

Guy Carawan Guy Carawan Guy Carawan

OLD BLUE THIS IS THE WAY I FEEL
CHINESE FLUTE SONG BRAZOS
WEARY BLUES VIRGIN MARY
THREE LITTLE PIGS CRIPPLE CREEK
SINNER MAN WHOA BUCK
KATUSHA BLACK FLIES
SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN HAVA NAGILA
BUFFALO GALS STRANGEST DREAM
BOLL WEEVIL

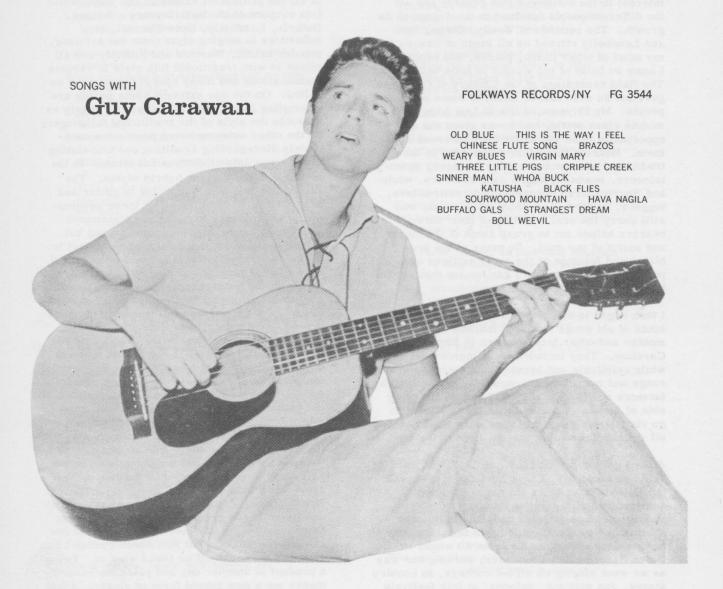
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MUSIC LP

Guy Carawan

Descriptive notes inside pocket

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didn't come in contact with folksongs until I was 21. I was born in Los Angeles and grew up there. If I had heard any folk music up until then I didn't pay any attention to it and was unaware of it as such. Actually my father is a true bearer of the oral tradition of Eastern North Carolina, having grown up for 18 years on a farm there, but I didn't realize this until a couple of years after I'd gotten interested in folk songs. At the age of 21 I hadn't the slightest idea of what my father's early life on the farm had been like or any notion at all of the many folk songs he had stored up in his memory. The only times I can remember him singing were once in a while late at night when he was by himself in the front room smoking and relaxing after the days work. Along with folk songs like Down in a Low Green Valley, the Eastern Burglar and On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand he would sing favorite composed songs

of the vintage of Stephen Foster. I didn't hear him sing very often and when I did I didn't pay any attention anyway since the songs weren't on the hit parade or the juke box - and that's the music I grew up with.

My first contact with the present day urban folksinging revival came around 1948 when I was introduced to a whole circle of city people who were singing folk songs and playing guitars at a party in Los Angeles. I got the bug then and was at it myself in a very short time. As I look back I realize what a variety of singers, songs, singing and instrumental styles and general approach there were to be influenced by. Burl Ives, Richard Dyer Bennett, Susan Reed, Morais & Miranda, Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, Josh White, Pete Seeger, the Almanacs and the Weavers. There was a whole new world of music and ideas for me. For a while I soaked it all in but in the

next year or so as I became more familiar with these various singers and the ideas they represented I found myself developing some definite preferences. The writings of Alan Lomax had a great influence on me. They awakened a deep interest in the history of this country and all the different people involved in the drama of its growth. The records of Woody, Cisco, Pete and Leadbelly stirred up all kinds of images in my mind of other times, places, and people that I knew so little of but wanted to know more about. The field recordings of the Library of Congress gave me an even closer listen to some of those people. My 25 years of life in Los Angeles in a middle class setting had never given me an opportunity to do any more than just read about them. Hearing these folk songs sung in the traditional manner by country farmers, mountaineers, cowboys, Negro gang laborers, white and Negro church congregations, railroaders, loggers, sailors, and many other people who still carry the oral tradition of their forebearers helped me to grasp some of the flavor and spirit of our past. So many of the problems and feelings of the early settlers and pioneers were brought to life for me thru hearing these songs.

