

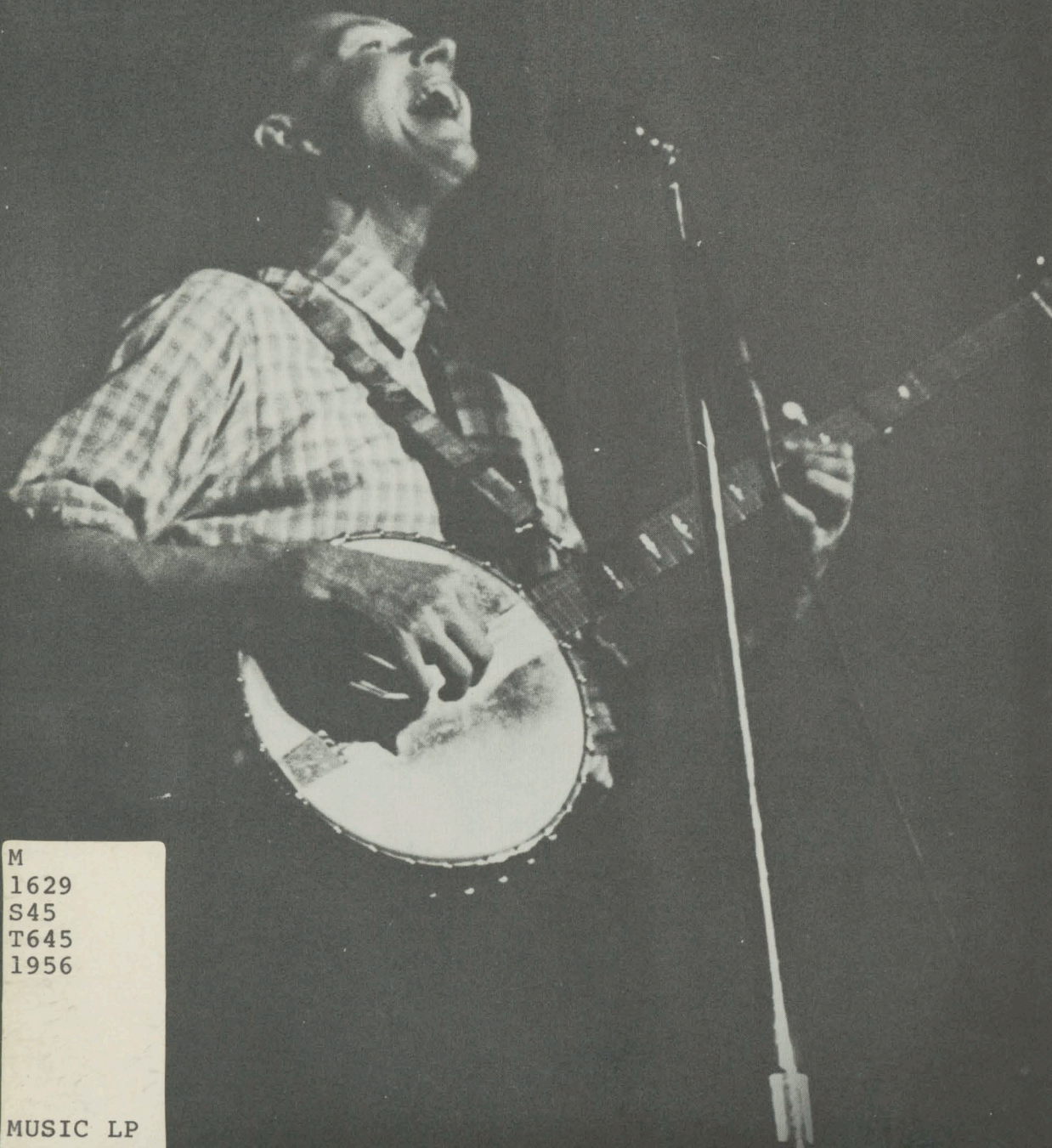
WITH VOICES TOGETHER WE SING

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ISAIAH 52:8 "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

**PETE SEEGER
AND
BANJO
LEADER
WITH
AUDIENCE
PARTICIPATION
IN
A
PROGRAM
OF
FOLK
SONGS**



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S45
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1956

