

American Favorite Ballads: Songs and Tunes, Vol. 5

Pete Seeger with 5-string banjo and 12-string guitar / Folkways Records FA 2445



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MUSIC LP

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FOLKWAYS FA 2445

American Favorite Ballads

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET



PHOTO BY DAVID GARE

PETE SEEGER . . . HIS SONGS AND HIS WORK

The songs Pete Seeger sings are a true cross-section of American life. They come from many parts of the country. Some are old, some recent, and they tell of real people and events . . . of strife and trouble, of wars and pestilence, of love and tenderness and beauty. They are mostly handed down orally from generation to generation. Some are collected by scholars and labelled as "folk songs" and published in books. Others are modernized and altered to fit whatever the popular music standard of the moment might be and become popular favorites.

Although in subject matter they might range from building railroads or coal mining to courting songs and lullabies, they all have a quality about them which makes them of a family. Each one gives a true and razor-sharp portrait of the person or community which birthed and nurtured it. Each has in it the look and texture and feeling of the people from whom it came.

Sometimes Pete sings the songs as closely in text and style as he can to the original spirit of the song. At other times he might change the song to suit more modern feelings and times. "Goodnight Irene" was sung pretty much as the famous Negro folk-singer Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly) taught it to Pete. On the other hand, "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" is an example of a modernized song. Originally it was an ancient Irish ditty about a deceased cow. But through the handiwork first of Leadbelly who added the chorus line, and then of Pete who added the present verses, it has evolved into the song which has twice in the past decade been a sweeping national hit.

Pete's repertoire knows few boundaries, musically or internationally. The songs come from many parts of the world and are sung in many languages. Most

American Favorite Ballads

Tunes and Songs as Sung by Pete Seeger

unique, however, is Pete's unique ability to transcend the normal gulf which separates the performer from the audience and actually share the music experience of the song directly with his audience. Through his song leading he establishes a rapport with his audience unmatched in the folk performance field. In a matter of minutes Pete will have an entirely strange group tapping their feet and lustily singing songs from Africa, Asia, and Europe, as well as favorite American songs.

His material comes from diversified sources. Much of it comes directly from the people who keep alive the old traditions or who are creating new traditions of their own. Some comes from song books, old and new, and phonograph records. Collections such as the Anthology of folk music in the Library of Congress and the Folkways Ethnic Library are examples of source materials. Pete keeps the songs in their authentic setting whenever possible through the type of accompaniment he gives them and by imparting the same kind of emotional feeling into the song that the original singer might have put in.

Much of Pete's time and energies are directed towards bringing folk songs directly to audiences throughout the United States and Canada. Between tours Pete spends his time actively in collecting and writing on folk songs, recording them on longplaying records for Folkways Records, and keeping in motion a voluminous amount of correspondence with interested people all over the world. In addition he and his wife Toshi are pioneering a new field of folklore collecting . . . utilizing a 16mm sound movie camera. With this they are producing educational films documenting actual folk styles of playing various instruments and related material.

"Anyone who has tried to learn a folk instrument by simply listening to a recording, knows the problem. You have to **see** it," he says. Finished already are studies of the American five-string banjo, the Trinidad steel drum, and American fiddling techniques, and in a related vein films on children's finger games and on decorating Christmas wrapping paper with fingerpaints. Soon to be released are studies of country fiddling techniques, blues guitar, gospel tambourine playing and others.

"If we truly love folk music, we will want to learn the very best of the old traditions, in order to pass them on to those who will put together the folk-music of future generations."

—Ed Baderaux

SIDE I, Band 1: RED RIVER VALLEY

From this valley they say you are going
We will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile,
For they say you are taking the sunshine
That has brightened our pathways a while.

CHORUS:

Come and sit by my side if you love me,
Do not hasten to bid me adieu,
But remember the Red River Valley
And the boy that has loved you so true.

For a long, long time I've been waiting
For those sweet words you never would say,
But now everybody has told me
That you are going away.

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 2: FOGGY DEW

I once was a bachelor, I lived all alone
I worked by the weaver's trade
The only only thing I did that was wrong
Was to woo a fair young maid.

I wooed her in the summertime
Part of the winter too
And the only only thing I ever did that was wrong
Was to keep her from the foggy foggy dew.

It was all lately in the night
When I was fast asleep
She came and knelt close by my bed
And then began to weep.

She wept, she cried, she tore her hair
Ah me, what could I do?
So all night long I held her in my arms
Just to keep her from the foggy foggy dew.

Now I am a bachelor, I live with my son
We work at the weaver's trade
And every every time I look into his eyes
It reminds me of the fair young maid.

It reminds me of the summertime
Part of the winter too
And the many many times I held her in my arms
Just to keep her from the foggy foggy dew.

SIDE I, Band 3: MOLLY MALONE

In Dublin's fair city
Where girls are so pretty
'Twas there I first met sweet Molly Malone
She wheeled a wheelbarrow
Through streets long and narrow
Crying cockles and mussels alive, alive-o.

