

FOLKWAYS RECORDS / NY

FW 6911

folksongs of four continents

sung by *Pete Seeger*

with *The Song Swappers*

Pete Seeger, arranger and director

Bring Me a Little Water, Silvy LOUISIANA *Ah, Si Mon Moine* QUEBEC

Bimini Gal BAHAMAS *The Greenland Whalers* NEW ENGLAND

Mi Caballo Blanco CHILE *Oleanna* NORWAY *Banuwa Yo* LIBERIA

Ragupati Ragava Rajah Ram INDIA *Hey, Daroma* ISRAEL

Rosenhouse

M
1627
S972
F666
1955

MUSIC LP

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6911

FOLKSONGS OF FOUR CONTINENTS

Descriptive notes inside pocket

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: R55-415

© 1955 FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE Corp., 701 Seventh Ave., New York City
Distributed by Folkways/Scholastic Records, 906 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6911

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FW 6911

© 1955, 1962 Folkways Records Service Corp., 701 Seventh Ave., N.Y.C., USA

M
1627
S972
F666
1955

MUSIC LP

folksongs of four continents



sung By
the song swappers

The revival of interest in folksinging in America centered about the role of the solo ballad singer. Yet many of the world's greatest folk songs require more than one person to do them justice. How can fewer than two sing many of the beautiful songs of Latin America? And at least four are needed for the fine choral chants of Africa. A small chorus is needed to give the proper feeling for many Slavic songs. And a roomful must rock and swell when we sing gospel songs and spirituals like "When The Saints Go Marching In" or "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder."

Why is it that when glee clubs and well-trained choruses attempt folk songs, the result is often

less than successful? Perhaps it is that folk songs, born in fields and kitchens, feel ill at ease on the concert stage. More often, possibly, it is that arrangers and conductors lack close basic acquaintance with folk song choral idioms, techniques, and attitudes.

In the United States we have many wonderful traditions of folk music, brought here from every continent under the sun. Some of them, such as the Irish and the Scottish, are primarily solo. Others, stemming from Africa, and from Slavic nations, are primarily choral. In addition new idioms have developed which borrow both from Europe and Africa. For example, through-

out the southern states we find a style of harmony which stresses fourths and fifths, rather than thirds and sixths, and a hard, flat, vocal tone which emphasizes their bare strength.

The songs in this record were selected with a view to encouraging group singing among lovers of folk music, amateur and professional. Even more, it is hoped that it can contribute to the slow rise in the standards of 'community singing,' beyond its present unison state (effective as that may be at times).

The Song Swappers is purposely composed of 'average' voices, of limited range and little training. Yet they agree with Bela Bartok, when he said that a folk song may be on as high a plane of art as a symphony... it is simply a shorter form, with a more limited range of expression. In this first collection of Folk Songs Of Four Continents The Song Swappers have explored just a few of the rich traditions that are the heritage of us all.

BRING ME A LITTLE WATER, SILVY

A field cry, developed into a song and story by the great Negro folk singer, Huddie Ledbetter, from whom this arrangement was learned.

Bring me a little water, Silvy
Bring me a little water now,
Bring me a little water, Silvy
Every little once in a while.

Don't you hear me calling?
Don't you hear me now?
Don't you hear me calling
Every little once in a while?

(3)
Don't you see me coming? (etc.)

(4)
Don't you hear me coming? (etc.)

(5)
Bring it in a bucket, Silvy (etc.)

(6)
Bring me a little water, Silvy (etc.)

AH! SI MON MOINE

One of the most popular French-Canadian folk songs. A girl sings: "Oh, if my top would spin for me (here, the words 'top' and 'monk' being the same in French, she goes on) I would give him - a hat, a coat (etc.)". In the last verse she sings: "If he had not taken the vows of poverty, there are many other things I would have given him."

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser (2)
Un capuchon je lui donnerais. (2)

Refrain: Danse, mon moin', danse!
Tu n'entends pas la danse!
Tu n'entends pas mon moulin, lon-la!
Tu n'entends pas mon moulin marcher!