MUSIC LP

LAWRENCE PHOTO

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WITH VOICES TOGETHER WE SING

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

DEEP BLUE SEA
RISSELTLY ROSSELTLY
EQUINOXIAL
OLEANNA
CHANUKAH
WHAT MONTH WAS JESUS BORN
ADDENDA
QUE BONITA BANDERA

STREETS OF LAREDO
BRANDY LEAVE ME ALONE
DIN'T OLD JOHN
MICHAEL, ROW THE BOAT
SENZENINA
WIMOWEH
WASN'T THAT A TIME

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album # FA 2452

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WITH VOICES TOGETHER WE SING

*Isaiah 52:8 "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing:
for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."*

*Peter Seeger and banjo, Leader
and Audience Participation in a Program of Folk Songs*

Introductory Notes by Peter Seeger

Those who love folk songs can recall the warm and exciting feeling of a mass of people singing together.

They can also remember the times when a song leader, out of tune with the audience, tried unsuccessfully to get a group to loosen up and sing. One of the less appealing things in the field of music is the spectacle of someone trying to read the words off a songsheet, at the same time saying, "Come on, everybody, come on; let's sing, now," followed by a waving of the arms like as not out of rhythm with the piano. It is a tribute to the lasting quality of folk music that such performances have not been able to kill it.

No two audiences are alike and the leader must be prepared to improvise and feel his way, until leader and audience are in tune with each other. At first, be wary of songs that are too strange and difficult. A song too familiar, stale or trite, can be even worse. Take long enough to explain the part you want the audience to sing with you - but not too long. If the song is unfamiliar, take long enough to describe the background of the song, so that the words are meaningful. On the other hand, too much talk is the death of the spirit of the music.

Rhythm and pacing are the most important things. This is why it is such a help to play one's own accompaniment; it is more important than being in exact pitch or knowing the most appropriate harmonies, nice as these may be. Rhythm can be given to the singers not just by the sound of the accompaniment, but by the sight of an arm or the whole body moving, or the feel of a foot tapping on the floor. Rhythm can be oppressive, too, so afford relief from it occasionally -- vary it, and at times abandon strict time for what is known as imperiodic rhythm or free cadence.



Often the main problem is how to loosen an audience up, and make them lose self-consciousness. A good belly laugh is one of the best ways to do this, but don't risk the sour aftertaste of an unsuccessful attempt at humor. Perhaps, more than any trick or artifice, it is best simply to enjoy yourself completely and trust that it will be catching.

Little things help. Pitch a song in a key everyone can sing. In the beginning, it is better to be too low than too high. Only low altoes and basses can go below a G; only real tenors and sopranos can be counted on to be comfortable above C or D. Certain songs, needing a warm and relaxed feeling, must be pitched as low as possible. Others have an occasional high note, which, to sound right, must be at the top of everyone's range. (Remember: 'Happy is the day when the soldier gets his pay' in the song 'I've Got Sixpence'?) Small children can sing two or three tones higher than adults. As for teen-agers -- no two voices are alike.

How to keep a large audience in rhythm? Main strength. Keep the tempo. But don't expect a

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large audience to be able to swing a fast hoe-down rhythm. As for accompaniment: A few songs need none, but we are so used to the traditional rhythmic accompaniment that some songs seem incomplete without it. Guitars and banjos are good because the sharp punctuation of the plucked string points out the rhythm without obscuring the melody.

The audience heard on this record was composed mostly of teen-agers and young adults, of college age, about 500 in number. They were acquainted with the song leader, but on the average had probably not heard more than half of the songs before, and a few numbers were completely new to all. On the whole, they were a cross section of young New Yorkers of varied background, united for an evening by a common love of folk music. A different age group, or an audience composed of country people, westerners or southerners or of totally different national backgrounds would have necessitated a somewhat different selection of songs.

Some songs are much easier than others to teach to an audience; songs with simple choruses or refrains are naturally first choice. But a slow song, especially one with a bit of repetition, can easily be sung, with the words given out just before each line, as in "Brandy, Leave Me Alone." Every year, as folk songs become more widely sung, it becomes easier to get people singing with you, and eventually we in America may reach the high level of casual mass singing that one finds in, for example, slavie countries, or in Africa, where the population has not been severed from its folk heritage.