I then began to discover that my father knew all kinds of old songs that he'd learned from his mother and other local singers in Mesic, North Carolina. They included local murder ballads, white spirituals and hymns, dance songs, love songs and many Negro songs sung by the Negro farmers and field hands that lived on the other side of Mesic. I decided then that I wanted to go visit Mesic some day - not only Mesic but all through the south.

After I got out of U.C.L.A. in 1952 with an M.A. in Sociology, I took my first trip across the United States in an old car. The next summer two of my fellow folksingers - Frank Hamilton of Los Angeles and Jack Elliot who I'd met in New York - piled into this same car and we headed south. We spent 10 weeks in North Carolina and Tennessee, earning our way as we went singing on street corners, in country stores, gas stations, saloons, at folk festivals and on the radio. We got to know all kinds of wonderful people that summer, Negroes and whites, and heard lots of good songs. We spent two weeks in Mesic at my uncles farm and I met over a dozen Caravans during our stay there. We used to sit every evening up in front of the general store and swap songs with the old timers, all who knew my dad when he was a boy. I learned more about southern farm life and music that summer than I have from all the books I've read or records I've listened to.

Over the last 9 years I've learned my songs and guitar and banjo playing from a number of different sources - books, records, sometimes from traditional singers and players, but mostly from other singers like myself. I know at least a couple of hundred city folksingers of this new generation all over the United States. In New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Seattle, Portland, Washington, D.C., Boston and elsewhere. In my travels I've met

them and traded songs, instrumental styles and ideas about folksinging past and present. We are not all learning to play and sing in the same way. There is a tremendous variety of outlook and approach being taken. There are followers of all the prominent authentic and unauthentic folk singers of the last 15 years - Seeger, Guthrie, Leadbelly, Dyer Bennett, etc. Influences in singing style from the art song, popular music, Western and hillbilly are all mixed in with traditional folk style in various combinations and many hybrid forms have resulted. On the one extreme some people are attempting to recreate of imitate as nearly as possible the style of the traditional folksinger; on the other extreme some people are completely disregarding tradition and translating these songs into other musical idioms In the middle are the various hybrid styles. The same thing has been happening to guitar and banjo styles, I mention all of these developments not in order to make any statements about what I consider to be good or bad but rather to point out that I have been subject to all these diverse influences and I know that it shows in my playing and singing. As contrasted with the homogenerty to be found in most traditional singers I find in myself a constant interplay of the various influences in my background - pop music, jazz, classical music, training in harmony and voice, and a love for traditional folk music. I don't think there is any one correct path today. There is room for many forms of expression in dealing with folk music. However, I do think that regardless of the musical and vocal style used there must be a love of the material and the people it came from in order for the singer to convey some of its feeling and meaning. We can distinguish between the sincere and the phony. As much as I stand for co-existance in the realm of expression I can't be completely impartial. Being human I do have my own preference. I can listen to the great traditional singers for hours and be greatly moved in a way that few else can do to me. But that doesn't mean I can sing like them myself or that I want to. Being a product of another day and place necessarily makes me a new hybrid form of singer. I feel like I'm only at the first milestone in a long journey. I've got a lot of singing and living to do before I find that voice within me and a way of using it that will completely express me and the way I feel about the past, present, and future.

There are a few other things I'd like to mention about my outlook on present day folk singing. When I first came in contact with it in 1948 I reacted against many of the topical and political songs that were being sung especially the jingles and musically trite ones. The whole idea of singing about present day or recent events, issues and persons seemed very strange to me and I didn't like it. The fact that so many of these songs were bad ones had a lot to do with it. Since then however, my views have changed. I still dislike bad songs but have come to realize that many of the songs that have come out of the Peoples Song Movement were good ones. The Almanacs, Woody Guthrie, Lee

Hays, Pete Seeger and others have made up marvelous songs that express some of our contemporary problems and feelings. I no longer find this kind of song strange. My love for many of these songs grew as my own awareness of life in America and the rest of the world grew. The idea that folk songs can and should express the present as well as the past is very important to me now. I appreciate the attempts of our contemporary song writers to keep the folk song making process alive. The bad songs of the past 15 years of the People's Song Movement are going down the drain but the good ones are being sung all the more. We need lots of good new songs today.

