

Old Time Fiddle Tunes played by Jean Carignan
With Marcel Roy, piano; Danny MacDougal, 2nd violin; Pete Seeger, banjo

Folkways Records FG 3531

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE/PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID GAHR



TRAVELER'S REEL (REEL DU VOYAGEUR)

French Canadian—clogging, with piano

MEDLEY & HASTE TO THE WEDDING

Irish—with 2nd violin, banjo

MICHAEL COLEMAN MEDLEY

Irish—with piano

CARPENTERS' REEL (REEL DE L'OUVRIER)

French Canadian—with piano

WINNIPEG REEL

Western Canada—with banjo

MEDLEY G. SCOTT SKINNER

Scottish—with piano

INDIAN REEL

French Canadian—with piano

FISHERS HORNPIPE

Irish—with 2nd violin, banjo

BLACKSMITHS' REEL (REEL DU FORGERON)

French Canadian—with banjo

REEL OF THE HANGED ONE (REEL DU PENDU)

French Canadian—clogging, with banjo

BONNY KATE

Irish—with guitar

BANK

Scottish—with piano

MEDLEY & LORD MACDONALD'S REEL

Irish—with 2nd violin, banjo

THE SNORING MRS. GOBEIL (LA RONFLEUSE GOBEIL)

French Canadian—with piano

PIDGEON IN THE GATE

Irish—with piano

THE CONNAUGHT MANS RAMBLERS

Irish—with 2nd violin, banjo

THE WHITE POST (LE POTEAU BLANC)

French Canadian—clogging, with piano

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

*Old Time Fiddle Tunes
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OLD TIME FIDDLE TUNES

played by

Jean Carignan

with Marcel Roy, piano;
Danny MacDougal, 2nd violin;
and Pete Seeger, banjo



SIDE I

- Band 1. TRAVELERS' REEL (REEL DU VOYAGEUR) Fr. Canadian - clogging, with piano
- Band 2. MEDELY & HASTE TO THE WEDDING Irish - with 2nd violin, banjo
- Band 3. MICHAEL COLEMAN MEDELY Irish - with piano
- Band 4. CARPENTERS' REEL (REEL DE L'OUVRIER) Fr. Canadian - with piano
- Band 5. WINNIPEG REEL Western Canada - with banjo
- Band 6. MEDELY G. SCOTT SKINNER Scottish - with piano
- Band 7. INDIAN REEL Fr. Canadian - with piano
- Band 8. FISHERS HORNPIPE Irish - with 2nd violin, banjo
- Band 9. BLACKSMITHS' REEL (REEL DU FORGERON) Fr. Canadian - with banjo

SIDE II

- Band 1. REEL OF THE HANGED ONE (REEL DU PENDU) Fr. Canadian - clogging, with banjo
- Band 2. BONNY KATE Irish - with guitar
- Band 3. BANK Scottish - with piano
- Band 4. MEDELY & LORD MacDONALD'S REEL Irish - with 2nd violin, banjo
- Band 5. THE SNORING MRS. GOBEIL (LA RONFLEUSE GOBEIL) Fr. Canadian - with piano
- Band 6. PIDGEON IN THE GATE Irish - with piano
- Band 7. THE CONNAUGHT MANS RAMBLERS Irish - with 2nd violin, banjo
- Band 8. THE WHITE POST (LE POTEAU BLANC) Fr. Canadian - clogging, with piano

recorded by Samuel Gesser

JEAN CARIGNAN
by Alan Mills

Jean ("Johnny") Carignan has been playing traditional fiddle tunes of his native Quebec and other parts of Canada for forty of his 44 years.

I have heard a fair number of country fiddlers in Quebec Province, which seems to be extraordinarily rich in folk tradition and in this otherwise-rare breed of "home-made" musician, but I have yet to meet or hear one who possesses the fantastic and, at times, incredible technique and talent in this field that Johnny has achieved through hard work and the great love he has for the instrument and for making music.

