

FOLK MUSIC U.S.A.

JOHN HENRY
GRIZZLY BEAR
SIX THOUSAND MILES
DARK WAS THE NIGHT
AMASEE
SPOOKY DRUMS
BLACK JACK DAVY
DRUNKEN SAILOR
ELLEN SMITH
MOLE IN THE GROUND
ROLLING RIVER
ALLONS DANSER COLINDA
DIAMOND JOE
SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN
MATACHINES DANCE
INDIAN WAR DANCE
ESTA NAVIDAD
AGUINALDO CAGUERO
ROCKY ROAD
ESKIMO DANCE SONG
SIETE LEGUAS
IF WE NEVER MEET AGAIN
AND OTHERS

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Folkways Ethnic Library FE 4530

Descriptive Notes are inside pocket.

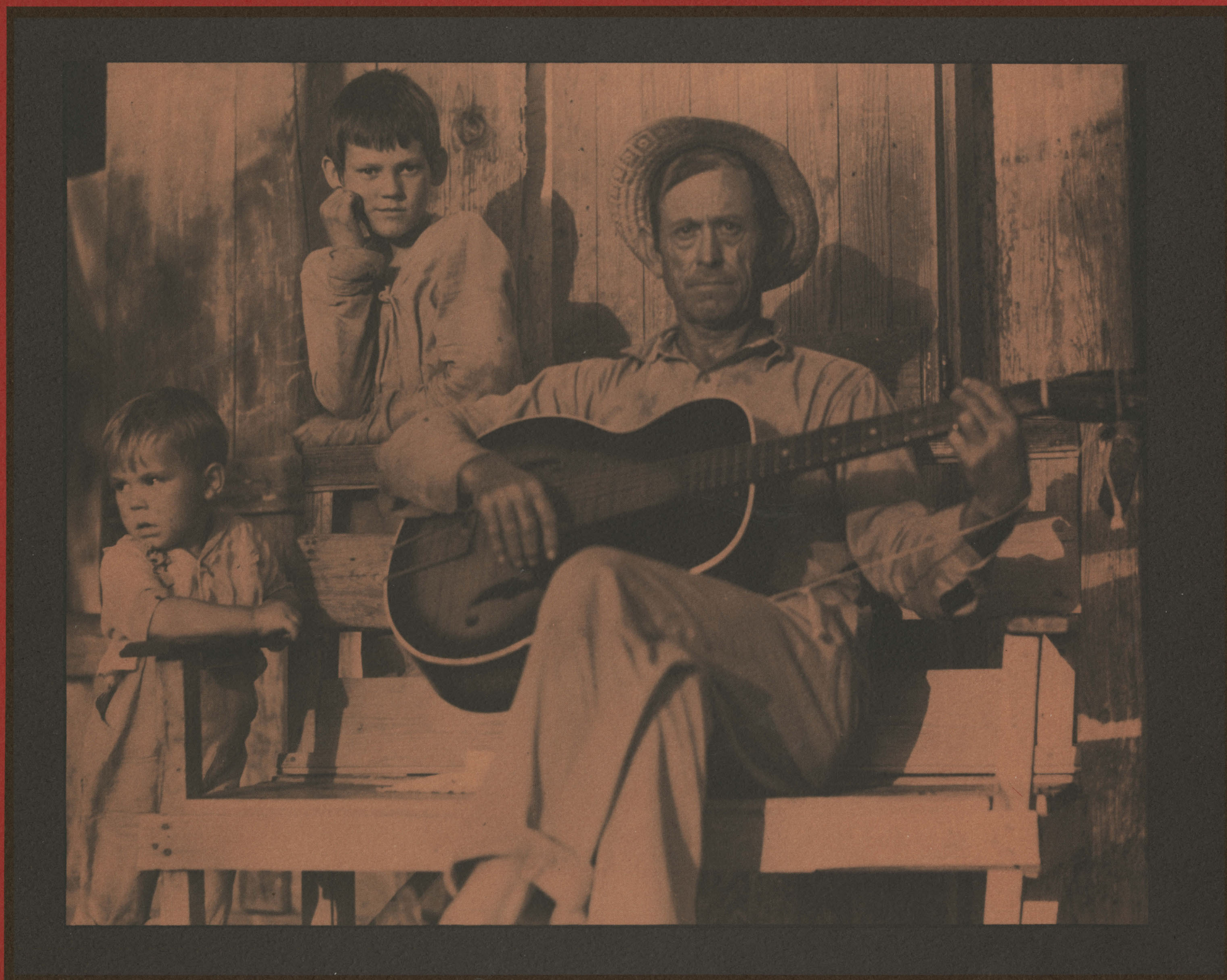
Volume One

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Compiled by Harold Courlander

With Notes by Charles Edward Smith



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Cover design by Ronald Clyne

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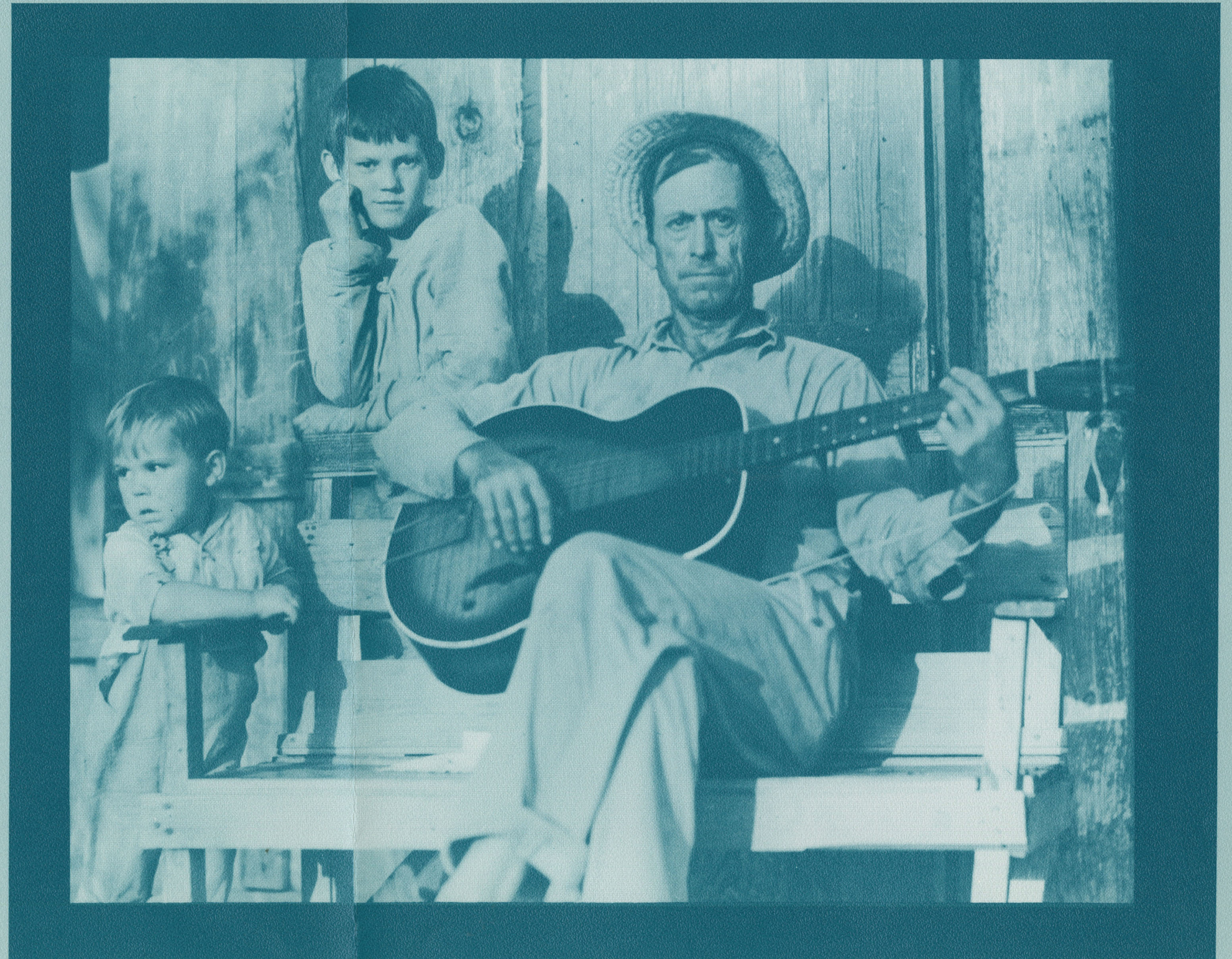
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FOLK MUSIC