Ed. Notes: There is no need to dwell on Peter Seeger's infectious spirit as a song leader. In this album of songs, which are the spirit of American folk traditions, we hope that his particular attempts to solve problems of making the best of past traditions meaningful to today's youth, will be pertinent and valuable to you.

Notes

by Harold Thompson, Cornell University

Pete says: "The most important thing about the record is the way people join in on a song. Mass participation in folk-singing is one of the most important elements in the whole revival of interest in folk-music. If folk-music is left to the professionals, it will die the quick death of any fad. If it enters the lives and homes of people who will make music themselves, then it will grow, change, and last." Extremely

modest as this statement is -- coming from a master of the five-string banjo who has the ability to thrill almost any audience when he sings solo -- it is a true statement of an opinion which is shared by many of us who know that folksong is going back to "the people, yes" by way of young folks who are "America singing."

This recording was made at a "concert" that Pete gave for five hundred teen-agers at New York's Museum of Modern Art in the fall of 1955. Similar results could have been recorded at any one of the many colleges and universities where students are buying an incredible number of banjos and guitars, making imitations of mountain dulcimers, singing all over the campus, and welcoming Pete's frequent visits.

Like most old-time singers from whom American folksongs were collected in the past, Pete just likes songs. Strictly speaking from the point of view of those scholars who collected old British ballads forty or fifty years ago, some of the songs on this record are not folksongs at all, though they are transmitted usually without the aid of print. The following notes are quite unnecessary for the enjoyment of this record but may interest those who wonder where Pete's songs come from.

SIDE I, Band 1. "DEEP BLUE SEA." Pete's father, a distinguished folklorist, thinks that this version may have come from the Bahamas. Cornell students have been singing it for only a couple years. "Lower him down with a golden chain" and "Dig his grave with a silver spade" are lines found in the sea-chanty called "Stormalong" and in other old songs. Pete likes the "type of rhythm and the general warm feeling."

SIDE I, Band 2. "RISSELTY-ROSSELTY" was first heard by Pete on a recording in the Library of Congress made in the South in the 1930's; Pete's stepmother, the late Ruth Seeger, once wrote a symphonic arrangement. Similar nonsense syllables can be found in the refrain of "The Wee Cooper of Fife" and in other old songs.

SIDE I, Band 3. "LITTLE PHOEBE" or "EQUINOXIAL" was recorded for the Library of Congress by a blind woman in Arkansas, Emma Dusenberry. The story of the woman who could do more work than her husband has been a favorite subject for ballads. The best one I have collected was given me in 1940 by Florence Coonrod of Cohoes, N. Y. She got the song from her grandmother who knew it as "There was an old man lived in the woods."

SIDE I, Band 4. "OLEANNA." This is said to have been produced in Norway as a satire upon people who thought they were going to find gold in the streets of the American settlement of Oleanna, founded in the 1840's by the famous Norwegian violinist Ole Bull. Pete composed the English verses himself as a "fairly direct translation of the original meaning." The Norwegians undoubtedly had heard medieval jokes about such places as "Schlarauffenland" or "Cockaigne," an imaginary land of luxury where roast

pigs run along the streets with knives and forks conveniently stuck in their backs. For other songs about Norwegians who came to America see Norwegian Emigrant Songs and Ballads, edited and translated by Theodore C. Blegen and Martin B. Rund (1936); eleven melodies are given.

SIDE I, Band 5(A): "CHANUKAH, OH CHANUKAH." Perhaps composed in the 19th century, this song celebrates the Jewish holiday in December which recalls the time in the second century before the Christian era when Judah the Maccabee defeated Antiochus IV of Syria, cleansed the Temple, and found one undefiled cruse or flask which, according to tradition, provided enough oil to burn for eight days. Nowadays Jewish homes remember the miracle by worship, by presenting gifts, and by lighting candles for eight nights in what Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein of Rochester, N. Y. calls "a rising crescendo of light." (What the Jews Believe, 1951, pp. 43-47). See Mrs. Ruth Rubin's articles in the N. Y. Folklore Quarterly, IX, 255-260, and X, 308-309, published in 1953 and 1954.

