marines and Coast Guarders.

JENNY JENKINS: According to British song-books, this song has been a favorite of the Empire for centuries. In America, it's a play-party song with as many verses as there are colors. Jean and Oscar have recorded this song before and sung it many times in concert, but the colors are always different and the answers are never the same.

OSCAR BRAND, JEAN RITCHIE, and DAVE SEAR at TOWN HALL FA 2428

SIDE I, Band 1: "SHORTENIN' BREAD"

sung by Jean Ritchie accompanied by Oscar Brand and Dave Sear

Ever since my dog's been dead Hogs been rootin' my 'tater bed

CHORUS:

I do love shortenin' bread
I do love shortenin' bread
Mama loves shortenin' bread
Papa loves shortenin' bread
Everybody loves shortenin' bread

Two little children a-layin' in bed
One was sick and the other 'most dead
Sent for the doctor and the doctor said
Why, all they needs if some shortenin' bread

(CHORUS)

Some folks say the preacher won't steal But I saw three in my cornfield One had a bushel and one had a peck And the other had a roastin' ear around his neck

I do love shortenin' bread
I do love shortenin' bread
Mama loves shortenin' bread
Papa loves shortenin' bread
Davy loves shortenin' bread
Oscar loves shortenin' bread
Jeanie loves shortenin' bread
Everybody loves shortenin' bread

SIDE I, Band 2: "HA HA THIS-A-WAY"

performed by Oscar Brand introductory comments by Oscar Brand

"Leadbelly used to sing this song in which I used to join him. Clap your hands three times while you sing "Then Oh Then." At progressive schools, I sometimes get four claps, for as you know, at progressive schools the children are forced to do what they want to!"

CHORUS:

Ha Ha this-a-way Ha Ha that-a-way Ha Ha this-a-way Then oh then

(REPEAT CHORUS)

Now, when I was a little boy, a little boy, a little boy
When I was a little boy a few years old
M' Daddy went and left me, left me, left me
M' Daddy went and left me, I've been told

(REPEAT CHORUS TWICE)

My Mama came and got me, she got me, she got me
M' Mama came and got me, to save my soul
My Mama didn't scold me, scold me, scold me
M' Mama didn't scold me, I've been told

(REPEAT CHORUS ONCE)

They put me in the school there, school there, school there,

They put me in the school there to save my soul I learned the Golden Rule there, Rule there, Rule there,

I learned the Golden Rule there I've been told

(REPEAT CHORUS ONCE)

I learned my lesson, my lesson, my lesson I learned my lesson to save my soul Now wasn't that a blessin' blessin' blessin' Wasn't that a blessin' I've been told!

(REPEAT CHORUS TWICE)

SIDE I, Band 3: "SHADY GROVE"

performed by Jean Ritchie introductory comments by Jean Ritchie:

"In Kentucky we didn't have many forms of entertainment. We didn't have movies, television, radios and things like that. And so we had to make our own fun. It usually took the form of a Saturday night "play-party". It was called a play-party because if you called it a square dance the preachers wouldn't let you do it! They didn't have baby-sitters back then - that's sort of a new-fangled thing. The babies were always taken along too, and pretty soon, even over all the noise and the shuffling feet, the babies would get tired and have to go to sleep. They would be put to sleep in the back room on some feather-bed. One of my earliest memories was of hearing this wonderful dancing sound going on outside; fiddles and such, and feet pounding the floor. It was an unusual lullaby, and it was nice. SHADY GROVE is one of our mountain play-party tunes."

CHORUS:

Shady Grove, mountain love, Shady Grove my love Shady Grove, mountain love, mountain Shady Grove

Cheeks as red as the bloomin' rose, eyes the deepest brown You are the darling of my heart, stay till the sun goes down

(CHORUS)

Went to see my Shady Grove, she was standing in the door Shoes and stockings in her hands, with her feet on the floor

(CHORUS)

Wisht I had a big fat horse, corn to feed him on Pretty little girls stay at home, feed him when I'm gone

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 4: "THE ROLLING OF THE STONES"

performed by Oscar Brand introductory comments by Oscar Brand:

"The funny thing about folk songs is that in transition in the oral tradition so many things are lost and so many things are gained. There's an article I remember about Lady Mondigreen who died with the Earl of Murray. Although many verses of THE ROLLING OF THE STONES are missing, somebody killed somebody, and it is a very lovely song!"