U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

BY CHARLES EDWARD SMITH

"Out of the cradle, endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat,
the musical shuttle..."

Walt Whitman in Leaves of Grass

"When life is big, music is big."

Rich Amerson in

"Negro Folk Music of Alabama"

Vol. IV (FE 4471)

"Why should the devil have all the pretty music?" John Wesley asked, and with some slight changes in musical notation and a more vigorous renovation of the lyrics, brought dance tunes into a church that for a long time put as strict a ban on social dancing as it later did on alcoholic beverages.

It will be recalled that John Adams, quoting oral history, designated the lining-out singing in New England meeting-houses of the century previous to his own as "all the quavering discord in the world..." and did not particularly castigate Plymouth or the Bay Colony but was catholic in condemnation. No doubt the "Negro-masters," as the Quaker John Hepburn termed slave owners north and south, found the singing taught by the New England "missionaries"

to the Negroes as offensive as their pleas for human rights. But though the latter tendency towards freedom was stamped out (with the help of the clergy, in many instances), the former, not being accessible to punitive measures, successfully infiltrated. And perhaps the Negro Americans of those days, whose singing traditions have been described as probably a-modal, found a kinship in those meeting-house harmonies that cut through the skin of sound so that you could feel the bone beneath. The intermingling of Afro-American and Anglo-American music began both north and south-- that of Franco-, Spanish- and Afro-American especially in the part of the South that became known as Louisiana Territory. Even in the 18th Century (before the Louisiana Purchase), with the achievement of unity amongst the colonies, Samuel Adams foresaw what a tremendous creative force for America would be the variety of its people, who came from many lands and were to contribute, each in his way, to the development of our resources and of our culture.

"Folk music for our purposes," said Harold Courlander, "is music passed on by way of oral traditions. This includes such in-between music as blues and early jazz right up to the time these styles merged with written music." Thus, while many of the pieces included here are by folk singers, a few are by singers of folk songs. Peter

Hurd is not "folk" but he has a fine, simple, understanding presentation that is true and folk-like. One of the best contemporary singers of western songs is Cisco Houston. He has worked on ranches but in the main he is a singer of folk songs rather than a folk singer. All the same, he is one of the best. In current popular renditions of this thoroughly indigenous development, western songs have often become so noble, romantic and utterly lovable that all the cowboy's west has been washed out of them. In contrast, remarked Harold Courlander, "Cisco Houston has played it straight and honest, and has in this respect done better than many an amateur, to say nothing of the cowhand who figured he could sing his way to Hollywood."

In the genesis of folk music two creative forces are involved, that of the gifted singer or musician and that of "the folk". In studies of folk music, some musicologists tend to emphasize one, some the other, but most surveys suggest the importance of both. There is both pride in his own unique contribution and pride in heritage in the statement by Rich Amerson, from which we quoted above: "I ain't proud to be poor but I ain't too poor to be proud. And I'm not too poor to be rich in values. Music is in everything you see and hear. Railroad, now that's music, isn't it? And church, that's music too, isn't it? And if you come right down to it, music is church too. Some folks, now, they won't sing no sinful songs. The way I see it, if a song is in you you got to sing it, and it's just another aspect of the Holy Spirit. When life is big, music is big."

In a situation where music is inseparable from the cultural complex in its entirety--as in much American Indian and Eskimo music--oral traditions overshadow the unique contribution of the individual, though the latter may be greatly respected. In American "family" styles that preserve ways of singing from one ancestral country or another--among the best documented are examples from the British Isles--the integrity of the style itself, even preservation of the lyric with few changes, may assume an unusual importance. In songs largely sung for entertainment, such as many Irish-American songs and, indeed, many American folksongs of various backgrounds, the uniqueness, timeliness and originality of presentation is sometimes almost all that matters. In religious songs

such as spirituals, and in work songs, words and music are revised or charged with new meanings. Folk imagery from old English and Scottish songs appears in the most unlikely places and it is possible to define kindred Afro-American musical elements in a blues, a spiritual and a work-song. There is increasing evidence that a relationship similar to the latter extends to lyric structure and treatment of material as well.

In addition to the many folk-songs that represent processes of acculturation within folk music itself (e.g. Careless Love) one should bear in mind such processes as they affect relationships between categories of music that we tend to think of as separate. In hill-billy--the country music so often dismissed as pseudo-folk and pseudo-popular--one finds many examples of bona fide folk songs and "pop" songs worthy of any hard-writing song-smith. In the Tennessee hills, blues, dance tunes and traditional ballads, as well as lesser musical strains, were all wrapped up in one package called "juke" music. That was before there was any juke-box, which got its name from the same African source. And just as a great deal of popular, show and concert music owes its melodic inspiration to folk music, to say nothing of its rhythms, so the latter, in some instances, is directly influenced by popular songs.

The relationship of folk ballads to printed broadsides--those progenitors of today's popular songs--is inescapable. In both, the use of familiar tunes was an accepted practice. Since folk balladry has survived in the present century, despite the dominance of written and recorded music, it is not illogical to suppose that it answers a basic need. To be sure, it is most likely to be found where mass media devices do not reach or where they cannot answer to the immediacy of need involved. In the present century, ballads and blues have been built around the stark tragedy of a river in flood (Backwater Blues), the intimate details of border warfare in the Pancho Villa saga (Siete Leguas), the last man to be executed by hanging in the state of Georgia (Betty and Dupree) and countless other large and small events, some humorous or happy, many expressing tragedy or a common anguish--but all speaking of the things that happen in America's big back yard, from the dust storms of Oklahoma to the atomic dust of Frenchman's Flat.

