



THE
OLD
RELIABLE
STRING
BAND

Old-Timey Folk Music

TOM PALEY
ROY BERKELEY
ARTIE ROSE



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3. Cherokee Shuffle
4. Lewis Collins
5. I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes
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7. Willie Moore
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The Old Reliable String Band

TOM PALEY ROY BERKELEY ARTIE ROSE



SIDE 1:

FA 2475A

Band 1: FLY AROUND
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 Band 3: CHEROKEE SHUFFLE
 Band 4: LEWIS COLLINS
 Band 5: I'M THINKING TONIGHT OF MY BLUE EYES
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SIDE 2:

FA 2475B

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A Statement By Tom Paley

During the considerable number of years since I commenced singing folksongs and playing on the guitar and banjo, I have leaned strongly towards the traditional styles of the small country string bands and family singing groups (like the Carter Family and the Monroe Brothers). It was this leaning which led me, a few years ago, to combine with Mike Seeger and John Cohen to form the New Lost City Ramblers. Our recent break-up, due, among other things, to their desire to be full-time performers and my unwillingness to be one, has not altered my feelings about the music a whit. For my part, this album is intended, in large measure, as a statement or reaffirmation of my love for old-timey country music.

My companions in this venture, Roy Berkeley and Artie Rose, also play primarily for love of the music rather than professional aspirations. I am very glad to be working with them.

Notes By Roy Berkeley

At the time of this writing, Tom is in Sweden and Artie is hopelessly tied up with his job and other commitments and it has devolved upon me to speak for the three of us in these notes. Tom and Art agreed, very slickly it seems to me, that, as a writer of sorts, I should do the notes anyhow.

To begin with, you may notice that there is no discography here. It seems to me that there are probably only a half dozen people in the entire United States to whom the master numbers of old records matter, and they already know those numbers. Also, elaborate listings of long-out-of-print recordings are a frustrating business; even if one knows the numbers, one can't very well go into a record store and order them, anyhow. And the whole thing smacks of a kind of snobbery which I find offensive.

I have tried, as often as possible, to cite recordings of songs in this album that are currently available. If you are lucky enough to have copies or tapes of the old recordings, so much the better.

Also, I have tried to keep the notes on the songs from sounding too much like an article for some scholarly anthropology journal. I have nothing against the scholarly approach to folk music but, frankly, that is just not my approach.

The Old Reliable String Band was formed in November of 1962 and cut this recording the following month. What we were aiming for was the kind of sound achieved by the old-time string bands of the twenties and thirties, much the same sort of thing that the New Lost City Ramblers did when Tom was a member of that group. While comparisons between us and the

old NLCR are going to be inevitable, we would remind the listener that the personnel of the two groups, (with, of course, the exception of Tom), are different people with different personalities and orientations toward the music.

In many of the songs on this record we did not confine ourselves to strict duplication of the words, music and arrangement from any one old recording. "Blue Yodel" for example, is a compendium of blues verses from four of Jimmy Rodgers' recordings. Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers are one of the few groups that did not record "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes" but we did it in Poole style.

We seemed to agree from the start that we wanted to try for some reasonable mean between esotericism and performance-oriented commercialism; we enjoy playing and singing together and felt that this enjoyment was what we wanted to communicate.

And now, a purely personal note.

I am, I suppose, a dreadful reactionary as far as aesthetic matters are concerned; I may as well admit that right away. There was a time when houses, firearms, musical instruments and the music played on them were made honestly and made to be decorative and made to last. Today's bread is mostly air and artificial flavoring and all the taste has been removed and, listening to today's commercial music (and today's commercialized "folk" music) the comparison is inescapable.

This is not to say that I regard the old-time music as some sort of quaint or charming antique; as long as there are people around who can sing the old songs because they have within themselves a sense of that honesty and directness represented in the old songs, those old songs will survive.

We are not, nor would we pretend to be, yokels in any sense of the word. And, anyhow, the bulk of the southern rural population would rather listen to Elvis Presley or Pat Boone than listen to old records of the Carter Family.

It is ironic that the greatest stronghold of the old music is to be found among university-educated city-dwellers. Perhaps these are the people who feel today's estrangement from honesty most acutely.

This is a very personal kind of music and yet it represents some fairly universal terms of communication.

I just wonder, though, whether the Carter Family or Poole's Ramblers spent quite as much time tuning as we do.....

