

Folkways Records FH 5403
STEREO

FROM THE COLD JAWS OF PRISON

SIDE 1

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SIDE 2

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Produced by Soul Rock from the Rock, Inc.
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Soul Rock from the Rock, Inc. Presents

STEREO
Folkways Records FH 5403

FROM THE COLD JAWS OF PRISON

by Inmates and Ex-Inmates, Musicians and Poets from

ATTICA, RIKERS and the TOMBS



produced by Attilio J. Cantore

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FH 5403 STEREO

FROM THESE COLD JAWS OF PRISON

Presented by Soul Rock from the Rock. The genesis of Jazz. The rock we refer to is the prisons. What you will hear on this recording is a cry of a people for justice and human dignity. You don't know what freedom is unless you've experienced the chains from which to break free. In the opening tune, (He Arose) the guitar plays a pattern of chords (blues changes) incessantly repeating itself like the links of a chain. The drum beats a strict two four time as solid as a rock. The voice cries out, the sound of an anguished body. The flute soars out to the very edges of the tyrannical confines of rhythm and harmony, a soul screaming ...freedom ...Freedom ...FREEDOM...

Cathedral...Black news of Metromedia TV was doing a documentary on the sorrows of the Black Mothers of the men locked in detention in the Tombs in New York City. This poem was written for that program by Obawayo and Al Drears.

Down Went The Junkie...The vast majority of those in our jails are serving time for possession of drugs or drug related crimes. Heroin is a most effective pain reliever. With so many people seeking so desperately for a pain reliever, there must be pain. A lifetime of feeling useless, in the way, can create an unbearable sense of anxiety. "It's like everyone wishing I were dead. Like a knife about to be plunged into my gut, but no knife, just that horrible feeling."

Daddy Come Dig Me...here the poet speaks to an amorphous "Daddy" perhaps all of us who created him..
If we were to put cats in a wire cage, then electrify the cage as we increase the current (anxiety or fear which can produce an uncool

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reaction); the cats react in one of two ways. Some turn inward like the drug addict while others tear the other cats to pieces, in reacting to the horrible pain.

Those who run our system of criminal justice seem to increase the current then prescribe nightsticks and machine guns as the victims react to the pain. The ex-offender is then turned out into the street by the hundreds daily to emit their renewed anger and vengeance on the population.

From These Cold Jaws of Prison, lock Bars, Steel Teeth....is another reaction to a prison system, we find the evolution to the politicized prisoner complete. It is the prisons that produced the Malcom Xs, The Cleavers, Panthers, Young Lords and Weathermen.

Letter from Prison...from your Ex-slave....This poem was inspired by a labor strike by inmates at Rikers Island after it was brutally quelled by the Warden. The thirteenth amendment of the United States Constitution still permits slave labor for those "duely tried and convicted of a crime."

I'm a Dreamer...The prisons also contained Martin Luther King who always remains an inspiration for most of those confined. Yet even here Russell Mayberry asks in the last line "Please don't wake me for if I wake now I may never see the day when there's peacefulness.

Screaming..is the cry from the Tombs or the scream that was Attica. The men from the prisons are shouting "LISTEN". It is a cry for Justice and basic Humanity.

Notes by Attilio Cantore. For the past 9 years music Dir. N.Y.C. Dept. of Correction at Rikers Island.

Side One

CATHEDRAL

Band One

She swings my soul to a sweet cathedral thing of beauty.
That African princess whose eyes as dark and deep as
the Nile and a truth within it.
Her face black, shining like the sun with love's true
light.
She bears the seed of the coming free
And she swings my soul to a sweet cathedral thing of
beauty.
Black blood coursing through her veins.
This is why when she bows down her love to me
And whispers, tenderly, "Baby, Baby",
Oh, I realize the blessings given to me.
And she swings my soul to a sweet cathedral thing of
beauty.
She swings my soul to a sweet cathedral thing of beauty
and I love her.
And I love her. And I lover her.