CHORUS:

Oh will you go to the rolling of the stones The tossing of the ball Or will you go and see pretty Susie Dance among them all

I will go to the rolling of the stones The tossing of the ball And I will go and see pretty Susie Dance among them all

They had not danced but one single dance Nor half a floor around When the sword that hung at his brother's side Gave him his fateful wound

They picked him up and carried him in Laid him there on the ground And there he lay for many a day Nor made one single sound

Then Susie charmed the birds from the sky The fish from out the bay Until she came to her true lover's side And there was contented to stay

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 5: "PRETTY POLLY"

performed by Jean Ritchie introduction by Jean Ritchie:

"Some love songs do have tragic endings. This one is about Pretty Polly who met with an awful fate. When I was a little girl, we used to hide our heads under the feather bed when we sang this song at home! Everybody in Kentucky thinks this happened in the next town. My grandfather said he knew those people. Yet, when I travelled in different parts of the world. I found the same story all over - the story of the girl who is murdered by her own sweetheart."

Oh Polly, pretty Polly, come go along with me Oh Polly, pretty Polly, come go along with me Before we get married some pleasure to see

Oh Willy, oh Willy, I'm afraid of your ways Willy oh Willy, I'm afraid of your ways I'm afraid you will lead my poor body astray

Oh Polly, pretty Polly you're guessin' about right
Oh Polly pretty Polly you're guessin' about right
'Cause I dug on your grave the best part of last
night

He led her over mountains and valleys so deep He led her over mountains and valleys so deep And at last Pretty Polly began for to weep

Oh he stabbed to the heart and her heart's blood did flow

He stabbed to the heart and her heart's blood did flow

And into the grave Pretty Polly she did go

Oh he threw a little dirt over her and started for home
Oh he threw a little dirt over her and started

for home Leavin' no one behind but the wild birds to moan It's a debt to the devil poor William must pay It's a debt to the devil poor William must pay For killin' pretty Polly and running away

Oh where is pretty Polly - over yonder she stands Oh where is pretty Polly - over yonder she stands With rings on the fingers of her lily-white hands

SIDE I, Band 6: "THE ADMIRAL"

performed by Oscar Brand introduction by Oscar Brand:

"This is the story of a famous admiral who had a great navigational sense. There was only one thing he did that made him seem queer. Every morning he would get up with a puzzled look on his face. He would then rush to the safe, take out a slip of paper, read it very carefully, and then get this beatific, secure smile. One day he died and everyone came to read the slip of paper which had done so greatly for him. It said, "stasboard right, port left". Howard Mitchell of the battleship Leyte taught me this song."

CHORUS:

Singin' too-ra-li oo-ra-li oo-ra-li Singin' too-ra-li oo-ra-li-ay Sing too-ra-li oo-ra-li oo-ra-li Sing too-ra-li oo-ra-li

Now the enlisted men ride in a motorboat The admiral he rides in a barge He don't go a darn sight faster But it makes that old bugger feel large!

(CHORUS)

The enlisted men ride in a motorboat The admiral rides in a gig It ain't that he goes any faster But it makes that old bastard feel big!

(CHORUS)

The enlisted men eat in the ward-room The captain won't eat with the mob It ain't that he eats any better He don't want us to know he's a slob!

(CHORUS)

The enlisted men sleep in their hammocks The admiral he sleeps in his bed He don't sleep a darn sight better But he's forty feet nearer the head!

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 7: "DHRINNIN DHU DHRINNIN"

performed by Dave Sear

Tis a mournful sad ditty I'll tell you right now About an old man and he had but one cow He sent his old cow to the field to be fed When word came to him that Dhrinnin was dead

CHORUS

Oh oh-ru mush-a sweeter than thou Oh oh-ru mush-a sweeter than thou

When the old man was told that his cow was so dead Over hedges and ditches and fields he fled

Over hedges and ditches and fields that was plowed And he never cried thwack till he came to his cow

(CHORUS)

I'd sooner lose Patsie, me only first born
Than to part with you Dhrinnin now that ye are gone
So now I'll sit down and I'll eat me dry bread
And I'll have no butter since Dhrinnin is dead!