FLY AROUND: Variants of this one are numerous and usually known by this name or "Fly Around My



"Pretty Little Pink" or by some other name. The verses are interchangeable with those of dozens of similar songs; in fact Tom seldom ever sings the same set of verses twice. That apocalyptic boom running under the fiddle and banjo parts is not a bass drum but a D-28 Martin tuned a whole tone below pitch and attacked molto con brio.

STREETS OF GLORY: Recorded by the Carter Family under the name, (as I dimly recall), "I'm Going Down To the River of Jordan" and also by Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, Sonny Terry, and Alec Stewart on the old Folksay series. The verses sung here were chosen by Tom from the many possibilities; vetoed was my suggestion of Chas. E. Jahncke's immortal contribution, "I'm gonna waltz with the Virgin Mary".

CHEROKEE SHUFFLE: Artie learned this pretty from an old Tommy Jackson recording and I have not met anybody who was not charmed by it. I hope the Mechanical Monster Scruggs Pickers never molest it; that would be a shame.

LEWIS COLLINS: Tom learned this from a tape of another tape of an old recording and we do not know anything about the singer. Tom's guess is that it was John Hurt (q.v. vol. 1 and 3, Folkways Anthology of American Folk Music) or maybe it was Furry Lewis, (ibid. vol. 1).

I'M THINKING TONIGHT OF MY BLUE EYES: Written by A. P. Carter, if you believe A. P. Carter; Carter had a tendency, reminiscent of certain collectors and contemporary folksingers, to claim authorship to just about everything in sight. It is probably lucky that the Carter Family recorded this one though, since their recording provides a kind of standard by which to judge other efforts. Probably the best known recording of this song was a early-1940's rendition by a fellow known as "The Crying Cowboy"; I cannot remember his straight monicker and maybe you can help me. Was it Bob Atcher?

BURY ME BENEATH THE WILLOW: Tom and Art took this arrangement, with its variant melody, from an early Monroe Brothers recording. An uncommon approach to a common and well-loved song.

WILLIE MOORE: I love this ballad dearly and was delighted to learn that Art and Tom felt the same. I have never run across any other versions of it. It was recorded by Burnett and Rutherford on an old black-label Columbia recording.

SPARKLING BLUE EYES: We took some liberties with the arrangement on the original Decca recording by Bill Carlisle's Kentucky Boys; while they played it on two guitars at breakneck speed (with the kind of dazzling articulation you can hear today from Doc Watson) we slowed it down and added dobro. If you think it sounds like an early Ernest Tubb -- well, bless you, friend.

BOIL THEM CABBAGE DOWN: Tom Paley is a man of surprising virtuositities; in addition to doing the second-best W. C. Fields imitation I have ever heard, he can really put over the feeling of an old Uncle Dave Macon performance. Maybe it has something to do with his build. The song is an old hoe-down number and the verses are to be found in an astonishing variety of second-cousins.

RODNEY'S GLORY: An Irish fiddle tune from Artie Rose's apparently limitless collection. Does Fiddler Beers play this one? If he doesn't, he surely should.

BLUE YODEL: The RCA Victor people have reissued a number of old Jimmy Rodgers recordings; this is an act I would classify under the heading of Civic Duty. Rodgers listened to the Negro blues singers of his day with uncommon acuteness and translated their three-line blues form into a country-music form that is a marvel and a wonder. Please, please, please though, don't compare my yodelling with his.

EAST TENNESSEE BLUES: To get an idea of the possibilities of phrasing and rhythm dormant in this dance tune, compare Tom and Artie's approach, (modified from an old recording by Tommy Jackson), with those of Fred Price and Clint Howard (as recorded by Ralph Rinzler for Folkways) and Byard and John Ray and Ervin Lewis, as recorded by Kenneth Goldstein. Both of these recordings are currently available.

LORD BATEMAN: An astonishing old ballad in which, mirabile dictu, nobody dies. Obviously this one goes back at least to the days of the Crusades. This version is patterned on the one sung by Pleaz Mobley, well known and highly regarded for his singing for the Library of Congress collection and in his campaigns for the Kentucky State Legislature.

SAD AND LONESOME DAY: If you own the Folkways Anthology of Folk Music, compare the text of this song to "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" by Blind Lemon, and compare the tune to "K. C. Moan" by the Memphis Jug Band. Woody Guthrie recorded this Carter Family version and swiped the tune for his "Vigilante Man".