The inspiration for many a broadside was much the same as for a folk ballad -- a local or regional event of more than passing interest and usually of dramatic import. In the broadsides -- apart from the atrocious sentimental songs that were peddled much like today's song sheets -- the printing press competed with the folk balladeer. Benjamin Franklin wrote a broadside, The Lighthouse Tragedy which, he reported, "sold wonderfully well, the event being recent, having made a great noise." A lawyer from Georgetown, on board a British ship to arrange for the release of prisoners, wrote the words for The Star Spangled Banner. As a broadside, it was hawked on the streets of Baltimore soon thereafter, with the tune to which it was to be sung (a glee) designated, as was the custom. The latter became our national anthem but often with the passage of time a song returned to oral traditions where, more often than not, its melody had originated.

It has been suggested that Irish folk music influenced Henry C. Work in the writing of The Ship That Never Returned (composed almost a century ago). This tune was used for a railroad ballad, Rarden Wreck, that is still sung in Scioto County, Ohio. In Virginia the melody took on something of the color and aliveness of Southern folk music, as it supported the rollicking lyrics of The Wreck of the Old 97. Whether one wants to call this particular song folk music or hill-billy, its history certainly reflects processes that go on continuously in the folk field where there have been no copyright barriers to the trade in musical ideas.

Many people seem to take it for granted that folk music connotes certain standards of musical excellence, forgetting that recorded collections are, of necessity, selective. Thus, though standards may be high, the aim of all but a few will be wide of the target. Yet the communal effort will determine, to some extent, the incidence of unique creativity. And so it is with most folk creation. A lot of hardwood chips went into the woodbox for every beautifully carved American eagle that found its way into our museums.

Everything in the continental United States and in its territories is "American" in our sense, from Maine to Hawaii and from

Alaska to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. These examples of American backgrounds in folk music encompass a wealth of musical styles and, though most are in English, a variety of languages. Wherever possible, selections chosen for this series consist of music found in its familiar environment -- the Eskimos in their communal house, the Puerto Ricans in their villages on their green island, the ring-game song of children recorded in an Alabama school.

Since jazz owes something both to oral and written traditions and to African and European sources, processes of musical growth and change could hardly be better illustrated than in a summary of its backgrounds, many aspects of which are known the world over. Though this comprises only one area of American backgrounds -- and the emphasis on it is not intended to encourage a lopsided view -- it is an area the influence of which has been, and is, far-reaching.

The impact of African oral traditions on American music is not even now fully appreciated. For a long time musicologists neglected it in their research on such an indigenous body of music as the spirituals. In tracing melodic strains they were almost single-minded, if not altogether scientific, in concentrating on such sources as were already documented -- chiefly those referring back to the British Isles -- and thus unwittingly nurtured the myth that the African contribution was chiefly one of rhythm. The overwhelming number of identifiable melodic motifs employed in spirituals no doubt do derive from the British Isles. This is to be expected, not merely in view of the converting to Christianity of slaves -- and consequent exposure to psalm-singing and lining-out styles -- but also considering the vastly more complex nature of the total Western European musical tradition in contrast to the tribal music of West Africa. The fact that contemporary, more enlightened, musicologists have found parallels and possible clues to antecedents in the latter does not alter the picture drastically but it does compel us to consider more carefully the nature of the African heritage. The unfortunate result of much early research, however, has been the promulgation of the fallacy -- by no means yet laid low -- that almost the sole contribution from West African music has been rhythmic. And of course the "primitive" angle has been played to death. Since the

rhythmic influence is inescapable and since African oral traditions have affected American music on almost every level, one can only be thankful that most musicologists of today, taking their cue from anthropology, are at last on the right track.

In this connection it is essential to emphasize what many writers have discussed in detail, that the so-called "blue scale" and, more importantly, blue tonality, are descriptive of an American music. They reflect the manner in which African oral traditions accommodated to Western European tunes and techniques, even, in a certain sense, how the latter were utilized.

Jazz, whether close to the concert hall or the barrel-house in style, tends to become sterile when it strays too far from its oral traditions -- this is so, even though on the basis of what is readily measurable, a superficial case can be made out for jazz as having derived largely from Western European music. It is when one begins to ask what distinguishes jazz from other music -- and this goes for blues, spirituals and many work-songs as well -- that one realizes that the measurable factors -- with some exceptions in tonal and rhythmic conventions -- are to be discerned in the subtler elements of style and technique, rather than in large, complex developments of form. Even the latter, in jazz, relate back to elements from blues, such as breaks (brief cadenzas) and riffs (repeated two- or four-bar phrases, e.g. riff arrangements). Such elements, the subtler and the readily apparent, assume considerable importance in assaying to what extent traditions now incorporated in jazz derived from West African sources.

Folk music the world over has much in common despite differences in tonal, scalar and harmonic usages and diverse rhythmic conventions and though the cultural settings-- even where musical affinity seems close-- may appear to be worlds apart. (This is not of course to deny that a great deal of it is alien to one's ears, its musical qualities obfuscated by one's own likes and dislikes.) A meeting ground is the parallel between basic music-making devices in more or less distinct cultures. It has always intrigued the writer that on the site of what was formerly called Congo Square in New Orleans, on certain occasions Indians used it for dances and singing, on others the Negro slave were allowed to use it for a similar purpose. Each group had, of course, its blowing and percussive instruments; one wonders if

they ever compared them! Yet respected musicologist, in compiling a history of instruments, had almost nothing to say of those of West Africa -- which number many distinct types, and where the basic blowing and percussive patterns were all there at the coming of the White man!

No one familiar with blues and jazz would deny that these developments, along with the spirituals and, in fact, many American songs of work and play, relate to Afro-American sources. Studies in country music backgrounds (such as those undertaken by Frederic Ramsey, Jr., in a Folkways series,) and in early New Orleans jazz (a Tulane University Project enlisting the help of the father of jazz musicology, William Russell, and financed by the Ford Foundation) are bound to relate to projects more closely allied to anthropology (e.g. Harold Courlander's Folkways series on Negro Folk Music of Alabama). Each of these areas of research increases our understanding of oral traditions without which one can have very little understanding of jazz at all. Before the widespread expansion of instrumental jazz, blues and ragtime piano were played in the small towns and big towns, honky-tonks and jukin' joints (as distinguished from juke box joints) from New Orleans to Nome, Alaska. This type of piano, though a separate development from jazz, was so obviously related to it that writers still make the error of saying that jazz came from ragtime rather than that ragtime influenced jazz but did not create it. (The great ragtime period and early jazz existed simultaneously.)

Perhaps second to the piano in its widespread popularity-- not forgetting such isolated phenomena as minstrel trombones-- was the drums. One drummer with whom James P. Johnson worked, had a wheel with all manner of music-making gear attached to it. A minstrel man would have recognized some of the devices and a West African, without straining himself, might have discerned their purpose since many of them were merely refinements of Afro-American instruments which also-- and not unexpectedly-- served as patterns for instruments that went into jazz or suggested Western European instruments that answered to the purpose. Quite apart from its formidable battery, a strong claim to African heritage in the drums is that none of the few really great jazz drummers, from Baby Dodds to Art Blakeley, neglects tonality.