Along with this more recent interest in topical and contemporary song my earlier interest in the traditional folk songs of the United States has kept growing all the time. In addition a third interest has been developing in world folk music. As soon as I came in contact with city folksinging in 1948 I was hearing songs from many other parts of the world and the British Isles, Africa, Spain, Israel, Russia, China and more. Through the many recordings that have come out this last 10 years it's been possible to get a good close listen to many of these countries native singers. What a revelation it's been to find that the world is full of such rich and varied sounds, strange and beautiful instruments, ways of singing, scales and harmonies that are new to my ear. This last year I finally realized a long wish to see some of the world outside of the United States of America. I had the opportunity to go meet first hand with young people from all over the world at the VI World Youth Festival in Moscow. It was a remarkable experience - to see there in one city 36,000 youth from the four corners of the earth, wearing their native clothes and doing their native songs and dances. Through the discussions and friendships we had there and later on in my travels in China, Russia and Europe I came to believe in an emotional and personal way what I had always thought on a rational level, that "all men are brothers." Human beauty and dignity took on direct meaning for me; the world became peopled with real people; China is not remote.

Since I've returned to the United States, I've been singing and talking at colleges all across the country trying to pass on my impressions of the friends I made in Russia, China, and Europe, their way of life and their music. In my singing I want to convey some of the spirit of friendship and mutual concern for each other that I felt at the festival and in my travels.

SIDE I, Band 1: OLD BLUE

I first heard this version from Cisco Houston. Later I heard it from Frank Hamilton who taught me the fabulous little lick on the guitar that so enhances the song. Then I added a high yodel and another guitar lick of my own - and that's how this rendition grew - with "something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue."

I had a dog and his name was Blue (3)

Bet ya five dollars he's a good one too. Ya-oh Blue, you good dog you.

Well, I shouldered my ax and I tooted my horn, Gonna catch me a possum in the new ground corn. Ya-oh Blue, you can come too.

Old Blue's feet was big and round, He never 'lowed a possum to touch the ground. Ya-oh Blue, you're a good dog, you.

Old Blue tree'd, I want to see, There was a possum in a 'simmon tree.

Well, the possum down on a swinging limb,
Blue barked at the possum, possum growled
at him.

Blue grinned at me, I smiled at him I shook him out and took him in.
Ya-oh Blue, you good dog you.

I baked that possum good and brown, And laid them sweet potatoes round and round. Ya-oh Blue, you can have some too.

Blue, what makes your eyes so red.
You've run them possums till you're almost dead.
Ya-oh Blue, you good dog you.

When old Blue died, he died so hard, He shook the ground in my backyard.

When old Blue died, I laid him in the shade, I dug his grave with a silver spade.

Lowered him down with a golden chain, In every link I called his name. Ya-oh Blue, you good dog, you.

Well, I'm gonna tell you, so you'll know, That old Blue's gone where the good dogs go.

But there's just one thing that bothers my mind, Old Blue went to heaven, left me behind. Ya-oh Blue, you good dog you.

SIDE I, Band 2: CRIPPLE CREEK

I've heard this favorite of banjo tunes played for years by many of our new generation of city banjo pickers in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Chicago - but best of all was hearing it in North Carolina and Tennessee in the summer of 1953 played by such great country musicians as George Pegram and Red Parham (listen to the Riverside album "Picking and a Blowing"). Frank Hamilton and Jack Elliot - two of our best city folksingers - and I spent 10 weeks that summer staying with country farmers and mountaineers and learning all we could about their music and life.

Well, I've got a girl and she loves me, She's as sweet as sweet can be. She's got eyes of baby blue, Makes my gun shoot straight and true.

Chorus
Going up to Cripple Creek,
Going in a run (whirl),
Going up to Cripple Creek,
To have a little fun (find my girl).

Cripple Creek's wide, and Cripple Creek's deep, I'll make Cripple Creek before I sleep.
Rolled my britches to my knees,
Wade old Cripple Creek as I please.

Well, I went down to Cripple Creek
To see what them boys were having to drink.
I got drunk, fell against the wall,
Old corn liquor was the cause of it all.

SIDE I, Band 3: WHOA BUCK

I learned this from the Lomax book "Folk Songs U.S.A." It suggested to me the picture of a southern farmer singing to himself and his mule as he plows his field on a hot summer day.