THE GYPSY GIRL: Taken pretty much intact from an old recording by the North Carolina Ramblers. This song and "Lord Bateman" have been cited, in all seriousness, by a colleague of mine as expressions of approval, however tacit, of miscegenation but I think I am being kidded here. Another point: Tom and I occasionally differ on interpretations of words on these old records; for example there is a line in Poole's "Baltimore Fire" which sounds to me like "...brave farmers struggled with devotion" and to Tom it sounds like "...brave firemen struggled..." On this recording I am convinced Poole, in the last verse, alludes to "...a pleasant quiet shore"; Tom sings it "pleasant white shore". On the only other recording of this song in my collection, Harry and Jeanie West interpret the line my way, so there. Incidentally, Artie Rose is on that recording, too, made over ten years ago.

LITTLE BIRDIE: Artie Rose regards himself as primarily a musician and accompanist; he doesn't feel that solo singing is his long suit. We got him to sing on this one, though, and, when you compare him to some of the self-proclaimed "Huck Finn" folksingers around these days, he comes out well in the comparison.

Ballad of a man who was killed during the American Civil War. The song is a ballad, and it is a very beautiful one. It is a song that is often sung at funerals, and it is a song that is often sung at weddings. It is a song that is often sung at all kinds of occasions, and it is a song that is often sung by all kinds of people. It is a song that is often sung by all kinds of people, and it is a song that is often sung by all kinds of people.

SIDE I, Band 1:

FLY AROUND

CHORUS:

Fly around, my pretty little miss
Fly around, my daisy
Fly around, my pretty little miss
You almost drive me crazy

The higher up the cherry tree
The riper grow the cherries
The more you hug and kiss the girls
The sooner they will marry

(CHORUS)

I'm gonna gather some weevily wheat
I'm gonna gather some barley
I'm gonna gather some weevily wheat
And bake a cake for Charlie

(CHORUS)

Oh, once I had a big frame house
A horse and a buggy fine
I used to hug and kiss the girls
I used to call them mine

(CHORUS)

Tom: banjo and verses, harmony on chorus
Roy: guitar and lead voice on chorus
Art: fiddle

SIDE I, Band 2:

STREETS OF GLORY

I'm gonna walk the streets of glory (oh, yes)
I'm gonna walk the streets of glory some of
these days, hallelujah
I'm gonna walk the streets of glory
I'm gonna walk the streets of glory some of
these days

I'm gonna walk and talk with Jesus (oh, yes)
I'm gonna walk and talk with Jesus some of these
days, hallelujah
I'm gonna walk and talk with Jesus
I'm gonna walk and talk with Jesus some of these
days

I'm gonna tell God how you treat me (oh, yes)
I'm gonna tell God how you treat me some of
these days, hallelujah
I'm gonna tell God how you treat me
I'm gonna tell God how you treat me some of
these days

God's gonna set this world on fire
God's gonna set this world on fire some of these
days, hallelujah
God's gonna set this world on fire
God's gonna set this world on fire some of these
days

Art: guitar and lead voice
Tom: guitar and tenor harmony
Roy: droning bass

SIDE I, Band 3:

CHEROKEE SHUFFLE

Art: mandolin
Roy: guitar

SIDE I, Band 4:

LEWIS COLLINS

CHORUS:

Angels laid him away
They laid him six feet under the clay
Angels laid him away

Miss Collins weep, Miss Collins moan
To see her son Lewis leave his home
Angels laid him away

(CHORUS)



Kind friends, oh ain't it hard
To see poor Lewis in a new graveyard
Angels laid him away

(CHORUS)

When the people heard that Lewis was dead
All the women-folk they dressed in red
Angels laid him away

(CHORUS)

Oh, Bob shot one and Lewis shot two
They shot poor Collins, shot him through and through
Angels laid him away

(CHORUS)

Tom: guitar and voice

SIDE I, Band 5:

I'M THINKING TONIGHT OF MY BLUE EYES

CHORUS:

Oh I'm thinking tonight of my blue eyes
Who is sailing far over the sea
Oh I'm thinking tonight of my blue eyes
And I wonder if she ever thinks of me

Oh I'm thinking it would have been better
In this wide and wicked world had we not met
For the pleasures we've both known together
I am sure, love, I'll never forget

(CHORUS)

Oh you told me once, dear, that you loved me
And you promised we never would part
But a link in the chain has been broken
Leaving me with a sad and aching heart

(CHORUS)

