

# Remembrance Of Things To Come

New Lost City Ramblers; Mike Seeger, Tracy Schwarz, John Cohen



M  
1630.18  
N532  
R387  
1973

MUSIC LP

PHOTO: ROBERT FRANK

# Remembrance Of Things To Come New Lost City Ramblers

Mike Seeger • Tracy Schwarz • John Cohen

Side I: Band 1  
SOLDIER'S JOY (Traditional) ..... 2:06

One of the most popular of the country dance tunes, there are as many ways of playing it as there are performers. We do it here in the manner of the Crook Brothers, using their basic instrumentation with fiddle and mouth harp doubling on the melody, as the banjo plays it in the background. The Crook Bros. can still be heard Saturday nights on the Grand Ole Opry, where they play breakdown music for the square dances. They have been with the Opry since its early years. (J.C.)

Tracy: fiddle; Mike: mouth harp and guitar; John: banjo

Side I: Band 2  
THE TITANIC (A. P. Carter) ..... 2:56

From a recording by The Carter Family—Acme 1000-B. This song was recorded in the mid-1950's by A. P. and Sara Carter and their two children, Joe and Jeanette.

The melody is unusual, especially in its descending the scale from the tonic on the first line. Lyrically, it is a very oblique ballad, in keeping with the Carter esthetic of pale moon, golden west, sad dreams, widows and children and the surprising last two lines. We have added the instrumental breaks. (M.S.)

Mike: lead voice and autoharp; Tracy: tenor voice and second guitar; John: bass voice and lead guitar

Side I: Band 3  
SINGLE GIRL (Traditional) ..... 5:56

I learned this bluesy, driving version of Single Girl from Roscoe Holcomb, in person, and from "Mountain Music of Kentucky," Folkways FA-2317.

I have added several verses. (M.S.)

Mike: voice and banjo; Tracy: fiddle; John: guitar

Side I: Band 4  
LORD BATEMAN (Traditional) ..... 5:35

Learned from a recording by Pleaz Mobley of Manchester, Ky. Recorded at Harrogate, Tenn., 1943 by Artus M. Moser. AAFS L 12.

Tracy and I were going through the Library of Congress albums last year, looking for, amongst other things, an old ballad to sing in duet. What especially appealed to us in this song, was the beautiful text, although several verses are missing. (We added the seventh verse taken from another version.) The tune is similar to some sung by the Stanley Brothers, whose vocal style we come closest to, and we hope that in our phrasing we have retained some of the weird old-time qualities of the original performance. (M.S.)

Mike: lead voice and mandolin; Tracy: tenor voice and guitar

Side I: Band 5  
I'M LUNESOME (Richardson-Schwarz) ..... 2:18

(Coal Creek Music-BMI)

From an album by The Blue Ridge Boys—Blue Ridge 306  
In the 1950's a number of local bands playing very close to Bill Monroe's style were recorded on small labels, and their music is included in the category of early bluegrass, of which this song is a good example. Two banjos, one Clawhammer style by Happy Smith, and the other three-finger Scruggs style by Larry Richardson were on the original as well as this one of ours, and therefore the instrumentation is not strictly bluegrass, but the singing certainly is. Larry Richardson, who did the singing and three-finger banjo playing on the original, can usually be seen at the yearly Galax Fiddler's

Convention. (T.S.)

Mike: banjo (Scruggs style); John: banjo (Clawhammer style); Tracy: vocal and rhythm guitar

Side I: Band 6  
HE IS COMING TO US DEAD (Traditional) ..... 3:16

From Whitter and Grayson, Victor-21139  
see also Molly O'Day—"A Hero's Death," Columbia-20441

Another song in G. B. Grayson style, dating possibly from the Civil War. A related song was recorded by Molly O'Day, entitled, "A Hero's Death," with words somewhat similar, but with a different tune. See Randolph's **Ozark Folksongs** for similar versions. The deceptively bright nature of the tune leads the creative folklorist to suspect that it once belonged to another set of words and completely different subject. (T.S.)

Tracy: fiddle and vocal; Mike: guitar; John: banjo

Side I: Band 7  
THE CAT'S GOT THE MEASLES AND THE DOG'S GOT THE WHOOPING COUGH (Traditional) ..... 2:56

From a recording by Jerry Jordan (a pseudonym for singer Walter Smith) on Supertone-9407A.