Band Two

THE JUNKIE

Down went the junkie with the monkey on his back.
the white world laughed because the junkie was Black.
the condemned building in which he lived pinned a cockroach on his head,
and his father told his mother "that boy is better of dead."
that's the only way for him to ride a Cadillac,
as a tuxedo wearing stiff in a box in the back
His mama was sad, but his papa was glad, the junkie
didn't have much to say
they tell me dead folks behave that way
The other junkies at his funeral whispered like dry leaves,
"O.D. glad it ain't me!" "overdose, the pig shot the most"
"Good for him," and "Whose to blame," "Sorry for him," and
ain't it a shame.
Well everyone at the funeral thought that they could spare a
tear--well how come nobody cried when the junkie was here?
How come nobody cried when the junkie was here? How come huh?
How come?
Why, nobody didn't give a damn then.

By Obawayo

Band Three

A Word to the Hip

From these cold jaws of prison...lock bars of steel teeth, from
way back when they did us wrong. Falsely labeled dope pusher,
killer, thief. Brothers let us be strong. No more rappin', let
there be a total eclipse of the bullshit wind. Let peace end.
let violent deeds begin.
Black power ran out of cheeks to turn, so now it's an eye for
an eye, Burn Baby Burn!

And all you beef, steak cattle rustling dope booting faggots
stand up on your alligator shoes. Tell whitey you don't give
a damn. Be for real Black man. And all you Black power slick pro-
improvement stop those speeches and get down with the movement.
We don't need a leader who gets paid to say it, who talks Black
revolution, but don't want to play it.
And that goes double for you preacher cats. Your holy bible never
kill rats. So let it now be said, Uncle Tom maybe dead, but we
got to get next to his brother Tim. Unity is a joke until we get
rid of him.
Watch out for the brother who starts acting strange. If he's
Black and raps we're not ready for change.
White radio lies--papa gotta brand new bag. Papa got nothing new
and his life is a drag.
JC got a house full of souls to save, while 16 yr. old boys go
looting to the grave.
Mama got a line from H. Rap Brown. "Whites don't know what to do
but everybody else knows what's going down."
Look at the big Black baby born to the white mother country he
didn't belong to. Did in by white folks he never did wrong to.
While white god turns his head and look the other way. The guilty
went to church to donate the sin away.
From these cold jaws of prison...lock bars of steel teeth.

Band Four

DADDY DADDY COME DIG ME

Daddy, Daddy come dig me
Daddy dig yourself in me
This trick mirror reflection of what you and mama did
Daddy dig the kid. Blown by the reckless winds of youth over
high roof-tops of reality to the funkier flop house, Truth!
Daddy cross the gray wall of years to my lonely house of tears.
Daddy come see about me
Come dig the son; come forgetting what I've done.
Daddy, my Daddy, my father of me
Show me the way out--how to be free
Daddy don't forget to bring all the answers with you
Your son is uptight, you've got to tell me what to do
Daddy pull my coat. Tell me what its all about.
I was born with a rope around my throat; but they won't let
your son hangout
Hey! there's a big white cat laying back fat broadcasting our
blues with a bulletin in the news saying, "Nigger get out of my
world right now."
And Daddy, Daddy if you read between the lines he's even telling us
how. Papa the man is slick. He's got a birth control trick. Papa I
can plainly see the man is popping pills to mama, so she can't make,
more of me.
For us here now he's got another plan--slave labor, prison or vietnam.
Daddy you better come dig this son you made
Daddy you better come rappin' cool because your son is afraid.
Papa I am youth and youth is action and fear can produce an uncool
reaction. Have me throwing a pepsi-cola bottle at a national guard's
face. Have me throwing fire bombs all over the place.
Daddy, Daddy you better dig me before fear have your son out on the

fire escape shootin' a gun.
 Daddy blind cold fingers of fear bury all common sense and logic
 alive; killing all my needs except my need to survive. Ugly bass
 voices of fear that refuse to be quiet, ordering folks and inciting
 them to riot, the same fear could make me throw a fire bomb, could
 destroy loyalty to race and people, and make your son an Uncle Tom
 Daddy fear might separate me from the rest
 Have me thinking that what I'm doing is best
 Have me wearing a badge of authority,
 Doing dirty Uncle Tom deeds for "The Man" over me.
 Have me as a brainwashed soldier in Vietnam huh, fighting a war as
 a stooge for "The Man."
 Have me a Black national guard doing something surprising
 Bayoneting my brothers and sisters. Talking about putting down some
 goddamn uprising.
 Daddy don't let fear do this to me
 Daddy my Daddy come see about me
 Why pain to Mama at my birth
 If I was born to suffer even worse
 Daddy motherfuck my evil ways
 Those are only scars I received in my younger days.
 Soft as a clam without his tough shell
 When I was young, Daddy it was Hell!
 It was roaches in Rice Krispies alive and
 running about. It was nothing else to eat so
 it was wise to pick them out
 It was too many in the beds,
 so I had to sleep on the floor
 It was real milk this morning, but now there ain't no more
 It was starting out right and
 ending wrong locked in a cell.
 To Tell it Like It Is
 Daddy It Was Hell!