Seemingly improvised devices for musical purposes-- as Courlander points out in his notes for Sonny Terry's Washboard Band (FA 2006) -- were not the result of sudden inspiration in music of the deep South. Many home-made instruments, the wash-tub bass, the valveless horn, the pie-pan and the washboard, had their counterparts in West Indian and African instruments. A variety of trumpet and trombone mutes that owe their modern development to jazz, began with a search for surfaces that would modify the blowing sounds, assuring timbres not unlike those achieved by folk instruments. Buddy Bolden used half a coconut shell, an ordinary bathroom plunger and an old derby hat, King Oliver used a child's sand pail. Modern musicians could identify these mutes but Buddy Bolden would recognize the name now used, for only one, the plunger.

To be sure, down-to-earth sounds (in distinction from more refined noises) are typical of much folk usage, both instrumental and vocal, but -- especially as one comes to appreciate our musically gifted cousins of the Caribbean, the differences and similarities between their music and ours -- the suggestion of African antecedents in jazz -- speaking of jazz as a music of instruments appropriate to it -- is hard to escape. Indeed, it becomes all the more apparent when one appreciates the Spanish and French influence on jazz as well (that, of course, extends to more than instrumental usage). If jazz awarded an "Oscar" -- this must not be construed as a suggestion -- it might fittingly be in the form of an African earth-bow. This apparent development of the spring snare (for catching animals) was the ancestor of the wash-tub bass (Courlander) which, in turn, determined the new ways Jimmie Johnson of the Bolden band was to play the string bass, plucking and thumping as well as bowing.

Jazz offers a parallel to instrumental folk music of many lands in that jazz improvisation implies not merely the ability to create variations (based either on melody or on chord structure) and to act as a casual alchemist of musical forms, but, equally important, to employ instruments as the folk artist employs instruments (including vocal chords) in order to achieve the most suitable presentation of material. This will differ according to cultural setting and musical conventions.. It might be the feathery whisper of a dulcimer and a limpid young voice singing an ancient song, or it might be the torn anguish of Blind Willie Johnson's guitar and the harsh grating of his

voice on a spiritual as somber as any blues. Once you've listened to the music of American Indians -- once you've become accustomed to the alienness of its conventions -- you'll find that they, too, have created music rich in inventiveness and geared to the song's need. Perhaps it is largely in the imagination but one senses something of the feel of the west, even to the loping gait of the horses and the swinging rhythm of the rider who doesn't "post", in songs of cowboys and rancheros. Indeed, from such a variety of music as one finds in this new Folkways series, the singing strength of a many-peopled country emerges. What was it the old gray-beard said?--

"I hear America singing..."

VOLUME I

Band 1: JOHN HENRY. Virgil Perkins, kazoo, washboard, vocal; Jack Sims, 12-string guitar. Recorded in 1955 by Samuel B. Charters.

There are hundreds of versions of John Henry, from "hammer" work-songs to the moving and beautiful folk saga created by Rich Amerson (FE 4471). It is possible that John Henry, the Negro folk hero of these songs and the subject of several scholarly essays, had a prototype in real life. At any rate the legend is localized to the Big Bend tunnel in West Virginia (Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad) and the early 1870's, when the heading (shield) was being pushed through red shale at the eastern end. In contrast to the gargantuan scale of Paul Bunyan and his accomplishments, many of the events in the John Henry narrative might have happened, even to the steel-driving contest with a steam drill. John Henry is at once immensely heroic and intensely human. The numerous lyrics one finds in collections include fragments from old folksongs of the British Isles.

What is of interest is that the Negro skiffle band used home-made or ready-to-hand instruments that often had African antecedents. Virgil Perkins' washboard, with a pan lid nailed to the top, is related to various scraping and percussion devices of the West Indies and West Africa, as indicated in our introductory remarks. Though this piece was recorded in Texas, Virgil Perkins came from a member of a skiffle group called The Mobile Strugglers.

Band 2: GRIZZLY BEAR. Negro prison camp work song, recorded in Texas, 1951, by John Lomax, Jr., Peter Seeger and others.

The singing of work songs is not only occupational but cultural. It didn't take plantation owners in the old South long to realize that African work-gangs -- in contrast to most other ethnic groups -- were accustomed to work to common rhythms, supplied by their own voices and accented by the tools with which they worked. The typically African use of antiphonal style and of overlapping parts is often found in spirituals and blues also. It may well have been that the Afro-American work-songs, preserving traditional ways of singing, made possible the distinctive character of the spirituals and blues. Certainly in the work-songs, as Harold Courlander remarked to the writer of these notes, "the African remnants are generally discerned more clearly than in any other forms." The rhythm in work-songs is always alive, though it does not always answer to a regular pulse since it must follow (or lead) the motions of the work being performed. It paces the work. (In relation to jazz, it is interesting to reflect that manipulation of the beat was a necessary feature of work rhythms.)

Tell me who was the grizzly, grizzly bear
Tell a-who was the grizzly, grizzly bear
Jack o' Diamonds was the grizzly, grizzly bear
bear
Jack o' Diamonds was the grizzly, grizzly bear
bear
He made a noise in the bottom like a grizzly bear
bear
He made a noise in the bottom like a grizzly bear
bear
Well my mama was scared of that grizzly bear
bear
Well my mama was scared of that grizzly bear
bear
Well my papa went a-hunting for the grizzly bear
bear
Well my papa went a-hunting for the grizzly bear
bear
Well my brother wasn't scared of that grizzly bear
bear
Well my brother wasn't scared of that grizzly bear
bear
Oh the grizzly, grizzly, grizzly bear
Oh the grizzly, grizzly, grizzly bear
Well-a I'm gonna kill that grizzly bear
Well-a I'm gonna kill that grizzly bear
Well the grizzly, grizzly, grizzly bear
Oh that grizzly, grizzly, grizzly bear
Well I looked in Louisiana for the grizzly bear
bear

Well I looked in Louisiana for the grizzly bear

NEW SOLOIST:

I'm gonna tell you a story 'bout grizzly bear
Jack o' Diamonds wasn't nothing but grizzly bear
bear
He come a-huffing and a-blowing like grizzly bear
bear
He had great long tushes like grizzly bear
He come a-wobbling and a-squabbling like grizzly bear
bear
And Jack o' Diamonds was the great big grizzly bear
bear
He was a great big grizzly, grizzly bear
He was the great big grizzly, grizzly bear
Everybody was scared of that grizzly bear
Everybody was scared of that grizzly bear
Oh the grizzly, grizzly, grizzly bear
Oh the grizzly, the grizzly, grizzly bear
Jack o' Diamonds was the great big grizzly bear
bear
He come a-wobbling and a-squabbling like grizzly bear
bear
He come a-huffing and a-blowing like grizzly bear
bear
He come a-walking and a-talking like grizzly bear
bear
He had great long tushes like grizzly bear
He had big blue eyes like grizzly bear
He had great long hair like grizzly bear
Oh the grizzly, grizzly, grizzly bear
Oh the grizzly, grizzly, grizzly bear
I'm going to tell you people 'bout grizzly bear
I'm gonna warn you and gonna tell you 'bout grizzly bear
bear
You better watch that grizzly, grizzly bear
You better watch that grizzly, grizzly bear
Well the bear's gonna get you now, grizzly bear
bear
Etc.