Sometimes I plow my old gray horse, Other times I plow my mule-y; Soon's I get my cotton crop in I'm going home to Julie.

Tighten on the back-band, loosen up the bow I'll quit pickin that banjo soon.

Last year was a very fine year, For cotton crops and tomatoes; Poppa didn't plant no beans or greens But lawd, got tomatoes.

Tomatoes, tomatoes, lawd got tomatoes.

Eighteen, nineteen, twenty years ago, I took my gal to the party-o; All dressed up in calico, But I wouldn't let her dance not a set or so.

A set or so, a set or so, No I wouldn t let her dance, not a set or so.

Whoa back buck! ghee by lamb, Who made the back-band, whoa! gawddamn!

SIDE I, Band 4: THREE LITTLE PIGS

Learned from Sam Hinton of La Jolla, California.

There once was a sow had three little pigs, Three little pig-ys had she; And the old sow went oink, oink, oink And the pig-ys went whee, whee, whee.

Now one day one of the three little pigs To the other two pig-ys said he; Why don't we always go oink, oink, oink It's so childish to go whee, whee, whee.

Now these three pig-ys grew skinny and lean, Skinny they well should be.

For they always would try to go oink, oink, oink And they wouldn't go whee, whee, whee.

Now these three pig-ys they up and died, A very sad sight to see. So don't ever try to go oink, oink, oink When you ought to go whee, whee, whee

SIDE I, Band 5: BOLL WEEVIL

Learned from Carl Sandburgs Songbag (Songbirds Sandbag).

The first time I seen the boll weavil, He was sittin on the square.
The next time I seen the boll weavil He had his whole dang family there.

Just a-looking for a home(4)

That boll weavil is a little black bug, Come from Mexico they say. Come all the way from Texas Just a-looking for a place to stay. Just a-looking for a home(4)

Well, the farmer took the boll weavil, And he put him in the red hot sand. The weavil says to the farmer, I'll stand it like a man.

I need a home (4)

The weavil says to the farmer, You better leave me alone. I've done e't up all your cotton, And next will be your corn.

That'll be my home (4)

The farmer took the boll weavil, And he put him in a cake of ice. That weavil says to the farmer, This is mighty cool and nice.

This'll be my home (4)

The farmer took the boll weavil, And he put him in the red hot sand. O, that weavil says to the farmer, I'll stand it like a man.

I need a home (4)

Well, the merchant got half the cotton, The boll weavil got the rest. All that boll weavil left the farmer's wife Was one old cotton dress.

And it's full of holes (4)

Well, if anyone should ask you Who made up this song, Just tell 'em it was old Guy Carawan With his dirty blue jeans on.

I'm looking for a home (4)

SIDE I, Band 6: BRAZOS

I first heard this song on a Library of Congress field recording of a Negro work gang in a Texas prison. It was sung unaccompanied and with a very slow pulse. It's a "long haul - slow drag" type of work song. Here the added guitar accompaniment has changed it into a blues.

There ain't no more cane here on this Brazos Oh -

They did grind it all into molasses Oh -

You ought to been on this Brazos in 1904 You could find a dead man on every row. You ought to been on this Brazos in 1910 They were driving the women just like the men.

Go down ol' hannah, don't you rise no more If you rise in the morning bring judgement day

If I had a sentence like ninety-nine years
All the dogs on the Brazos couldn't keep me here.

There ain't no more cane here on this Brazos They done grind it all into molasses.

SIDE I, Band 7: BUFFALO GALS

I've known this for so many years that I can't remember where I first learned it. I couldn't resist playing an old minstrel style banjo on it.

As I was walking down the street, down the street, down the street.

A pretty little girl I chanced to meet, by the light of the silvery moon.

Buffalo gal won't you come out tonight come out tonight, come out tonight;
Buffalo gal won't you come out tonight gonna dance by the light of the moon.

I asked this girl would you like to talk, like to talk, take a walk.

I asked this girl would you like to talk by the light of the silvery moon.

I danced with the girl with the hole in her stocking

While my knees kept a-knocking and my toes kept a-rocking;

I danced with the dolly with the hole in her stocking

I danced by the light of the moon.