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser (2)
Un ceinturon je lui donnerais. (2)

Refrain

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser (2)
Un chapelet je lui donnerais. (2)

Refrain

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser (2)
Un froc de bur' je lui donnerais. (2)

Refrain

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser (2)
Un beau psautier je lui donnerais. (2)

Refrain

S'il n'avait fait voeu de pauvreté (2)
Bien d'autres chos' je lui donnerais. (2)

Refrain

(Singable translation)
Oh, if my top (monk) would dance for me
A feathered cap he would get from me.

Refrain

(Subsequent verses change "cap" to
other articles of clothing)

(last verse)
If he had not taken the vows of poverty (2)
So many things I would give to him. (2)

BIMINI GAL

This song is a descendent of a street dance from Nassau in the Bahamas, amended and considerably changed by the folk process operating among young singers in New York City.

Hey yo, when I go down to Bimini,
Hey yo, when I go down to Bimini.

Never get a lickin' till I go down to Bimini.
Bimini girls are like a rock in the harbor.

Hey yo, when I go down to Bimini,
Hey yo, when I go down to Bimini.

THE GREENLAND WHALERS

This arrangement combines two distantly related versions of a whaling ballad. The prologue and epilogue were sung recently in the Bahaman Islands. The narrative verses are the New England version of the song.

When the whale gets strike and the line run down
And the whale makes a flunder with his tail,
And the boat capsizes, and I lost my darling man
No more, no more Greenland for you, brave boys -
No more, no more Greenland for you.

'Twas in eighteen hundred and fifty-three
On June the thirteenth day,
That our gallant ship her anchor weighed
And for Greenland sailed away, brave boys -
And for Greenland sailed away.

The lookout in the crosstrees stood
With a spy glass in his hand,
There's a whale, there's a whale, there's a
 whalefish, he cries
And she blows on every span, brave boys -
And she blows on every span.

We struck that whale and the line played out
But she gave a flunder with her tail,
And the boat capsized and four men were drowned
And we never caught that whale, brave boys -
And we never caught that whale.

"To lose a whale," our captain cried,
"It grieves my heart full sore,
But to lose four of my gallant men
It grieves me ten times more, brave boys -
It grieves me ten times more."

O, Greenland is a dreadful place
It's a land that's never green,
Where there's ice and snow
And the whalefishes blow
And daylight's seldom seen, brave boys -
And daylight's seldom seen.

When the whale gets strike and the line run down
And the whale makes a flunder with his tail,
And the boat capsize, and I lost my darling man
No more, no more Greenland for you, brave boys -
No more, no more Greenland for you.

SIDE II

MI CABALLO BLANCO

From the pen of a popular contemporary Chilean songwriter, Francisco Floro Del Campo.

Es mi caballo blanco
Como un amanecer,
Siempre juntitos vamos
Es mi amigo mas fiel.

Refrain: Mi caballo, micaballo,
Galopando va,
Mi caballo, mi caballo,
Se va y se va.

En alas de una dicha
Mi caballo corrio,
En alas de una pena
El tambien me llevo.

Refrain

Al Taita Dios le pido
Y El lo sabe muy bien,
Si a so lado me llama
En me caballo ire.

(My white horse, he is
my most faithful friend, he is
always by my side.)

Refrain: (My horse, my horse, gallops away
My horse, my horse, away and away.)

(On wings of happiness my horse carries me;
on wings of pain also.)

Refrain

(I will ask God the Father
and He knows it very well,
if He calls me to his side
I will go on my white horse.)

OLEANNA

Around a hundred years ago, the great Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, was touring in America, and he had the grand idea to start a Norwegian colony in Pennsylvania. But some sharpers sold him a lot of poor land - rocks and trees - and the first colonists nearly starved to death before the project was abandoned. It would all be forgotten now, but that someone in Norway wrote what became a tremendously popular song, satirizing the unrealistic dreams of Norwegians who had "America fever." There were originally thirty or more verses. These are translated by Peter Seeger from Norwegian.