When the cold, cold grave shall enclose me
Will you come, dear, and shed just one tear
And say to the strangers around you
A poor heart you have broken lies here

(CHORUS)

Art: fiddle
Tom: banjo and tenor harmony
Roy: guitar and lead voice

SIDE I, Band 6:

BURY ME BENEATH THE WILLOW

My heart is sad and I am lonely
Thinking of the one I love
I know that I shall never see him
'Til we meet in heaven above

CHORUS:

Bury me beneath the willow
Under the weeping willow tree
And when he knows where I am sleeping
Then perhaps he'll weep for me

They told me that he loved another
How could I believe them true
Until an angel softly whispered
"He has proven untrue to you".

(CHORUS)

Tomorrow was our wedding day
Oh God, Oh God, where can he be?
He's gone away to wed another
And no more he cares for me

(CHORUS)

Tom: guitar and lead voice
Art: mandolin and tenor harmony

SIDE I, Band 7:

WILLIE MOORE

Willie Moore was a king, his age twenty-one
He courted a lady fair
Oh her eyes were as bright as a blossom in the night
And raven-black was her hair

He courted her both night and day
Til to marry they did agree
But when he come to get her parents' consent
They said it might never be

She threw herself into Willie Moore's arms
As oft'times had done before
And little did he think when they parted that night
Fair Annie he would see no more

'Twas about the second week of May
And the time I remember well
That very same night her body disappeared
In a way no tongue can tell

Annie was loved both far and near
Had friends 'most all around
And in a little brook before the cottage door
The body of sweet Annie was found

She was taken by her weeping friends
And carried to her parents' room
And there she was wrapped in her shroud of snowy
white
And laid in her lonesome tomb

Her parents now were left all alone
One mourned and the other weep
And in the little mound before the cottage door
The body of sweet Annie did sleep

This song was composed in the south and west
By a man you may never have seen
Oh I'll tell you his name but it is not in full
His initials are J.R.B.

Roy: voice
Tom: banjo
Art: fiddle

SIDE I, Band 8:

SPARKLING BLUE EYES

There's a ramshackle shack in old Caroline
That's calling me back to that gal of mine
Those dear blue eyes I long to see
Little girl of my dreams she will always be

CHORUS:

Those dear blue eyes that sparkle with love
Sent down to me from heaven above
If I had the wings of a beautiful dove
I'd fly to the arms of the one I love

When the whippoorwills call in the hills far away
We'd sing love songs and she would say
My love for you will never die
But I bid farewell with a sad good-bye

(CHORUS)

When it's harvest time in old Caroline
I'll be drifting back to that gal of mine
I'll spend my days with the gal I love
By the help of one from heaven above

(CHORUS)

Roy: voice and guitar
Tom: tenor harmony and guitar
Art: dobro

SIDE II, Band 1:

BOIL THEM CABBAGE DOWN

CHORUS:

Boil them cabbage down, turn the hoecakes 'round
The only song that I can sing is "boil them
cabbage down".

I went to see that gal of mine; she said she
loved me some

She threw her arms around me like a vine tree
'round a gum

(CHORUS)

Took my gal to the blacksmith's shop to have her
mouth made small
She turned around a time or two and swallowed
shop and all

(CHORUS)

I went to see my gal last night; I went there
kind of sneaking
I kissed at her lips and I got her nose and the
doggone thing was leaking

(CHORUS)

Tom: banjo, 1st and 3rd verses, harmony on chorus
Roy: guitar, 2nd verse, lead on chorus
Art: mandolin

SIDE II, Band 2:

RODNEY'S GLORY

Art: mandolin
Tom: guitar

SIDE II, Band 3:

BLUE YODEL

When a woman's got the blues, she hangs her little
head and cries (2x)
When a man's got the blues, he grabs a train and
rides

Talk about trouble, trouble is all I've known (2x)
If I hadn't been a man I would have stayed at home

I hate to see that evenin' sun go down (2x)
You know, it makes me think I'm on my last
go-round

I'm not singing the blues; I'm just telling 'bout
the hard times I've had (2x)
You know the blues ain't nothing but a good man
feeling bad

Roy: guitar and voice
Tom: guitar
Art: dobro

SIDE II, Band 4:

EAST TENNESSEE BLUES

Art: mandolin
Tom: guitar

SIDE II, Band 5:

LORD BATEMAN

Lord Bateman was a high-born noble
He held himself of high degree
He would not rest or be contented
Until he'd fought across the sea

He sailed east and he sailed westward
Til he come to the Turkish shore
And there they took him and they put him in prison
He never expect his freedom any more

Now the Turk he had one only daughter
Pretty fair maiden as ever I seen
She stole the key to her father's prison
Said, "Lord Bateman I'll set free"

"Have you got house, have you got land, sir?
Do you hold yourself of high degree?
What would you give the Turkish lady
If out of prison I'd set you free?"