(grizzly is pronounced griz-ze-ly throughout)

Band 3: BLOWING THE TRAIN. Percy Randolph, harmonica. Recorded by Harry Oster, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1957.

One of the most familiar themes in country music is the train -- the midnight freight, with its long and lonesome wail, the train that takes you away and the one that leaves you behind. The train in American folk music has as many meanings as there are sounds on the midnight air and each singer or musician makes his own, from a lightness of spirit that is like a dance on the strings of a guitar (while the singer tells

As a junkman and fruit peddler, Percy Randolph shouted street cries in New Orleans. At night he picked up the harmonica and remembered country sounds. Almost every harmonica player has his own train piece. This one is Percy Randolph's.

The blind street musician is still held in respect in many parts of the United States and this is somewhat traditional. He is regarded not as a beggar but as an itinerant musician, the shaking of the tin cup merely calling the attention of his listeners to the way in which he makes his livelihood. Although Snooks Eaglin learned much of his repertoire from radio and recordings his singing is dominated by the strong oral tradition of blues; no matter what his material may be, he re-creates it to his own purposes. The singing on this number, to a vibrantly percussive guitar, is at times almost somber, yet not subjectively so and the lyric itself ends on a note of optimism.

I woke up early in the morning)
 People, I just can't sleep no more)²
 All the crickets and frogs that keep me
 company
 And the wind howling 'round my door.

Band 5: DARK WAS THE NIGHT. Blind Willie

Blind Willie was yet another of those itinerant blind musicians discussed above. With his guitar and his tin cup he was a familiar figure from Houston to Harlem. Blind Willie played a type of urban guitar very like that of country blues and set a high standard for jazz guitar.

Band 6: AMASEE. Children's ring game song, recorded by Harold Courlander at Brown's Chapel School, Livingston, Alabama. 1950.

Take your partner down the line,)
Amasee, Amasee.) 3
Swing your partner, swing again,
Amasee, Amasee.
Take your partner down the line,)
Amasee, Amasee.) 2
Swing your partner, swing again,)
Amasee, Amasee.) 3
Take your partner down the line,)
Amasee, Amasee.) 3

Band 7: SPOOKY DRUMS. Warren "Baby" Dodds, drums. Recorded by Moses Asch and Frederic Ramsey, 1946.

In early jazz drumming the left-hand "hard" beats were called "mama" and the right-hand "soft" beats were called "daddy"-- a terminology recalling that in Haiti and some parts of West Africa the big drum that takes the heavy beats is called a "mama" drum. Tonal nuance, an essential of early jazz drums-- though not always heard to advantage on recordings where, in fact, the bass drum was often omitted -- was less emphasized during the swing period. With the recent emphasis on small instrumental groups it has once more assumed its proper role in contributing to the tone color and texture of a performance. In his introduction to "African and Afro-American Drums," (FE 4502) Harold Courlander notes, with regard to African influence on jazz, that "the factors that have to be taken into account go far beyond the element of rhythm. Melodic structure and harmonic concepts must be considered. So must the style of presentation..."

Band 8: BLACK JACK DAVY. Mary Jo Davis, vocal. Recorded by Mary Celestia Parker, Fayetteville, Alabama, 1955.

Even in this mass-media century-- in which popular songs have a life expectancy of about three months-- some families preserve songs and traditions in singing them, from one generation to another. In this way the family of Mary Jo Davis kept alive a style of English traditional singing. Such "family" styles may be closer to older ways of singing than any others, preserving elements of oral presentation. Sometimes in this way of singing, words are changed (witness the many versions of Barbara Allen) to make sense locally or to fit an immediacy of mood, but the sweetness of tone so often encountered and the enduring simplicity of the melodic structure somehow remain as confident of their place in the scheme of things as a theme by Haydn.

Black Jack Davy came a 'riding through the woods,

Singing his song so gayly.
He sang so loud he made the wildwoods ring,
And charmed the heart of lady,
And charmed the heart of lady.

He said pretty Miss will you go with me,
Will you be my honey?
I swear by the sword that hangs by my side,

You'll never want for money,
Never want for money.

The old man came home late that night,
Inquiring for his lady.
The servant (said) before he thought,
She's gone with Black Jack Davy,
Gone with Black Jack Davy.

Go saddle me up my milk white horse,
Saddle him slow and easy.
I'll ride all night till the broad daylight,
And overtake my lady,
Overtake my lady.

He rode all night till the broad daylight,
Till he came to the edge of the water.
There he looked on the other side,
And there he spied his darling,
There he spied his darling.

Oh, will you forsake your house and home,
Will you forsake your baby?
Will you forsake the one you love,
To go with Black Jack Davy,
To go with Black Jack Davy?

Oh, yes I'll forsake my house and home,
Yes I'll forsake my baby.
Yes I'll forsake the one I love,
To go with Black Jack Davy,
To go with Black Jack Davy.

Then pull off that little black glove you wear,
Made of that Spanish leather.
Place your little white hands in mine,
And here we'll part forever,
Here we'll part forever.

She pulled off that little black glove she wore,
Made out of that Spanish leather.
Placed her little white hands in his,
And there they parted forever,
There they parted forever.

Band 9: DRUNKEN SAILOR; EARLY IN THE MORNING; HEY, HEY, SHE RISES (medley). Dulcimer. Recorded in West Virginia.

The dulcimer, a percussive instrument struck with a feather or a mallet, is almost as well known in certain areas of American folk music as is the fiddle. Here it is played incisively, by an old man, in a recording made in West Virginia in the mid-forties, reminding us that the dulcimer sometimes furnished music for dancing. It was often used to accompany

singers, and still is, particularly in mountainous regions such as the Great Smokies.

Band 10: ELLEN SMITH. Pete Steele, vocal and 5-string banjo. Recorded by Ed Kahn, Hamilton, Ohio, 1957.

Born and raised in Kentucky, Pete Steele farmed, worked in the mines in Harlan County and made staves for whiskey barrels. He sang and played his five-string banjo for square dances, and in 1938 Alan Lomax recorded him for the Library of Congress. "At six years old," said Pete Steele, "my father made a small banjo. He took a sieve and put a squirrel's hide on for the banjo head, put thread strings on it, and that's how I learned to play banjo." The right hand technique most often employed by Steele -- and used in this number -- is a type of double thumbing with an occasional pinch of the first and fifth strings in order to add syncopation. The ballad is related to numerous other accounts of the homely and homicidal. In some versions of Ellen Smith the singer admits to being the murderer. In this instance, as Steele remarked before singing it, "it was a boy that took the punishment of some other man's crime."