CHORUS:

Alive, alive-o
Alive, alive-o
Crying cockles and mussels
Alive, alive-o.

She was a fishmonger
And sure 'twas no wonder
For her father and mother were fishmongers too
And they wheeled a wheelbarrow
Through streets long and narrow
Crying cockles and mussels alive, alive-o.

(CHORUS)

She died of a fever
Of which none could relieve her
And thus I lost my Molly Malone
Now her ghost wheels a barrow
Through streets long and narrow
Crying cockles and mussels alive, alive-o.

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 4: IDA RED

Ida Red, Ida Red,
I'm in love with Ida Red.

Ida Red, Ida Red,
I'm in love with Ida Red.

Ida Red, Ida Blue,
I'm in love with Ida, too.

Ida Red is big and plump,
84 inches around the rump.

Ida Red, Ida Green,
Prettiest gal you've ever seen.

Ida Red, Ida Red,
I'm in love with Ida Red.

Ida Red is about half-grown,
Jumps on a man like a dog on a bone.

SIDE I, Band 5: TALKING BLUES

Now you want to go to heaven
Let me tell you what to do,
Gotta grease your feet in a little mutton stew,
Just slide out of the devil's hand
Ooze over in the promised land.
Take it easy, boys
Go greasy.

Now there ain't no use in me working so hard
I got a gal in the rich folks' yard
When they kill a chicken, she sends me the head
She thinks I'm working, I'm a laying up in bed
Having a good time,
I'm dreaming about her
Dreaming about two other women, too.

I was down in the hen-house on my knees
Thought I heard a chicken sneeze
'Twas only the rooster, though, saying his prayers,
Giving out thanks to the hens upstairs.
Well the rooster was preaching
Hens a-singing
'Course, little young pullets doing the best
they could.

Now, ma's in the kitchen greasing her feet,
Paw's in the backroom squeezing the yeast,
Sister's in the bedroom squeezing the hops,
Brother's at the window just watching for the cops,
Making home brew.
Getting drunk
Fooling around.

I was standing in the corner by the mantel piece
Standing in the corner by a bucket of grease
I stuck my foot in that bucket of grease
Went slipping and a-sliding down the mantel piece
I was hunting
Cigarette stubs, matches,
Yesterday's beer bottles.

SIDE I, Band 6: LOLLY TOO-DUM

As I went out one morning
To breathe the pleasant air
Lolly-too-dum, too-dum, lolly too-dum day.
As I went out one morning
To breathe the pleasant air
I overheard a mother
Just scolding her daughter fair
Lolly too-dum, too-dum, lolly too-dum day.

Now you go wash them dishes
And hush your silly tongue,
You know you want to marry
And that you are too young.

Oh pity my condition ma,
Just like you would your own...
For 14 long years
I have lived all alone.

Why, supposing I'd let you marry,
Just where would you get your man...
Why Lord sakes, mama,
I could marry that handsome Sam.

Why, supposing he should slight you
Like you done him before...
Why, Lord sakes, mama
I could marry 40 more.

There's pedlars and tinkers
And boys from the plow...
Why, Lord sakes, mama,
I could marry 40 now.

Well now my daughter's married
And well for to do...
Six daughters married
Now I'm in the market, too.

Why, Lord sakes, mama
Who would marry you?...
There's no one in the wide world
Would want a wife as old as you.

Why, there's doctors and lawyers,
And men of all degree...
And some of them will marry,
And some will marry me.

Well, now I am married
And well for to be...
Ha ha, jolly girls,
That fit is off of me.

SIDE I, Band 7: RIFLEMEN OF BENNINGTON
© John Allison

Why come ye hither, Redcoats, your mind what
madness fills?
In our forests there is danger, and there's danger
in our hills.
Oh hear ye not the singing of the bugle wild and
free?
Full soon you'll know the ringing of the rifle from
the tree.

CHORUS:
For the rifle, for the rifle,
In our hands will prove no trifle.

Ye ride a goodly steed, ye may know another
master;
Ye forward come with speed, but ye'll learn to
back much faster,
When ye meet our mountain boys and their leader,
Johnny Stark,
Lads who make but little noise, lads who always
hit the mark!

(CHORUS)

Had ye no graves at home across the briny water,
That hither ye must come like bullocks to the
slaughter?
If we the work must do, why the sooner 'tis begun,
If flint and trigger hold but true, the quicker
'twill be done! (CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 8: SUMMERTIME (G. Gershwin)

Summertime and the living is easy
Fish are jumping and the cotton is high,
Your daddy is rich, and your mama's good looking,
So hush little baby, don't you cry.

One of these mornings, you're gonna rise up singing,
And you'll spread your wings and take to the sky,
But till that morning, there's nothing can harm you,
With daddy and mama standing by.