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 8: "MY BOY WILLY"

performed by Jean Ritchie and Oscar Brand

"This is one of Jean Ritchie's variants of the Billy Boy songs".

Where have you been all the day, my boy Willy Where have you been all the day, Willy won't you tell me now

I have been, all the day, courtin' with my lady gay

But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy

Can she brew and can she bake, my boy Willy
Can she brew and can she bake, Willy won't you
tell me now

She can brew, she can bake, she can make a wedding cake

But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy

Can she weave and can she spin, my boy Willy Can she weave and can she spin, Willy won't you tell me now

She can weave, she can spin, she can do most anything

But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy

Can she make up a bed, my boy Willy
Can she make up a bed, Willy won't you tell me
now

She can make up a bed, fifty feet above her head But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy

Did you ask her to wed, my boy Willy
Did you ask her to wed, Willy won't you tell me
now

Yes I asked her to wed, and do you know what she said

I am much too young to be taken from my Mammy I am much too young to be taken from my Mammy!

SIDE I, Band 9: "JENNY JENKINS"

performed by Jean Ritchie and Oscar Brand introduction by Oscar Brand:

"Jenny Jenkins has many different versions but in all of them the main joke is on the person who plays Jenny Jenkins, for the onlookers are trying to catch her by making her rhyme to all sorts of strange colors".

Oh will you wear blue oh my dear oh m'dear Oh will you wear blue Jenny Jenkins No I won't wear blue the color ain't true CHORUS:

I'll buy me a fol-de-rol-dy-til-dy-tol-dy Seek-a-double, use-a-cause-a, roll the find me Roll Jenny Jenkins roll

Oh will you wear black oh m'dear oh m'dear Oh will you wear black Jenny Jenkins No I won't wear black, it's the color of a sack

(CHORUS)

Oh will you wear mauve oh m'dear oh m'dear Oh will you wear mauve Jenny Jenkins No I won't wear mauve 'cause it's too suave

(CHORUS)

Oh will you wear beige oh m'dear oh m'dear Oh will you wear beige Jenny Jenkins No I won't wear beige, they would put me in a cage

(CHORUS)

Then what will you wear, oh my dear, oh m'dear What will you wear Jenny Jenkins
Oh I'll just go bare with a ribbon in my hair!

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 1: "POOR HOWARD"

performed by Jean Ritchie, Oscar Brand and Dave Sear

They say poor Howard's dead and gone Left me here to sing this song Poor Howard's dead and gone Left me here to sing this song

CHORUS:

Poor Howard's dead and gone Poor Howard's dead and gone Poor Howard's dead and gone Left me here to sing this song

Now who's been here since I've been gone A pretty little gal with a green dress on Who's been here since I've been gone A pretty little gal with a green dress on

CHORUS MELODY WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

A pretty gal with a green dress on A pretty gal with a green dress on A pretty gal with a green dress on Left me here to sing this song

Who's been here since I've been gone Oscar Brand with a new suit on Who's been here since I've been gone Oscar Brand with a new suit on

CHORUS MELODY:

Oscar Brand with a new suit on Oscar Brand with a new suit on Oscar Brand with a new suit on Left me here to sing this song SIDE II, Band 2: "LORD RANDALL MY SON"

Performed by Oscar Brand and Jean Ritchie

Introduction by Oscar Brand:

"Experts say that Lord Randall My Son is one of the original versions from which My Boy Billy came. I heard this one many years ago in Alabama."