SIDE I, Band 5(B): "LAST MONTH OF THE YEAR", a Negro song for Christmastide, was recorded for the Library of Congress by Vera Hall of Alabama and also by a trio of children in Mississippi. Mrs. Ruth Seeger used it in her American Folk Songs for Christmas (1953). Pete thinks that it would probably be sung oftenest by what is called a Gospel Quartet, and may not be more than thirty years old. It is certainly very effective in rhythm and melodic outline. Notice that Pete makes no attempt at dialect when he sings Negro songs; usually he does not even say that they are from Negroes; to him they are just good songs.

(ADDENDA): Transition rhyme, made for the tune of a popular song, "Davy Crockett."

SIDE I, Band 6: "QUE BONITA BANDERA." Pete recently heard this song sung by a Puerto Rican trio in New York City, and later found that it was very widely known among the city's large number of immigrants from the island who tell him that the text is by a contemporary author. The lively tune could easily be that of some Mexican or Spanish song. The audience sings the refrain without caring what the Spanish words mean -- and probably without knowing anything about the song except that it is about a flag and has attractive rhythm of the dance.

SIDE II, Band 1a. "STREETS OF LAREDO." Pete's father suggested to him that this cowboy song would make a canon-at-the unison or round. The tune was used for several older Irish songs including "The Bard of Armash."

SIDE II, Band 1b. Another canon, on "O Brandy, leave me alone," a little South African song which Pete learned from Joseph Marais who translated the words from Afrikanas and who used to hear it sung around campfires.

SIDE II, Band 2 (A): "DIDN'T OLD JOHN CROSS THE WATER?" A worksong of South Carolina Negroes. Pete learned it from Alan Lomax but has changed the tune slightly, as the folk often do. Notice that Pete brought along an ax and a log to demonstrate the rhythm of the chopping. For the Lomax version see Our Singing Country (1941), p. 384.

SIDE II, Band 2 (B): "MICHAEL, ROW THE BOAT ASHORE" is another fine Negro song, this one from the Georgia Sea Islands. The man who sang it to Pete called it a Gospel Song, though it is also used at work.

SIDE II, Band 3 (A): "SENZENINA". Pete learned this South African song from Mrs. Z. K. Matthews who says that it is sung in harmony -- very likely if, as he thinks, "it is obviously a missionary hymn-tune." The harmonies (which the audience liked) are certainly such as might be found in a 19th century hymn or in an anthem for village choirs in England.

SIDE II, Band 3 (B): "WIMEWEH" is another (and superior) song from South Africa. Pete learned it from a record called "Mbube." About the year 1946 the song was very popular in South Africa and was said to have been made from an older one. The record was made by "Solomon Lindo and His Evening Birds" in Johannesburg. On a Folkways recording, New York 19, Tony Schwartz compares Pete's singing with the "original." It is an amusing fact that when Pete made a recording with a group of which he was a member, his recording found its way back to South Africa again and enjoyed a new success. There was yodeling on the earlier record; Pete, who has changed the song only slightly, uses here a very effective yodel. The idea of a hero sleeping until he is awakened to help his nation is found often in European lore; for example, Barbarossa for the Germans, Drake for the English.

SIDE II, Band 4: "WASN'T THAT A TIME!" This, of course, is not a folksong. Although it was written only five or ten years ago, Pete says that he has heard varying versions in different parts of the country, so it seems to be entering tradition, though he says, "Fifty years from now it might sound as dated as some of the abolitionist or temperance songs of the 19th century." Evidently the audience here recorded included many young people who already knew the tune and some of the words. Possibly they liked the references to American history (Washington, Gettysburg, World War II); probably they found the tune "catchy." Anyway, they had a happy time, and so will those who hear this record with its variety of songs that young people enjoyed in 1955 -- in addition to "Rock and Roll."

SIDE I, Band 1: DEEP BLUE SEA

Deep blue sea, baby, deep blue sea (3 times)
It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea.

Lower him down with a golden chain (3 times)
It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea.

Dig his grave with a silver spade (3 times)
It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea.

(repeat chorus)

SIDE I, Band 2: RISSELTY ROSSELT

I married a wife in the month of June
Risselty risselty now now now.
I carried her off by the light of the moon,
Risselty risselty
Hey bombosity
Nickety nackety
Retricule quality*
Willoughby wallaby
Now now now!