Though I've heard Johnny play many times, I've always found something new in his playing that seems to make each time I hear him more exciting than the last, and I've watched a number of "classical" violinists and other musicians wonder at his bowing skill and the marvellous sounds he makes.

Although playing the fiddle has always been his deepest desire, as well as his greatest talent, since childhood, and he has seldom spent a day without running through some of his favorite tunes and trying to improve his dazzling technique, Johnny has not always managed to earn a living from it. He has worked at a wide variety of jobs, from rivetting and steam-fitting to taxi-driving and selling cars during the course of his rather unusual career.

In fact, he still owns a taxi and spends almost every day driving it "for expenses" on the streets of Montreal and vicinity, and taking time off to fill engagements as fiddler in radio, television, concert and other programs.

Johnny Carignan was born in the Quebec town of Levis, across the St. Lawrence River from the historic Plains of Abraham, and, at the tender age of four, began learning how to play the violin, county-style, from his father, a brick-layer who used to earn extra money by playing at country dances and fairs.

Neither Johnny nor his father ever had any serious musical training; they learned how to play by copying others first, then developing their own individual techniques and building up their particular repertoires by ear.

Young Carignan took to the fiddle as naturally as breathing and developed so rapidly that by the time he was seven years old, his neighbors and others were giving him nickels and dimes to play for them.

By then, his family had moved to the Eastern Townships city of Sherbrooke, Que., and when Johnny's father found himself out of a job and unable to earn much with his fiddling, young Jean took to playing in the streets for whatever people would give him.

He soon became known throughout the district, and people started hiring him for church meetings,

country fairs and dances, and even for political rallies, and by the time he was eight, he was making as much as \$10 a day. He continued earning money in this fashion when his family moved to Three Rivers and thence to Montreal.

"I was 12 years old then," Johnny recalls, "and I was ashamed to play my fiddle in the streets of the big city, so I talked with my father and we decided it was best for me to learn a good trade. He got me a job in a shoe-maker's shop, as an apprentice, for 50 cents a day."

But Johnny did not forsake his fiddle; he took it with when he went to work every day, and always managed to get in a little playing, during lunch-hours and at any slack periods.

It was thus, during one lunch hour in 1933, that Johnny's talent was discovered by George Wade, then a very popular musician who was touring Canada with a country orchestra known as "George Wade & His Corn Huskers" and Wade wasted no time in making arrangements with Johnny's father to take the boy with him as a member of the orchestra.

"It was wonderful!" says Johnny. "Wade had eleven musicians and six of them were fiddlers. We travelled all over the country in two big automobiles and a trailer (for the instruments). I could play as much as I liked every day, and he paid me \$36 a week and all my expenses!"

Johnny toured with the Wade orchestra for five years, by which time his salary had been upped to \$60 weekly. But when the group disbanded in 1938, he found himself back in Montreal without a job. He started playing for dances and various other groups in the evenings, and working at any jobs he could get in the daytime, until he had managed to save up enough money to buy himself a taxi, so that he could work at this only when he had no engagements to fulfill.

In the meantime, he had got himself a wife and three daughters to support.

The upsurge of interest in folk music in the past few years has brought Johnny's extraordinary fiddling talent into the limelight again. In addition to appearing in concerts and other programs with myself (including the Newport Folk Festival this year) and other Canadian folk-singers, he has been discovered by America's incomparable Pete Seeger and has appeared with him in New York and on Canadian television.

However, Johnny's greatest moment in recent years, and perhaps in his whole career, came in the summer of 1959, when he was chosen by the City of Montreal as guest soloist to play traditional Canadian fiddle tunes for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, at a civic reception in her honor during her trip to Canada to officiate with President Eisenhower at the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

JEAN'S VIOLIN TUNES

All the selections on this record have been learned by ear. Some tunes, like "Bank" took Jean almost one year of listening and practicing.

The Irish and Scottish tunes were taken from recordings made by Michael Coleman, Jim Morrison and G. Scott Skinner, and were imported directly from those countries by friends of Jean's. The Canadian tunes were learnt from his father and other country fiddlers.



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