SIDE II, Band 1: I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE
RAILROAD

I've been working on the railroad
All the live-long day,
I've been working on the railroad
Just to past the time away.
Can't you hear the whistle blowing?
Rise up so early in the morn
Can't you hear the captain shouting?
Dinah blow your horn.

Dinah, won't you blow?
Dinah, won't you blow?
Dinah, won't you blow your horn?
Dinah, won't you blow?
Dinah, won't you blow?
Dinah, won't you blow your horn?

Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah,
Someone's in the kitchen I know
Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah
Strumming on the old banjo.

Fee fi, fiddle-i-o
Fee fi, fiddle-i-o,
Fee fi, fiddle-i-o
Strumming on the old banjo.

SIDE II, Band 2: HALLELUJAH I'M A BUM

Oh, springtime has come	Well, I went to a house
I'm just out of jail	And I knocked on the door
Without any money	The lady said, "Bum, bum,
Without any bail.	You been here before."

CHORUS:
Hallelujah, I'm a bum,
Hallelujah, bum again,
Hallelujah, give us a handout
To revive us again.

(CHORUS)
Oh, why don't you work
Like other men do?
How can I work
When the skies are so blue?

I went to a door
And asked for some bread,
The lady said, "Bum, bum,
The baker is dead."

(CHORUS)
Oh, springtime has come
We're just out of jail,
Without any money,
Without any bail.

(CHORUS)

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 3: FARTHER ALONG

Tempted and tried, we're oft made to wonder
Why it should be thus all the day long,
While there are others living about us
Never molested, though in the wrong.

CHORUS:
Farther along, we'll know all about it,
Farther along, we'll understand why,
Cheer up, my brothers, live in the sunshine,
We'll understand it all by and by.

When death has come and taken our loved ones,
Leaving our home life so lonesome and drear,
While there are others living about us
Never molested, year after year.

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 4: AIN'T IT A SHAME?

Ain't it a shame to beat your wife on Sunday,
Ain't it a shame?
Ain't it a shame to beat your wife on Sunday,
Ain't it a shame?
Ain't it a shame to beat your wife on Sunday
When you got Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
Oh Thursday, Friday, Saturday,
Ain't it a shame?

Well, ain't it a shame to take a drink on Sunday,
etc.

Ain't it a shame to play cards on Sunday,
etc.

Ain't it a shame to work for nothing on Sunday,
etc.

Yes, ain't it a shame to beat your wife on Sunday,
etc.

SIDE II, Band 5: LEATHERWING BAT

Hi, said the little leatherwing bat
I'll tell you the reason that
The reason that I fly by night
Is 'cause I've lost my heart's delight.

CHORUS:

How-do-dow a little oh day
How-de-dow a little oh day
How-do-dow a little oh day
Hey lee, lee li lee oh.

Hi, said the woodpecker, settin' on a fence,
Once I courted a handsome wench,
But she got saucy and from me fled
Ever since then, my head's been red.

(CHORUS)

Hi, said the little bird so blue,
If I'd a been a young man, I'd a had two
So if one got saucy and wanted to go
I'd have me a new string to my bow.

(CHORUS)

Hi, said the owl with head so white,
A lonesome day and a lonesome night,
I thought I heard some pretty girls say
Court all night and sleep all day.

(CHORUS)

Hi, said the lonesome turtle dove,
I'll show you how to gain her love,
Keep her up both night and day,
Never give her time to say go away.

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 6: St. James Infirmary

It was down in old Joe's barroom,
In a corner by the square,

The drinks were served as usual,
And a goodly crowd was there.

On my left stood Joe McKinney,
His eyes bloodshot and red,
He said, "You can set 'em up, bartender,"
And these were the words he said:

"I was down by St. James Infirmary,
I saw my sweetheart there,
She was laying out on a cold white table
So cold, so white, so bare.

"I went up to the doctor,
She's mighty low, he said,
I went back to my baby,
Good God, she's laying there dead.

"Let her go, let her go, God bless her,
Wherever she may be;
You can search this whole wide world over
But there'll never be another for me.

"Now when I die, just bury me
In my long black coat and silk hat
Place a 20-dollar gold piece on my watch-chain
To show the good Lord I'm standing pat.

"And now my story's over
You can pass around another shot of booze
And if anybody should ask you
I've got those gambler's blues."

SIDE II, Band 7: T B BLUES (Jimmie Rodgers)

Well my gal's trying to make a fool out of me (2)
She's trying to make me believe I ain't got
that old T. B.

CHORUS:

I got the T. B. Blues
When it rained down sorrow, it rained all
over me (2)

'Cause my body rattles like a freight on that
old S. P.

I got the T. B. Blues.

Ooh TB, TB, TB, TB, you robber
TB, TB, took my life away
Oh I never can remember just when you came
in me to stay

Well, I'm fighting like a lion, but I know I'm
bound to lose (2)
'Cause there never was a body whipped these
old T. B. Blues.

(CHORUS)

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