SIDE I, Band 8: VIRGIN MARY

This is one of the many wonderful Negro Christmas songs gathered together by Ruth Seeger in her book of American Christmas Folk Songs. I learned it from her daughter Peggy along with many other beautiful songs while we were singing together in England, Russia, and China. in the summer of 1957.

The Virgin Mary had a-one Son, Oh, Glory, Hallelujah...Oh, pretty little baby.

Glory be to the new-born King.

Mary, what you going to name that pretty little baby.

Some call him a-one thing, think I'll call him Jesus

Some call him a-one thing, think I'll call him Manuel.

Some call him a-one thing, think I'll call him Counselor.

SIDE I, Band 9: SINNER MAN

Learned from Bob Gibson when we worked together at the Gate of Horn - Chicago's folksong night club - in December of 1956.

Oh, sinner man, where you gonna run to (3) All on that day.

I'll run to the rock, rock won't you hide me (3)

I'll run to the sea, sea'll be a-boiling. etc.

Run to the sky, sky'll be a-falling. etc.

Run to the moon, moon'll be a bleeding. etc.

I'll run to my Lord, Lord won't you hide me (3)

Oh, sinner man, you ought to been a-praying. etc.

I'll run to the devil, devil won't you hide me (3)

Oh, sinner man, where you gonna run to.etc.

SIDE II, Band 1: THE WATER IS WIDE

I learned this English folksong from Pete Seeger one day while we were driving along in a car in upstate New York. Later I had the opportunity to hear it sung in London by Shirley Collins - the very beautiful folksinger from Sussex, England.

The water is wide, I cannot get o'er,
Neither have I the wings to fly;
Give me a boat, that can carry two
And both shall row, my love and I.

There is a ship, and she sails the sea, She's loaded deep as deep can be; But not so deep, as love I'm in, For I know not how I sink or swim.

I leaned my back against an oak, Thinking it was a trusty tree; But first he bended and then he broke And thus did my false love to me.

I put my hand into some soft bush, Thinking the sweetest flower to find; I pricked my finger to the bone And left the sweetest flower alone.

O, love is handsome and love is fine, Gay as a jewel when first it is new; But love grows old and waxes cold And fades away like summer dew.

SIDE II, Band 2: SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN

Another favorite banjo tune (like Cripple Creek) the flavor of which I picked up during my stay in North Carolina and Tennessee in the summer of 1953.

Chickens crowing on Sourwood Mountain Hey, d'ding-ding, diddle um day. So many pretty girls I can't count 'em Hey, d'ding-ding, diddle um day.

I got a gal that lives in the holler She don't come and I don't call her.

SIDE II, Band 3: WEARY BLUES

Learned from Earl Gormaine a Detroit folk-singer.

People try to fool me, people try to fool me,

Said that the blues ain't bad, pretty baby. People try to fool me, say the blues ain't

But that's the worst old feeling that I ever had.

Call 'em the blues, call 'em the blues, call 'em just what you please pretty baby;

Call 'em the blues, call 'em just what you please;

The weary blues ain't nothing, but a poor aching heart's disease.

Tear drops are water, tear drops are water, and three grains of sand, pretty baby.

Tear drops are water, and three grains of sand.

The weary blues ain't nothing but a poor woman needs her man.

SIDE II, Band 4: THE LITTLE BLACK FLIES

Learned from the Toronto "Travellers" (a Canadian folksong quartet). It was written by the Ontario folksinger Wade Hemsworth.

horna

And the black flies - the little black flies, Always the black fly no matter where you go, I'll die with the black fly a-pickin' my bones

In north Ontar-i-o -i-o In north Ontari-o

The man Black Tobey was the captain of the crew And he said I'm gonna tell you boys, what we're gonna do. They want to build a power dam and we must find a way For to make the Little Ab flow around the other way

Chorus:

So we survey to the east and we survey to the west And we couldn't make our minds up how to do it best. Little Ab, Little Ab what shall I do For I'm all but goin' crazy with the survey crew

Chorus:

Twas blackfly blackfly everywhere, A-crawling in your whiskers, a-crawlin' in your hair, A-swimmin' in the soup and a-swimmin' in the tea, Oh the devil take the blackfly and let me be

Chorus:

Black Tobey fell to swearin' cause the work went slow, And the state of our morals was gettin' pretty low, And the flies swarmed heavy - it was hard to catch a breath As you staggered up and down the trail a-talkin' to

Chorus:

Now the bull cook's name was Blind River Joe; If it hadn't been for him we'd've never pulled through For he bound up our bruises and he kidded us for fun, And he lathered us with bacon grease and balsam gum

Chorus

At last the job was over; Black Tobey said-We're through With the Little Abitibi and the survey crew. 'Twas a wonderful experience and this I know I'll never go again to North Ontar-i-o

Chorus:

SIDE II, Band 5: THIS IS THE WAY I FEEL

This blues was passed on to me by way of the following sequence of people. Brownie McGhee - Erik Darling - Jo Mapes - Mary Travers and I learned it from Mary having never heard any one else sing it before. In this process of oral transmission it's undergone a great deal of change.

Well, if you've ever been down and out, Then you know just how I feel, I feel like an angel, ain t got no driving wheels.

Nobody cares how much I'm crying, Nobody care if I'm all alone, Nobody cares if I'm living -but baby, You can't love me when I'm dead and gone.

This is the way that I do feel,
Tell it everywhere I go.
Well, I feel like an angel, ain't got no place
to go.

SIDE II, Band 6: HAVA NA GEELA

Learned from Hal Cotter of the Jewish Young Folksingers in New York City, 1953.

SIDE II, Band 7: CHINESE FLUTE

I learned this Chinese folk tune from Wang - a Chinese railroad worker who I got to know during my 6 weeks tour of China in the summer of 1957. It's played on a 6 hole bamboo flute that was given to me by a young Chinese fellow who Peggy Seeger and I met out in a boat one day on the lake of the Summer Palace near Peking. Peggy and I were floating along playing the guitar and banjo and before we knew it we were surrounded by a dozen or so row boats of Chinese. We started swapping tunes with a flute player in one of the boats and before long we were having a hootenanny there in the lake of the Summer Palace. When we left the flute player insisted I take his flute and learn to play it.

During our trip through China we heard all sorts of Chinese folk music from both ordinary people who sing and play for the fun of it and professional folk musicians on the concert stage. I

became so crazy about Chinese folk music that I bought a whole crate of instruments & records to bring back for my friends at home to hear and see. (Folkways will be issuing some of these recordings in the near future.)

SIDE II, Band 8: KATUSHA

I learned this song from our Russian interpreter Larissa while Peggy and I were doing a five week tour of the U.S.S.R. in October 1957 for the Ministry of Culture. It was a very popular at the World Youth Festival in Moscow. Soviet audiences sang it with us at our concerts and we often danced to it with Russians at parties.

Soviet audiences seemed to like our informal hootenanny style of presentation. Concerts there are usually very formal. Peggy could speak some Russian and I memorized enough so that we could introduce all our own songs in Russian to our audiences. Also we got the audience to sing with us on a couple of Russian folksongs and some Negro Spirituals with simple choruses. This took some persuading however (in our best Russian) since they were not used to audience participation at concerts. After explaining that audiences in the United States always sing with us at our folksong concerts it was easier. One night at the Bolshoi theatre we got a packed house to sing Raz Tumani. By the third time thru the whole place was singing. This was an exciting evening for us. We had placed in the gold medal division in the folksinging competitions at the festival and this was the night when all the winners were being presented in concert at the Bolshoi theatre. It was truly an international concert with singers, dancers and instrumentalists from all over the world -India, China, Africa, Egypt, Europe, the U.S.S.R., Mexico and more. We were so thrilled to be a part of it.

In Russia we heard folk music every where - in peoples homes and on the concert stage. The Urals chorus in particular was magnificent.

SIDE II, Band 9: STRANGEST DREAM

This beautiful song was written by Ed McCurdy and was one of the most popular songs we sang in Russia and China. It expressed a wish deeply felt by people all over the world by especially by those people who have experienced was first hand.

Please give credit to the other two musicians:

John Cohen - guitar He's a New York professional photographer, painter, and folk musician.

Ollie Phillips - bass He's a professional musician, teacher, and folk bass player.

I met them both at Washington Square.

Recorded by Mel Kaiser in Stereo.

Mastered by Mel Kaiser.

Production under the direction of:

Moses Asch.

LITHO IN U.S.A.