She swept the floor but once a year...etc.
She swore her broom was much too dear...etc.

She combed her hair but once a year...etc.
With every rake she gave a tear.....etc.

She churned the butter in Dad's old boot...etc.
And for a dasher she used her foot...etc.

The butter came out a grizzly gray...
The cheese took legs and ran away...

The cheese and molasses are on the shelf
If you want some more verses you sing 'em yourself.

*A reticule was a lady's handbag. We assume
this is a reference to "high quality folks" -
the kind of folks who might carry a "reticule."

SIDE I, Band 3: EQUINOXIAL

Equinoxial swore by the green leaves on the tree
That he could do more work in a day than Phoebe
could in three, three
That he could do more work in a day than Phoebe
could in three.

If that be true the old woman said, then this you must
allow
You come do the work in the house and I'll go follow
the plow.

And you must milk the brindle cow for fear she would
go dry.

It's you must feed the little pig that stands in yonder sty.

And you must churn that crock of cream that I left in
the frame.

You must watch the fat in the pot or it'll all go in a
flame.

He went to milk the brindle cow but she wrinkled up her nose,
She give him a dip upon the lip and the blood run to his
toes.

He went to churn the crock of cream that she left in
the frame

And he forgot the fat in the pot, and it all went in a
flame.

He looked to the east, he looked to the west, and saw
the setting sun

He swore to himself it had been a long day and Phoebe
hadn't come.

Presently little Phoebe came and saw him looking sad
She clapped her hands upon her sides and swore that
she was glad.

Then Equinoxial swore by all the stars in heaven
That she could do more work in a day than he could
do in seven.

SIDE I, Band 4: OLEANNA

Oh, to be in Oleanna, that's where I'd like to be,
Than be bound in Norway and drag the chains of
slavery.

Ole-Ole-anna, Ole - Ole-anna
Ole - Ole - Ole - Ole - Ole-anna.

In Oleanna land is free, the wheat and corn just plant
themselves
Then grow four feet a day, while on your bed you rest
yourself.

Beer, sweet as Munchener, springs from the ground
and flows away,
The cows all like to milk themselves and hens lay
eggs ten times a day.

Little roasted piggies rush about the city streets
Inquiring so politely if a slice of ham you'd like to
eat.

Aye, if you'd begin to live to Oleanna you must go,
The poorest wretch in Norway become a king in a
year or so.

Oh, to be in Oleanna, that's where I'd like to be
Than be bound in Norway, and drag the chain of slavery.

SIDE I, Band 5 (A): CHANUKAH

Chanukah, Oh, chanukah, a yomtov a shayner,
A lustiger a fraylicher nito noch a zoiner,
Alle nacht in dreidl shpielen mir
Hayse, fette latkes essen mir.
Ceschwinder, tsind, kinder
Di chanukah lichtelech un,
Lomir alle zingen, lummir alle shpringen
Lomir alle tanzen in kan, , , , (repeat last two lines)

SIDE I, Band 5(B): WHAT MONTH WAS JESUS BORN

What month was my Jesus born in?
On the last month of the year!
What month was my Jesus born in?
The last month of the year!

Oh, January (January)
February (February)
March! Oh, Lordy
April, May and June
You got July, August, September,
October, Lordy, November.
On the twenty-fifth day of December
On the last month of the year.

Well they laid him in a manger... (etc.)

Well they wrapped him in a swaddling cloth... (etc.)

Well, He was born of the Virgin Mary (etc.)

SIDE I, Band 5: (ADDENDA):

Born in a garbage can in Tennessee
Burnt down the church when he was only three
Hung his pa to a hickory tree
And lost his mother in the A and P

SIDE I, Band 6: (QUE BONITA BANDERA)

Que bonita bandera
Que bonita bandera
Que bonita bandera
Es la bandera Puertoriquena.

Azul blanca y colorada
Y en el medio tiene un estrella
Bonita, Senores, es la bandera Puertoriquena.

Todo buen Puertoriquenos
Es buen que la defienda
Bonita, Senores, es la bandera Puertoriquena.