Where did you dine Lord Randall my son Where did you dine my handsome young one I dined with my true love, mother I dined with my true love, mother

CHORUS:

Make my bed soon For I'm weary at heart I fade away, adieu

What did you eat Lord Randall my son What did you eat my handsome young one Eels fried in eel-broth, mother Eels fried in eel-broth, mother

(CHORUS)

I fear you've been poisened Lord Randall my son I fear you've been poisened my handsome young one Yes I have been poisened, mother Yes I have been poisened, mother

(CHORUS)

What do you leave to your mother, Lord Randall my son

What do you leave to your mother my handsome young one

My gold and silver, mother My gold and silver, mother

(CHORUS)

What do you leave to your true love, Lord Randall my son

What do you leave to your true love, my handsome young one

A rope to hang her, mother A rope to hang her, mother

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 3: "ENNERY MY SON"

performed by Jean Ritchie introduction by Jean Ritchie:

"When I was in England in 1953 I found a school where the little children sang Lord Randall My Son. They developed their own children's version called ENNERY MY SON. Ennery is the cockney dialect of Henry."

Where have ya been to, Ennery my son Where have ya been to, my beloved one Woods, dear mother; woods, dear mother

CHORUS:

Make my bed, I've a pain in me head And I wants to lay down and die

What did you see there, Ennery my son What did you see there, my beloved one Gypsies, dear mother; Gypsies dear mother (CHORUS)

What did they give you to eat, Ennery my son What did they give you to eat, my beloved one Snakes, dear mother; snakes, dear mother

(CHORUS)

What color were the snakes, Ennery my son What color were the snakes, my beloved one Green and yellow; green and yellow!

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 4: "THE INNISKILLIN DRAGOON"

performed by Oscar Brand introduction by Oscar Brand:

"When I was young I boarded with an Irish family who taught me many Irish ballads. One of my favorites is the Inniskillin Dragoon."

A handsome young damsel of fame and renown A gentleman's daughter from Monathan town As she rode by the barracks this beautiful maid She stood on her coach to see the dragoons on parade

Fare thee well Inniskillin, I'll see thee in awhile
And all thy bright waters and every green isle
When the wars they are over we'll return in full
bloom

And they'll all welcome home their Inniskillin Dragoons

They all were dressed up like gentlemen's sons With bright shiny sabres and carrabine guns She said: William dear William you've enlisted too soon

You brave, loyal, royal Inniskillin Dragoon

Oh Martha, dear Martha, your pardon I crave
It's now and forever I am your slave
But your parents have slighted me morn, night,
and noon

Because I am just an Inniskillin Dragoon

Oh William, dear William, never heed what they say
For we must forever our parents obey
But when you leave Ireland they'll soon change their
tune

Saying: The good Lord be with you Inniskillin Dragoon

Fare thee well Inniskillin, I'll see thee in awhile
And all thy bright waters and every green isle
When the wars they are over we'll return in full
bloom

And they'll all welcome home their Inniskillin Dragoon

SIDE II, Band 5: "TRIP TRAP ROBBERS IN THE SEA"

performed by Jean Ritchie introduction by Jean Ritchie:

"When you are at the age of jumping rope, that's when courtship begins. That's the way it was with me. I had several sweethearts, more when I was four, five and six years old than I have had since, and I probably enjoyed it just about as much! I collected this song in the northern part of England."

Trip trap robbers in the sea Please turn the rope for me Come come come to the fair Oh no the fair isn't there I must not miss a loop Up in the north a long way off The donkey took the whooping cough What shall we give him to make him better? Salt - mustard - vinegar - pepper I'll tell Mommie I saw Mary Anne A-walkin' up the street with a nice young man High-heeled shoes and a feather in her hat I'll tell Mommie - saucy cat Policeman, policeman don't catch me I've got a wife and a family How many children have you got? Mind your own business And that's the lot!

SIDE II, Band 6: "THE TALKING ATOM"

performed by Oscar Brand introduction by Oscar Brand:

"This is a typically American talking-blues. It was recently written by Verne Partlow of the west coast and rewritten slightly."