Oh, to be in Oleanna, that's where I'd like to be
Than be bound in Norway, and drag the chains
of slavery.

Refrain: Ol-e, ol-e-anna
Ol-e, ol-e-anna
Ol-e, ol-e, ol-e, ol-e, ol-e, ol-e-anna.

In Oleanna land is free, the wheat and corn just
plant themselves
Then grow four feet a day, while on your bed you
rest yourself.

Beer, sweet as Munchener, springs from the
ground and flows away
The cows all like to milk themselves, and hens
lay eggs ten times a day.

Little roasted piggies rush about the city streets
Inquiring so politely if a slice of ham you'd
like to eat.

Aye, if you'd begin to live, to Oleanna you must
go
The poorest wretch in Norway becomes a king
in a year or so.

Oh, to be in Oleanna, that's where I'd like to be
Than be bound in Norway, to drag the chains of
slavery.

BANUWA YO

Liberian students attending Western Reserve
University in Ohio taught this to their classmates.
It seems that in the large (500,000) city of
Monrovia, an annual folk festival is held in the
football stadium. This song is sung by the en-
tire audience. The words mean, simply: "Don't
cry, pretty little girl, don't cry."

Banuwa, banuwa, banuwa yo
Banuwa, banuwa, banuwa yo
A-la-no, nehniyo la-no
A-la-no, nehniyo la-no (repeat)

Neh ni a-la-no
Neh ni a-la-no (Be-ka-chu-wa!)

RAGUPATI RAGAVA RAJAH RAM

This song was one of the favorites of Mahatma
Gandhi. A devotional song, it says, "Who is
Allah" (the Moslem God) "...and who is Ram"
(the Hindu God). They are simply two names
for the same thing, and in other words, why
are we fighting? Many different versions of
the song are known in India. Some of them
are slower than this; others have even more
of a square dance tempo.

Ragupati ragava rajah Ram
Puhtita bhavana sitaram. (2)
Sitaram je sitaram
Puhtita bhavana sitaram. (2)
Ishuhre Allah tere nam
Tubko sunmutti de bhagawan. (2)

Ragupati ragava (etc.)

HEY, DAROMA

A popular folk tune of present day Israel.
Eilat is a town on the shores of the Red Sea.

The English verse is by Peter Seeger.

Ktsat daroma li-ver-sheva
Ru-ach ba-midbar no-she-vet
Shvil la a ra-vah ya-rad
La-ra-dya-nim ach mi-har-ta
Et El Omar chish a-var-ta
Veh-hin-eh hu-chof Eilat.

Refrain: Hey, daroma
Hey daroma
Hey daroma, l'Eilat.

To the southward now we travel,
Through this land of rock and gravel,
Deserts 'round us do we see.
We'll bring life and grass and water
Life to raise our sons and daughters,
Youth and life is what we bring.

Hasufa hineh overet
Al haderech he doheret
Lamidbar hagodud sha-at
Jipim kantasim karuach
Halochem rosho paruach
Kan bederech l'Eilat.

Refrain

Halochaym ahyafe yageyah
Al ha-arets histareya
Vel-cha-shav hayn kach katoov
Et ha-arets Beenish-ba-ti
Rock la-chem koolah matati
Meeny Dom veh-ad yom soof.

Refrain

(translation of Refrain: "Hey, southward,
hey southward to Eilat.")

Credits:

Adaptation of "Bimini Gal" by Tom Geraci
Words and music of "Hey, Daroma" by Chaim Chefer
Adaptation and arrangement of "Silvy" by
Huddie Ledbetter
Vocal arrangement of "Si Mon Moine" as learned
from La Jeune Equip. of
Montreal
Arrangement of "The Greenland Whalers"
by Peter Seeger

LITHO IN U.S.A.