By Obawayo

Band Five

LORD I WANT TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Lord I want to be a christian
 in my heart, in my heart
 Lord I want to be a christian
 in my heart, in my heart
 in my heart, in my heart
 Lord I want to be a christian
 in my heart

Lord I want to be like Jesus
 in my heart, in my heart
 Lord I want to be like Jesus
 in my heart, in my heart, in my heart
 Lord I want to be like Jesus
 in my heart

Lord I want to be more loving
 in my heart, in my heart
 Lord I want to be more loving
 in my heart, in my heart
 in my heart
 Lord I want to be more loving
 in my heart

Lord I want to be a christian
 in my heart, in my heart
 Lord I want to be a christian
 in my heart.

Spiritual

This next one is an open letter from prison by a friend of Obawayo.
 He gave me this message to be read to you today. Well, maybe
 Obawayo could explain a little bit about his very good friend
 Ronnie Reed who is still at Rikers Island.

Yea, Ronnie ask me to give this to you. You know, if you can
 dig where he's coming from. Like while I was doing my consolation
 bit, my rehabilitation thing you know, me and Ronnie hooked up.
 And we knew each other in the streets, we shot drugs together. And
 all of a sudden we went different ways. We met back up at Rikers
 Island. Then he was separated from me again. They took him over to
 C76 where they send all the adults, you know because he wasn't
 an adolescent. Okay, Ronnie was over there about, I say, two
 months. Speaker: How did Ronnie come back? Obawayo: He signed
 papers saying that he was a homosexual in order to get out of
 C76, because few brothers felt that they weren't getting their
 rights, you know as human beings and said we ain't going to work
 and the man said, "you ain't," and he socked it to him. They came
 in with clubs and all kinds of things just like they do all over
 the city now--at the Tombs, in Queens, and they set fire to him.
 Ronnie told me this. Brothers were coming out with their eyes
 hanging out, bleeding busted heads, you know and he said he
 had to get out of there. I think there's something about the
 constitution, the 13th amendment of the Constitution that states
 you know, I dig that. You do it, I don't know how it goes.

Speaker: This is kind of interesting, if you check the Constitution
 of the U.S. there's a 13th amendment which is suppose to free the
 slaves. It said: 'Slavery shall be abolished in the United States
 except for those duely convicted, tried and convicted of a crime.
 Check it out. It says it in your own U.S. Constitution. Slavery
 is legal for 14,000 Black men in the city of New York who are
 in prison --Blacks and Puerto Ricans. And they actually have things
 like forced labor and like what happens when some people refuse to
 work, as I suppose Obawayo just ran down from Ronnie. Anyway this
 is about an ex-slave. An open letter from Ronnie Reed, who is now
 at Rikers Island speaking to you through Obawayo.
 I think Ronnie came home--he's heavy, check him out.

Side Two Band One

AN OPEN LETTER

Mr. Whiteman:

Please Sir help me, I'm so confused;
 you tell me all the don'ts but not the do's.

You say, "Boy get a job and stand up tall
 but I look around and there ain't no work at all.

Of course if I had some education, I'd be cool.
 But BOSS, you know you ain't taught me nothing in them there schools.

I'm sorry I can't sing, dance or keep a rhymic beat
 but from stepping on the roaches, I learnt how to tap my feet.

I could get some polish and start to shine
 but man, you don't want to give me no more then a dime
 and that ain't fair cause master, you done upped the price of wine.

Hey BOSS maybe I can be a athlete.

I learnt how to wrestle from being mugged on the street.

I know! I'll be your hunting guide; I can set a mean trap.

Why Mr. CHARLIE, in my house I caught many a rat.