Oh, it's poor Ellen Smith
This poor girl she was found
With a ball through her heart,
Lying cold upon the ground.

I was saw on Friday
Before that sad day,
They picked up her cold body
And carried it away.

Oh, they gathered their Winchesters,
They chased me all around,
They found this poor boy
In the fur edge of town.

Oh, they send me to Frankfurt
I've been there before,
I wore the ball and chain
Till it made my ankles sore.

I courted her through years
For to make her my wife,
I loved her too dearly
To take her precious life.

Some day before long
We'll stand before the bar,
And when God tries our case,
We'll shine like a star.

Band 11: RUN, RUN. Elizabeth Cotton, guitar solo. Recorded in Baltimore, Maryland, 1958, by Mike Seeger.

As a girl in North Carolina, where she was born around 1900, Elizabeth Cotton -- having found the hiding place of her brother's guitar -- spent as much time as she could picking and chording. Shortly after marriage she gave up all but religious songs for a period of some thirty-five years. Then she met a member of the Seeger family in Washington, and it wasn't long before she was picking and chording again! She plays the regular guitar or banjo, but plays left-handed, and uses a country ragtime style and a banjo strum on both instruments.

Band 12: MOLE IN THE GROUND. Bascom Lamar Lunsford, vocal and 5-string banjo. Recorded by Ralph Auf der Heide, 1951-1952

Ballad country is banjo country. Bascom Lamar Lunsford was born in 1882, in a section rich in folksong, between the Great Smokies and the Blue Ridge. As an interpreter of oral traditions he is unique, being distinguished as performer, collector and festival-founder. The Annual Mountain Dance and Folk Festival held at Asheville, North Carolina, which he instituted, is now world-famous as, indeed, is Mr. Lunsford himself, who went to Venice in 1949 as United States representative at the first International Folk Festival.

I wish I was a mole in the ground,
Yes, I wish I was a mole in the ground,
If I was a mole in the ground I'd root that
mountain down,
And I wish I was a mole in the ground.

Kempie wants a nine-dollar shawl,
Yes, Kempie wants a nine-dollar shawl,
When I come over the hill with a forty-dollar
bill,
'Tis baby, where you been so long.

Oh where have you been so long,
Yes, where have you been so long,
I've been in the bin with the rough and
rowdy men,
'Tis baby, where you been so long.

Oh, I don't like a railroad man,
No, I don't like a railroad man,
A railroad man will kill you when he can,
And he'll drink up your blood like wine.

I wish I was a lizard in the spring
 Yes, I wish I was a lizard in the spring,
 If I was a lizard in the spring I could hear
 my darling sing,
 And I wish I was a lizard in the spring.

Oh, it's where have you been so long,
 Yes, it's where have you been so long,
 I've been in the bin with the rough and
 rowdy men,
 'Tis, baby, where you been so long.

Band 13: ROLLING RIVER. Murph Gribble,
 banjo; John Lusk, fiddle; Albert York, guitar.
 Recorded in Campaign, Tenn., 1946, by
 Margo Mayo.

This is music by a Negro country dance group.
 This piece is interesting for a kind of thick-
 ness in the harmony and for a suggestion of
 "organ chords" that reminds one of very basic
 New Orleans jazz. (The "organ chord" device
 in jazz was later stylized so that it sounded
 little different from conventional harmony.)
 The use of instruments bears out remarks
 made in the introduction. As often happens
 in folk music (another parallel to early jazz)
 instruments are used with a new-born vigor and
 freshness, much as though the use to which
 they could be put had to be discovered for the
 first time -- this is the spirit in which Pete
 Steele plays his banjo and Blind Willie Johnson
 his guitar.

Band 14: ALLONS DANSER COLINDA. Roy
 Brule, vocal, accordion. Recorded by I.
 Bonstein, Arnaudville, La., 1956-57.

Cajun music is the music of the Louisiana bayous,
 and notably, of the Acadians, a people
 descended from the Acadians of Nova Scotia who
 were deported from this homeland in the 18th
 century, during the Seven-Years War (1755).
 (Other Acadians, including those who had
 been deported to New England, re-settled in
 Canada after the Treaty of Paris, their
 descendants now number about 300,000.) Lucie
 de Vienne, in notes on Cajun songs, relates
 that though this dialect is similar in some
 ways to French "Creole" it abounds in
 colloquial expressions still in use today in rural
 Quebec. The music, too, has an affinity to
 French Canadian. This title suggests a West
 Indian influence. The Calinda, said to have
 come from the islands, was danced on Louisiana
 plantations and at Congo Square in New Orleans.
 (There's also a folk-song and dance by the

name of Colinda, which comes from Rumania.)
 The Cajuns have not been without outside
 influence. Jazz musicians of New Orleans have
 been going down to the bayou country for decades,
 to spell the accordion at dances. Whatever the
 origins of this "Colinda" dance-song, nothing can
 take away from the authentic Cajun flavor of
 its performance.

Allons danser, Colinda, allons danser, Colinda.
 Le pa'quet l'est bien bon, allons danser,
 Colinda.

C'est pas tout l'monde qui connaît danser
 lès valse à deux temps.
 Allons danser Colinda, danser, Coli, Colinda.

Allons danser, Colinda, pou' pavoiser le
 départ.
 Allons danser, Colinda, danser, Coli, Colinda.

Let's go dancing, Colinda, let's go dancing,
 Colinda.
 The floor is very good, let's go dancing,
 Colinda.

It isn't everyone who knows how to dance
 two-beat waltzes.
 Let's go dancing, Colinda, dancing, Coli,
 Colinda.

Let's go dancing, Colinda, to celebrate the
 departure.
 Let's go dancing, Colinda, dancing, Coli,
 Colinda.

Band 15: SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN. Hobart
 Smith, piano. Recorded by Moses Asch and
 Alan Lomax, 1945-46.

"Hill-billy," wrote Alan Lomax in introducing
 what one might call the "piano-picking" of
 Hobart Smith, "is the music of the country
 musician come to town...it becomes every
 day a more important part of American popu-
 lar music...Hobart Smith's approach is typi-
 cal of this movement." The truth is, he is a
 little more than typical. His is what might
 be termed a "banjo style" piano. He plays
 old banjo and fiddle tunes by ear (reminding
 us, by association, that old ragtime pianists
 used to speak of "banjo rags"). Sourwood
 Mountain is a venerable square dance tune.

Band 16: DIAMOND JOE. Cisco Houston, vocal,
 guitar. Recorded in 1951, by Moses Asch.

Except when a blood-curdling ballad was sung

lugubriously to soothe the long-horns, cowboy songs were usually camp songs rather than work songs, yet something of the riding rhythms seems reflected in the songs, adding a rhythmic snap to the rhythmic angularity that typifies so many American ballads, especially those that are the least bit up-tempo. Cowboy songs have varied from the sentimental to the satirical and from bad bosses to far horizons. Diamond Joe is a genuine story-telling ballad, the kind sung around the dying fire at round-up time. In its choice of language and in its under-played humor and blunt sarcasm, it is as singularly a product of American backgrounds as is the writing of Mark Twain. As noted in the introduction, Cisco sings them straight, and good.