This song is fairly well-traveled in tradition and is fairly certainly of Negro or would be Negro origin.

We have followed closely the original recording, even to the extent of guitar accompaniment in "F" fingering. (M.S.)

Mike: voice and guitar; Tracy: fiddle

Side I: Band 8  
ROCK ABOUT MY SARO JANE (Traditional) ..... 3:10

From "Uncle Dave Macon & His Fruit-Jar Drinkers," Brunswick B-1024, no. 80091.

This old riverboat song has been a favorite since 1948 when it first appeared in Alan Lomax's album of early Hillbilly re-issues, "Listen To Our Story." During the Hootenanny period, it was recorded by the Kingston Trio and others. We have tried to stick close to Uncle Dave Macon's original arrangement of the part singing. According to Lomax, Uncle Dave learned it from Negro roustabouts in Nashville, in 1887. (J.C.)

John: lead voice and banjo; Tracy: guitar and tenor; Mike: fiddle and other voice

Side I: Band 9  
BLACK BOTTOM STRUT (Traditional) ..... 2:07

From "Old Timey" LP-101 by the Three Stripped Gears (no further information given).

The original recording has rhythm guitar plus a second guitar which plays very strange passages and runs. The spoons were Tracy's addition, and several of the weird guitar parts have drifted over to the mandolin. This kind of ragtime string-band music has become comic relief to the NLCR and the coda on this performance (Tracy hurling his spoons at the triangle) is picked up from Side 2: Band 7 of this recording. (J.C.)

Mike: mandolin; John: guitar; Tracy: spoons

Side II: Band 1  
NEW LOST HOMETOWN BLUES (Arrangement: Mike Seeger) (Coal Creek Music-BMI) ..... 2:09

This is a combination of three tunes. It is based on a recording of "Hometown Blues" (Roane County Ramblers, Columbia-15328-D (147182-2) with parts of "Lee Highway Blues" (first recording: "Going Down the Lee Highway," Grayson and Whitter, Bb-B5498); and also from the playing of Scott Stoneman, Chubby Wise, and especially Art Wooten, (who combines 'Hometown' and 'Lee Highway' into an epic piece) and

"Hitch-Hiker's Blues" (Jack Youngblood, Columbia 21298). In our recording the spirit of The Roane County Ramblers predominates. (M.S.)

Mike: fiddle; Tracy: guitar thrasher; John: 5-string banjo

Side II: Band 2  
DARK AND STORMY WEATHER (A.P. Carter) (Peer International Corp.-BMI) ..... 2:23

From "The Carter Family," Bluebird-8868.

This is a fairly old song and I have seen the chorus in several folksong collections. I rather suspect the Carters "collected" the chorus and perhaps a verse, and composed the remainder. The tune and harmony lean towards Blue Grass, especially in the use of the flatted 7th with a IV chord in the third line.

Mike: lead voice and autoharp; Tracy: tenor voice and second guitar; John: A. P. bass and lead guitar

Side II: Band 3  
BLACK JACK DAISY (Stormking Music, Inc.-BMI) ..... 2:30

(Arranged By D. Chandler-J. Cohen)  
This song is called everything from "The Gypsy Laddie" to "Black Jack David," "Whistling Gypsy Rover," and "The Raggle-Taggle Gypsies, Oh." The NLCR have recorded it in the Carter Family version on Folkways FA-2399.

I learned this version from the excellent ballad singer, Dillard Chandler of Sodom, N.C., who sings strictly unaccompanied, seldom sings a song twice the same, and thus far, has never been out of the mountains. He can be heard on Folkways FA-2309, "Old Love Songs And Ballads." Dillard's traditional ballads are full of improvisations of text, tune and meter, and he sings them with an emotional involvement which contradicts the stereotype of the detached and distant ballad singer. (J.C.)

John: voice and banjo (FCFBbC)

Side II: Band 4  
NEVER BE AS FAST AS I HAVE BEEN (Traditional) ..... 3:02

From Grayson and Whitter, Victor-23565; record from the collection of Loy Beaver. See also "Sporting Bachelors" Buell Kazee, Brunswick-157

This song is strangely absent from folk song collections. Cecil Sharpe gives one verse, under the title "Rain and Snow." Dillard Chandler of N. Carolina, sings this version with a more complete text—in which the wife is murdered. (He mentions that there is another part about the judge and jury as well.) In **Folk Song: U.S.A.**, Alan Lomax gives a version in the minor mode, called Sporting Bachelors, which is similar to Margot Mayo's tune, reported by Israel G. Young.