I'm gonna preach you a sermon about ole man Atom And I don't mean Adam in the Bible for Adam Don't mean Adam that mother Eve mated But I do mean Atom science liberated Einstein said he was scared If Einstein said he was scared, I'm scared I'm not always green, friends. Stop the world, I want to get off! To stay around longer all we gotta do Is get all the people together with you 'Cause if we don't get together and do it Well, one of these days we'll be shot Right up to hell And that's no future for a growing boy Or a shrinking girl The moral of my sermon I'm trying to say Is: the atom bomb is here to stay It's going to stay fixed, that's plain to see But oh my dearly beloveds -- are we? We hold these truths to be self-evident: All men can be cremated equal! You know, life used to be such a simple joy And the cyclotron a super toy You got born and lived, sometimes married Atom was a word in the dictionary One of them four-letter-words But science was marching on Some science boys from every clime Got together and worked overtime Worked and worked and when they were done Why, they harnassed up the power of the doggone sun They were splitting atoms Hey Ma; look at me I'm splittin' atoms! The diplomats are still splitting hairs! Then the jingo boys they put on a show Turned back the clock on the UNO Got a court order on atoms to maybe extinguish Every doggone atom that didn't speak English Damn the foreign-born atoms America is for American atoms Well, the atoms are in a national state of hysteria That flourishes in Utah and in Siberia Whether you're black, white, red, or brown The question is the same if you boil it down To be or not to be, that is the question! It isn't a question of military doubt Like who gets there firstus with the mostus atoms It's the people of the world who decide their fate Stick together or disintegrate!

It's up to the people 'cause the atom don't care
He just flits around and sears the air
He doesn't give a darn about politics
Or who gets whom into whatever fix
All he wants to do is settle down
And have his nucleus bombarded by neutrons!
Well, I've come to the end
And I hope I made it clear
About what you gotta do
And what you gotta fear
Here's the finish and here's my thesis:
Peace to the world
Or the world in pieces!

SIDE II, Band 7: "AIKEN DRUM"

performed by Dave Sear who says:

"Here's a Scotch ballad I learned from Tony Saletan of Boston."

CHORUS:

And he played upon a ladle, a ladle, a ladle He played upon a ladle And his name was Aiken Drum

There was a man lived in the moon Lived in the moon, lived in the moon There was a man lived in the moon And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)

And his head was made of cream cheese Of cream cheese, of cream cheese His head was made of cream cheese And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)

And his coat was made of good roast beef Of good roast beef, of good roast beef His coat was made of good roast beef And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)

And his breeches were made of haggis bags Of haggis bags, of haggis bags His breeches were made of haggis bags And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)

There was a man lived in the moon Lived in the moon, lived in the moon There was a man lived in the moon And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 8: "FAIR AND TENDER LADIES"

performed by Jean Ritchie, Oscar Brand and Dave Sear

introduction by Oscar Brand:

"In preparing a program of this sort, one of the major problems is selecting which version we should sing together. This often occurs when we record our albums. Instead of solving this problem, each one of us will sing his own version!"

### JEAN RITCHIE'S VERSION:

Come all you fair and tender ladies
Take a warnin' how you court young men
There lies a bright star on a cloudy mornin'
First it appears and then it's gone
I wisht I was a little sparrow
And I had wings and I could fly
I'd fly away to my false true lovers
And while they talk I'd sit and cry

### DAVE SEAR'S VERSION:

But I am not a little sparrow I have no wings, neither can I fly So I'll just sit here to weep in sorrow And try to pass my troubles by

JEAN RITCHIE, DAVE SEAR AND OSCAR BRAND SING:

Come all you fair and tender maidens Be careful how you court young men There lies a star on a cloudy mornin' First it appears and then it's gone First they appear and then they're gone!

SIDE II, Band 9: "BLACK-EYED SUSIE"

performed by Jean Ritchie, Oscar Brand and Dave Sear

Black-eyed Susie she's full grown She jumps on a man like a dog on a bone

### CHORUS:

Hey pretty little black-eyed Susie Hey pretty little black-eyed Susie Hey pretty little black-eyed Susie, hey!

Here she comes, boy she's a honey All dressed up and waitin for Sonny

(CHORUS)

Well, there's two old maids sittin' in the sand Each one wishin' that the other was a man

(CHORUS)

Now I got me a gal in Vera Cruz She's got ten kids the Lord knows whose

(CHORUS)

Here I come a-ridin' ole Blindy She'll carry double: - come and get up behind me

(CHORUS)

Now Susie and the boys went berry pickin' The boys got drunk and Susie got a lickin'

(CHORUS)

You've been tryin' your level best Let's all go home and take a rest! For Additional Information About
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