You say no, cause my health ain't no good.

Well SIR dont think I'm ungrateful; you gave my people the best you could but you plumb forgot to add some medical services like you should.

Say BOSS, I'd be happy to go to your jail and do some time but ever since your kids discovered dope, its been such a crime.

Well sir, I just thought I'd let you know

I'll never forget your generosity and now I gotta go.

Cause, like yesterday I took a job that was offered to me Working with a guy named Huey for the B.P.P.

Your ex-slave,
The Brothers

By Ronnie Reed

Band Two

Here's Russell Mayberry who's gonna do one of his very heavy sounds, "I'm a Dreamer." Its kind of a hope, hope against all of the despair, maybe a reminiscent of King and yet even in that there's not quite a certainty. If I wake now I might never see the day. I'm a Dreamer written by Russell Mayberry, sung by Russell Mayberry and his brother Jesse Mayberry.

"I'M A DREAMER"

I'm a dreamer, let me dream my life away,
I can fly, watch me glide up and away,
To a new life, to a new place, to a new time,
There is peace now, no more fighting losing wars.
I see people, like I've never seen before,
Get together, no one claiming, they are better,

Follow the stream of my dream,
Into the sea of liberation,
Beyond the walls of war and death,
Into the land of freedom,

Please don't shake me, let me dream my life away,
If I wake now, I don't think I'll see the day,
When there's peacefulness, and my mind will cease,
to be restless, — I'm a dreamer, I'm a dreamer, I'm a dreamer.

Band Three

SCREAMING...

Screaming, screaming, crying, wailing, calling and begging,
millions of voices forever screaming.
I heard them always night and day
I heard them, doesn't anyone else?
Don't you Mr. Nixon, President Nixon?
Millions of voices over this land crying and dying because of the man.
Whats that you say, you don't hear none
Your ears are full with the sound of cannons and guns
and besides you're busy with pen in hand sending another mother's son
to his death in Vietnam.

But the screaming continues, its loud and clear.

So I wonder do you hear, Vice President Agnew?

Thousands struggling to break the chains of illiteracy and you say that the niggers are entering colleges at a rate that appalls thee I guess you figure our desire will pass; meanwhile, your main concern is being a stuffy-old ass(?)

And the wailing and calling goes on, listen to it congress.

Gentlemen of congress, students are rebellious and national guard are sent. Un-trained and afraid so their bullets are spent.

Though you saw it on TV the blood wasn't fake, its your last chance to stop this barbarism before its too late.

Because the crime is being stifled and the voices are being suppressed. Don't you know Attorney General Mitchell, Attorney General Mitchell people are fighting to obtain their rights and you present a program of repression to demonstrate your might. But its not too late to call in your flat foot dances--but no, you're obsessed with killing or caging Black Panthers. So the screaming and calling goes on. No one wants to hear or see, not even you American people. American people don't you see what the government is trying to do--make yourself totalitarian with the test for president that doesn't give a damn about you. But no, you can't see because you been lulled to sleep in a dream by living in an automative plastic society thats totally unclean.

So you that cried, dry up your tears,

Stop screaming and wailing and forget your fears, though it seems only one way justice can be done, I know you want to stamp out these evils by picking up the gun; but before you resort to violence and hate, try a little more love and brotherhood. It's not yet too late!

He Arose

Band Four

They crucified my Saviour
They nailed him to the cross
They crucified my Saviour
They nailed him to the cross
and the Lord shall bear my spirit
He arose, he arose, he arose from the dead
and the Lord shall bear my spirit home
Then Joseph begged his body
and laid it in the tomb
Then Joseph begged his body
and laid it in the tomb
Then Joseph begged his body
and laid it in the tomb
and the Lord shall bear my spirit home
He arose, he arose, he arose from the dead
He arose, he arose, he arose from the dead
He arose, he arose, he arose from the dead
and the Lord shall bear my spirit home
An angel came from heaven and rolled the stone away
An angel came from heaven and rolled the stone away
An angel came from heaven and rolled the stone away
and the Lord shall bear my spirit home
He arose, he arose, he arose from the dead
He arose, he arose, he arose from the dead
He arose, he arose, he arose from the dead
and the Lord shall bear my spirit home

-- Old Slave Spiritual