"I've got house and I've got land, love
Half of Northumberland belongs to me
I'd give it all to the Turkish lady
If out of prison you'd set me free"

She took him to her father's harbor
And give to him a ship of fame
Says "Fare-thee-well to thee, Lord Bateman
I fear I'll never see you again"

They made a promise to each other
That was seven long years in span
And in that time he'd wed no woman
She would marry no other man

Seven long years she kept that vow true
Seven long years in her own cuntry
Then she gathered up her gay, fine clothing
Said, "Lord Bateman I'll go see"

She sailed east and she sailed westward
Til she come to the English shore
She went unto Lord Bateman's castle
And lighted down beside the door

"Is this Lord Bateman's fine castle
And is his Lordship here with thee?"
"Oh yes, Oh yes," cried the proud young porter
"He's just taken his new bride in"

"What news, what news, my proud young porter
What news, what news do you bring to me?"
"Oh there's as fine and fair young lady
As my two eyes ever did see

"She says for you to cut a slice of cake, sir
Draw a cup of your finest wine
And not forget the Turkish lady
That did free you when confined"

Lord Bateman rose where he was sitting
His face it was white as snow
Saying, "If this is the Turkish lady
With her love I'm bound to go"

He called to him the young bride's mother
"She's none the better nor worse for me
She come to me on a horse and saddle
I'll send her home in a carriage free

"She come to me on a horse and saddle
I'll send her home in a carriage free
And I'll go marry the Turkish lady
That did cross the seas for me"

Roy: guitar and voice

SIDE II, Band 6:

SAD AND LONESOME DAY

Today has been a lonesome day (3x)
And it seems tomorrow be the same old way

They carried my mother to the burying ground (3x)
And I watched the pallbearers let her down

Did you ever hear a churchbell tone (3x)
You may know by that she's dead and gone

Oh dig my grave with a silver spade (3x)
And mark the place where I must lay

It's one kind favor I'll ask of you (3x)
Please see that my grave is kept green

Tom: guitar and tenor harmony
Art: guitar
Roy: lead voice

SIDE II, Band 7:

THE GYPSY GIRL

Once I was a gypsy girl but now I'm a rich man's
bride
With servants to wait on me while in my carriage
ride

While in my carriage ride, while in my carriage
ride,
With servants to wait on me while in my carriage
ride

As I was a-walking one day down London's streets
A handsome young squire was the first I chanced
to meet
He viewed my pretty brown cheek which now he
loves so well
And he said "My little gypsy girl, will you my
fortune tell?"

"Will you my fortune tell? Will you my fortune tell?"
He said, "My little gypsy girl, will you my fortune
tell?"

"Yes sir, kind sir, please hold to me your hand
You have many fine mansions in many a foreign land
But all those young ladies, you'll cast them all
aside
I am the gypsy girl who is to be your bride."

"Who is to be your bride, who is to be your bride-
I am the gypsy girl who is to be your bride."

He took me, he led me to a pleasant white shore
With servants to wait on me and open my own door

And open my own door, and open my own door
With servants to wait on me and open my own door

Tom: banjo and lead voice
Roy: guitar and bass voice on chorus
Art: fiddle

SIDE II, Band 8:

LITTLE BIRDIE

CHORUS:

Little birdie, little birdie
Come and sing me your song
Got a short time for to stay here
And a long time to be gone

Oh, I'd rather be in some dark holler
Where the sun don't never shine
Than to be another man's woman
When you promised to be mine

(CHORUS)

I'm a long way from old Dixie
Near my old Kentucky home
And my father and mother are both dead
Got no place to call my home

(CHORUS)

Oh, I'd rather be a sailor way out there on the sea
Than to be a married man with a baby on my knee
For a married man sees trouble
While a single man sees none
And I'd rather be a single man
And live all alone

(CHORUS)

Art: lead voice and fiddle
Roy: guitar and bass harmony
Tom: banjo and tenor harmony

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