There is a man you'll hear about
Most every place you go,
And his holdings are in Texas,
And his name is Diamond Joe.

Well, he carries all his money
In his diamond studded jaw,
And he never was much bothered
By the process of the law.

Well I hired to Diamond Joe, boys,
I did offer him my hand,
And he gave me a string of horses
So old they could not stand.

I liked to died of hunger
'Cause he did mistreat me so.
I never earned a dollar,
In the pay of Diamond Joe.

Well, his bread it was corn-dodger,
And his meat I could not chaw,
And he drove me near distracted
With the waggin' of his jaw.

While he tellin' of his story,
And I mean to let you know
There never was a rounder
That lied like Diamond Joe.

Well I tried three times to quit him,
boys,
But he did argue so
That I still am punching cattle
In the pay of Diamond Joe.

And when I'm called to heaven,
Last thing before I go,
Give my blankets to my buddies,
And give the fleas to Diamond Joe.

Band 17: SIETE LEGUAS (SEVEN LEAGUES).
Peter Hurd, vocal, guitar. Recorded by
J.D. Robb, New Mexico, 1956.

Peter Hurd is a gifted singer of ranchera songs. He is also an artist represented in the Metropolitan Museum and in the Texas Institute of Technology, among other places. Mr. Hurd lives on a ranch in New Mexico, in which state he grew up with the Spanish-speaking people of the Hondo valley. "By ranchera songs," Peter Hurd says, "I mean the earthy songs sung by Mariachi bands and wandering singers of Mexico... The distinction between ranchero songs and other types is for me one of feeling, not of antiquity. Although the verses are usually simple in structure they occasionally have an intense emotional impact." Peter Hurd learned his first ranchera songs from an old Mexican woman who cooked for his family for many years. Later he got to know ranchera singers in their own environment and learned many songs, including this corrido. "Seven Leagues" is a narrative ballad named for Pancho Villa's horse, telling about incidents in the saga of Villa, a folk hero of the U.S.-Mexican border early in the century.

"Siete Leguas" el caballo
Que Villa mas estimaba.
Cuando oía silbar los trenes
Se paraba y relinchaba
Siete Leguas el caballo
Que Villa mas estimaba.

En la estación de Irapuato
Captaban los horizontes
Allí combatió formal
La Brigada Bracamontes
En la estación de Irapuato
Cantaban los horizontes.

Oye tú Francesco Villa
¿Que dice tu corazón
Qué no te acuércas valiente
.....
Cuando atacaste Torreón?
¿Que no te acuerdas, valiente,
Cuando tomaste Paredón?

Como a las tres de la tarde
Silbó la locomotora.
Arriba, arriba muchachos.
Pongan la ametralladora!
Como a las tres de la tarde
Silbó la locomotora.

Adiós torres de Chihuahua!
 Adiós torres de cantera!
 Ya vino Francisco Villa
 A quitar les lo pantera
 Ya vino Francisco Villa
 A devolver la frontera.

"Seven Leagues" was the horse
 Which Villa most of all liked.
 When he heard train whistles blow
 He always would rear up and neigh
 Seven Leagues, the horse
 Which Villa most of all liked.

In the station at Irapuato
 The birds were singing.
 There in formal combat
 Battled Bracamonte's brigade.
 In the station at Irapuato
 The birds were singing.

Listen to me Francisco Villa
 What does your heart say to you?
 Don't you remember, brave man,

 That time when you took Torreón?
 Don't you remember, brave man,
 When you also took Paredón?

At about three in the afternoon
 The locomotive blew its whistle.
 Jump up, my lads
 Man the machine gun!
 At about three in the afternoon
 The locomotive blew its whistle.

Farewell towers of Chihuahua!
 Farewell towers of tufa stone!
 Already Francisco Villa has come
 To rid them of the panther.
 Already Francisco Villa has come
 To restore the frontier.

Band 18: MATACHINES DANCE. Recorded in
 New Mexico, 1949, by J.D. Robb.

Spanish, Mexican and American Indian tradi-
 tions are interwoven often in the music of the
 Southwest. The Matachines Dances or Dance
 of Los Matachines, derives from religious
 ritual. It is danced in Mexico and in
 Spanish settlements of the Southwest on the
 feast day of patron saints, and is also danced
 in some Indian pueblos. One of the figures
 in the dance, a young girl, is in white com-
 munion dress and is said to be identified with
 the Indian consort of Cortez. The dance of Los
 Matachines has magic implications -- one

year when it was omitted in a community, the
 village spring dried up -- and in the midst
 of its solemnity there is slapstick comic relief.
 This is often in the form of a comic figure
 dressed up as El Toro, the bull, who at one
 fiesta happily pursued a man dressed as a
 woman.

Band 19: MOONLIGHT SONG. Taos Indians.
 Recorded by Willard Phodes.

This Moonlight Song is typical of the serenade
 songs of Taos Indians. These are traditional-
 ly sung on moonlit evenings by young men who
 gather on a river bridge between their two
 communities and engage in song contests. In
 these performances, the solo voice delights
 in vocalism and virtuosity-- and the style is of
 course less restrained than that found in much
 Pueblo ceremonial music.

Band 20: WAR DANCE SONG. Recorded by
 Alan P. and Barbara W. Merriam at
 Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana, 1950.

Nowadays the war drum for a tribal dance will
 likely as not be an ordinary bass drum, the
 trip to the gathering be undertaken in a hard-
 top sedan. For the Indians of the west, the
 Flatheads and the Plains groups, have left the
 ancient times, and, in many respects, the
 ancient ways. During the last three decades
 -- working as groups, in the Indian way, which
 is why they do not like to see the tribal lands
 chopped up into real-estate sub-divisions --
 these original settlers of the west developed
 herds of Buffalo and built hydro-electric
 dams. The music of the Flatheads is some-
 times knowingly influenced by that of other
 western tribes but there is little impingement
 of other music.

"War dancing is done by men and is basical-
 ly individualistic and exhibitionistic" writes
 Alan P. Merriam. The movement for it
 (around a pole) is counter-clockwise. The
 song leader taps the rhythm on the edge of
 the drum and after he begins a phrase,
 others join in. The change in tempo and
 increase in volume is a signal to the dancers.
 Singers of this song were Louie Nine Pipe,
 Paul Finley and five others.

Band 21: ESTA NAVIDAD (THIS IS
 CHRISTMAS). Recorded in Puerto Rico, by
 William S. Marlens, 1956.

This is a well known Puerto Rican song to which the singer has put his own words. He is accompanied by a 10-year old boy. Puerto Rico, the island housing some two millions citizens of the United States, is culturally allied to the West Indies. With-in its small space -- 100 by 35 miles -- it manages to squeeze an almost infinite variety. From the days of its original Indian inhabitants, through Columbus' discovery, Spanish occupation and, finally, assimilation by the United States, it has developed its own musical identity, changing it as its own cultural environment has changed. It has many musical styles in common with islands of the Caribbean, representing various combinations of African and Spanish influences, along with other elements.