Bonita Senora, que bonita es ella
Bonita, Senores, es la bandera Puertoriquena.

SIDE II, Band 1 (A): STREETS OF LAREDO

As I walked out in the streets of Laredo
As I walked out in Laredo one day,
I spied a young cowboy all wrapped in white linen
All wrapped in white linen, as cold as the clay.

SIDE II, Band 1 (B): BRANDY LEAVE ME ALONE

Oh brandy, leave me alone
Oh brandy, leave me alone
Oh brandy, leave me alone
Remember I must go home.
Oh, brandy you broke my heart
Oh, brandy you broke my heart
Oh, brandy leave me alone
Remember I must go home.

SIDE II, Band 2 (A): DIDN'T OLD JOHN

Didn't old John, cross the waters on his knees?
Didn't old John, cross the waters on his knees.
Let us all bow down, good Lord, and face, face the
rising sun.
Didn't old John cross the water, waters on his knees?

Let us all sing together, 'gether on our knees,
Let us all sing together, on our knees.
Let us all bow down, good Lord and face, face the
rising sun,
Let us all sing together, 'gether on our knees.

SIDE II, Band 2 (B): MICHAEL, ROW THE BOAT

Michael, row the boat ashore, Allelulia!
Michael, row the boat ashore, Allelulia!

Michael's boat is a gospel boat...etc.

Sister, help to trim the sail...etc.

Jordan's river is deep and wide...etc.
Meet my mother on the other side

Jordan's river is chilly and cold...etc.
Chills the body but not the soul.

Michael's boat is a music boat...etc.

SIDE II, Band 3 (A): SENZENINA

Senzenina, Senzenina
Senzenina, Senzenina
Senzenina, Senzenina
Senzenina, Senzenina



Photo by Tom Burnside

SIDE II, BAND 3 (B): WIMOWEH

Basses: Hey --- yup boy, Wimoweh,
Wimoweh, wimoweh.

Tenors: Wimoweh, wimoweh, wimoweh, wimoweh,
Wimoweh, wimoweh, wimoweh, wimoweh.

(Lead in falsetto)

SIDE II, Band 4: WASN'T THAT A TIME

Our fathers bled at Valley Forge,
The snow was red with blood
Their faith was warm, at Valley Forge
Their faith was brotherhood.

Wasn't that a time (Wasn't that a time)
Wasn't that a time, a time to try...the soul of man
Wasn't that a terrible time?

And brave men died at Gettysburg,
And lie in soldiers' graves
But there they stemmed the slavery tide
And there the faith was saved.

(Repeat chorus)

The fascists came with chains and war
To prison us in hate
And many a good man fought and died
To save the stricken faith.

And now again the madmen come
And shall our victory fail
There is no victory in a land
Where free men go to jail.

Isn't this a time (Isn't this a time)
Isn't this a time to try the soul of man
Isn't this a terrible time?

Our faith cries out, they shall not pass
We cry, No Pasaran,
We pledge our lives, our honor
All to free our native land.

Isn't this a time (Isn't this a time)
Isn't this a time to free the soul of man
Isn't this a wonderful time?

CREDITS:

DEEP BLUE SEA: Anon.
RISSELTLY ROSSELTLY: Anglo-American. Traditional
EQUINOXIAL: From Emma Dusenberry, Mena, Ark.
OLEANNA: English lyrics by P. Seeger
CHANUKAH:
WHAT MONTH WAS JESUS BORN IN: Amer. Negro
Folksong
QUE BONITA BANDERA: - Author Unknown
STREETS OF LAREDO: Cowboy variant of English
ballad, coll. by John Lomax
BRANDY LEAVE ME ALONE: S. African version
J. Marais
DIDN'T OLD JOHN: Amer. Negro worksong, Coll.
by John & Alan Lomax
MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT: Amer. Negro worksong,
Verses Arr. by Tony Saletan
SENZENINA: S. African protest song
WIMOWEH: (orig. Mbube) by Solomon Linda,
Johannesburg, So. Africa
WASN'T THAT A TIME: (Paine-Lowenfels-Hays)

Lawrence Photo
Recording Engineer, David Hancock
Production Director, Moses Asch

The rumble of the 8th Avenue Subway was unavoidable
in one or two of the selections