Whitter's unusual guitar accompaniment on the original recording seems incorrect at first, but actually helps to emphasize the curious major/minor quality of the tune. (J.C.)

John: voice and guitar; Tracy: fiddle

Side II: Band 5  
LITTLE BALL OF YARN (Traditional) ..... 2:18

Learned from a recording of an 80-year old woman in Mena, Ark., recorded by Sidney Robertson, 1936. (AAFS 3236 A1)

This singer had a very wide repertoire of songs, and I understand that she would sing this one only for female company. It struck me that the song, textually and melodically, would fit well into the Kelly Harrell-Charlie Poole mountain chamber music style. It was also recorded in a less direct non-narrative form by the

Southern Melody Boys for Bluebird in the 1930's. (M.S.)  
Mike: voice and guitar; Tracy: fiddle; John: 5-string banjo

Side II: Band 6  
THE SIOUX INDIANS (Traditional) ..... 3:02

Alex Moore, Austin, Tex., 1940. Recorded for the Library of Congress by John A. Lomax and Bess Lomax.

A ballad which states simply what the originator felt profoundly. Such songs remain in the oral tradition primarily for their narrative role, and secondarily for their musical aspects, and therefore will often be unaccompanied so as not to distract the attention of the listener from the message. (T.S.) Vocal: Tracy.

Side II: Band 7  
PARLEZ-NOUS A BOIRE (Dewey Balfa) (Coal Creek Music-BMI) ..... 3:38

Learned from a tape by Dewey Balfa, Basile, Jefferson Davis Parish, La. Recorded 18 October 1965 for the Newport Folk Foundation by Ralph Rinzler. Ralph writes: "He learned the song from his father who was reputed to be a top-notch fiddler and harmonica player as well as a fine singer. Grandfather (paternal) also played fiddle and sang. Dewey and three brothers had a band for many years. Of the six boys in the family, all played and sang. Dewey is now about 40 years old."

We have recorded this Cajun song as close as possible to the original by Mr. Balfa, in instrumentation, key, tune and words. Of course, my pronunciation is at least once removed from the Cajun French dialect, sometimes affectionately termed "fringlish." (M.S.)

Mike: lead fiddle and vocal; Tracy: second fiddle; John: triangle

Side II: Band 8  
THE ARKANSAS SHEIK (Traditional) ..... 2:57

From Clayton McMichen & Riley Puckett, Columbia-15686 (147300). See also The Lilly Brothers and Don Stover, Folkways-FA 2433; Cousin Emmy, Decca-24213

A version of a popular theme in mountain music; i.e., Arkansas is the worst place of all. Most of this song, learned from the playing of Riley Puckett on guitar and Clayton McMichen on fiddle, is similar to The Lilly Brothers version, as well as Cousin Emmy's. However, the last two verses are clearly a product of the Skillet-Licker's imagination. Adding banjo was our imagination. (T.S.)

Tracy: vocal and fiddle; Mike: guitar (Riley Puckett style); John: banjo

Side II: Band 9  
GIVE THE FIDDLER A DRAM (Traditional) ..... 2:00

From "Carter Bros. and Son," Okeh-45289

Thus far, nothing is known about Carter Bros. & Son except that they made several recordings of the wildest fiddle music—always using the instrumental combination heard here. On the original recording, the fiddles get out of phase with each other. One plays the first part as the other plays the second—while the singer emits a series of whoops and semi-incoherent words, with never a complete line except that it is interrupted by the nonsense syllables. This is possibly a carry-on of the Irish mouth music tradition. Their performance is a testimony to the "first take" recording arrangement in the early Hillbilly days. As for my own performance, I can only say permit me my excesses, and I'll permit you yours. (J.C.)

John: voice and guitar; Tracy: fiddle; Mike: fiddle

Recorded by: Peter Bartok . . . August, 1966/Produced by: The New Lost City Ramblers and Moses Asch/Album Text by: Mike Seeger, Tracy Schwarz, John Cohen



This record has been engineered and manufactured in accordance with standards developed by the Record Industry Association of America, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to the betterment of recorded music and literature.

Folkways Records ©1973, 701 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10036

Library of Congress Cat. #73-751132