Esta navidad
Esta navidad
Esta navidad
No me coge pasta.
Nadie pana.
Por eso:
Esta navidad
Esta navidad
Esta navidad
No me coge pasta
Nadie pana.

Voy pa' Sayamonte
Si, el día veinticuatro
El día veinticuatro
Sí voy pa' Sayamonte
A comer casey y a bailar
Por eso:

Esta navidad, etc...

Esta ya se fue,
Yo no estaba en casa;
Y dicen que digan porque
Yo todavía no vengo.

Esta navidad, etc...

Dueño de la casa,
Mire, no me acusa a mí,
Dueña de la casa,
Mire, no me acuse a mí,
Usted, chivanito, mire
Que nos trajo aquí
A cantarle, mire:

Esta navidad, etc...

This Christmas Day
This Christmas Day

This Christmas Day
Brings me no pastries,
No one brings me velvet,
This is why:
This Christmas Day
This Christmas Day
This Christmas Day
Brings me no pastries
No one brings me velvet.

I'm off to Sayamonte,
Yes on (December) the twenty-fourth,
The very twenty-fourth,
I'm really off to Sayamonte
There to eat cheese and to dance.
And this is why:

This Christmas Day, etc...

This day now is over,
And I was not at home;
And say they what they will because
I'm still not on my way.

This Christmas Day, etc...

Master of the house,
Look, lay no blame on me;
Mistress of the house, look,
Lay you no blame on me.
You, my capering lad, look
What brought us here
To sing to you, look:

This Christmas Day, etc...

Band 22: AGUINALDO CAGUEÑO. The
"Trobador" De La Montana and the
Puerto Rican Quartet: Victor Rolón
Santiago, leader, singer, bongo drum;
Julio Berrios Mendoza, singer, claves
(hard-wood sticks), guiro (a scraper:
serrated gourd rubbed and stroked by
wires); Vincente Cotto Suarez, cuatro
(guitar with four double strings);
Jorge Figueroa, tres (guitar with three
double strings); Recorded in 1956 by

William S. Marlens in Puerto Rico.

This exciting performance reminds one of flamenco singing in the way the lines are extended and in the singer's control of breathing. Something similar occasionally is found in blues. Aguinaldo Caguño is a decima in which verses are improvised, a parallel to such forms of vocal improvisation as Trinidadian calypso. Refrain syllables precede each stanza, though it is unlikely the singer needed the time to think up new lines, as one writer inferred. In song contests of Latin-American and West Indian music, singers improvise verses like jazzmen jamming for keeps. And the "Trobador" just doesn't sound as though he's ever at a loss! The two Puerto Rican numbers included in this collection afford yet another example of how different can be the impact of African musical heritage, according to what music it encounters.)

Ay - la - lo - le - le - lo - la-a
(Como lloros) y voces se oyen en la calles,
En campos y valles. Ay! campos y bosques.
El reloj las doce pronto marcará
Y se ausentará el año ya viejo.
Cristo en el cielo, compadres, nos alumbrará.

Aquí se lo resisten
Y se acerca un año que es nuevo
Trayendo consuelo con su luz divina;
La virtud encima reconocerás
Con Jesús habrá completa armonía
Y un sol de alegría nos alumbrará.
Y un sol de alegría nos alumbrará.
Dulces memorias o recuerdos tristes,
Dulces memorias o recuerdos tristes
En el alma existen juntos a la esperanza.
El hombre que avanza con fe encontrará
La felicidad, y el bien encontraremos,
Y Dios todos los años nos l' alumbrará

Ay - la
¡Viva el nuevo año!
Viva el nuevo año de vida repleto,
¡Ay! Todo completo lo mismo que antaño,
Libre del engaño el bien triunfará,
Porque brillará la luz de lo bueno
Y después del duelo, muchachos, nos alumbrará.

Ay - la - lo - le - le - lo - la-a
What (weeping) and voices are heard in the
streets,
In fields and valleys. Ay! in fields and forests!
The clock soon will strike the hour of midnight
And the year will be gone that now already

is old.

Christ in Heaven, friends, will light our way.

Here they're resisting it
And nearer draws the oncoming year
Bringing us solace with its light divine;
Above it you'll see Virtue itself
In perfect harmony with Jesus
And a joyful sun will light our way.

Sweet remembrances and sad memories
Sweet remembrances and sad memories
Dwell in the soul together with hope.
The man who goes forward with faith
he will gain
Happiness, let us but do right
And God will always light our way.

Ay - la
Long live the New Year!
Long live the New Year with life overflowing
Ay! full of good things like the year before last,
Free of deceit, the good, it will triumph,
For it will shine on, the light of all good,
And once grief is gone, boys, it will light
our way.

Band 23: ROCKY ROAD. Alabama Sacred
Harp Singers.

This is an example of "shape-note" singing which, in such compilations as The Sacred Harp served to preserve old ways of singing. In such songbooks the notes were printed in various shapes to facilitate easy identification. Some of the tunes featured in this type of choral singing pre-date the American Revolution.

Band 24: IF WE NEVER MEET AGAIN. Sung
by the Children of Diamond Rural School, St.
Croix, Virgin Island. Recorded by Edward J.
Keinzer, 1958.

This is a Virgin Island "spiritual" with folk elements and an underlying fervor and intensity that even the setting cannot disguise. Though somewhat formalized, the singing has an ingenuous charm. This has the "calypso sound" that is prevalent throughout the Caribbean area. Properly speaking, it's the Caribbean sound since calypso refers to lyrics, not music. (Houdini-- one of the best Trinidad singers -- once explained to me that calypso singers used tunes from various islands, but that the genuine Calypso singer made up his own words.) We might add that the "calypso sound" is almost always that of

a dance, from one or another of the islands.

Band 25: "INVITING-IN" DANCE SONG. Otis Ahkivigak, singer. Recorded by Laura Boulton at Point Barrow, Alaska, 1946.

"To stop the Eskimos singing and dancing is like cutting the tongue out of a bird," an old man remarked, on an occasion when it was rumored that the Inviting-In or Messenger Feast, might be banned as a pagan performance. Eskimo music is, like so much folk music, more subtle than its measurable elements would indicate, just as its story-telling is as evocative and suggestive as it is literal. Musicologists have found correspondences between music

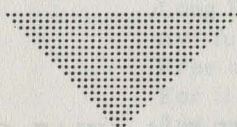
of Alaskan Eskimos and that of Indian tribes of the Southwest. The custom described as the basis of this song from the 49th state suggests a "prestige-value" in "giving", which suggests the practices of some Indian tribes. Traditionally, the host of the Inviting-In Feast saved for years in order to feed the guests, including those from other villages, invited by the "Messengers". This is one of two types of feasts at Point Barrow, the other being the Whale Feast. Entertainers at the Inviting-In Feast wear masks, some to keep the guests amused, some to honor the spirits of animals. The dances vary from comic to serious and reach a climax in that of the Shaman, which ends in a trance.

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