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MUSIC LP

A LONG TIME BROTHER JOHN SELLERS JOSEPH BREWER

ELLA JENKINS

GUY GUILBERT, GUITARIST, STU BLACK, ENGINEER

PHOTOGRAPH: BERNADELLE RICHTER

GOSPEL SONGS | SPIRITUALS | WORK SONGS | BLUES | SONGS OF FREEDOM

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7754 - AH 850

STEREO

SIDE 1

- Band 1. THE WILDERNESS
 John Sellers, Joseph Brewer, Ella Jenkins
 Band 2. I'M GONNA TELL GOD ALL MY TROUBLES
 Ella Jenkins
 Band 3. HEAVEN - Joseph Brewer
 Band 4. WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER
 John Sellers
 Band 5. TOL' MY CAPTAIN - Ella Jenkins
 Band 6. I'M GONNA RIDE THIS TRAIN - Ella Jenkins
 Band 7. JIMBO - John Sellers, Joseph Brewer,
 Ella Jenkins (Forster Music Publishers)
 Band 8. ANOTHER MAN DONE GONE - Ella Jenkins

SIDE 2

- Band 1. SOFT PEDAL BLUES - Ella Jenkins
 Band 2. PO' MAN'S BLUES - John Sellers
 Band 3. A FRIENDLY LOAN - Ella Jenkins
 Band 4. HOW HIGH'S THE WATER?
 Joseph Brewer, Ella Jenkins
 Band 5. AN OLD LADY AND HER HORSE
 Joseph Brewer, Ella Jenkins
 Band 6. IF YOU EVER GET DOWN - Ella Jenkins
 Band 7. FREEDOM'S COMING MIGHTY SOON
 John Sellers, Joseph Brewer, Ella Jenkins
 Band 8. A LONG TIME - Ella Jenkins
 (Forster Music Publishers)

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ELLA JENKINS
 BROTHHER JOHNS SELLERS
 JOSEPH BREWER
 A LONG TIME

FOLKWAYS FC 7520

A LONG TIME

by Ella Jenkins

Today there is much attention being given to the role that the black man has played, is playing and shall play in the rapidly changing history of the United States.

A great deal of thought is being directed toward his accomplishments; his contributions; his influences in the fields of Literature, Music, Science, Education, Communications, the Naval and Military Services, et al.

And there is an enthusiastic concern about and a genuine empathy for his struggle for FREEDOM.

For A LONG TIME the black man has wandered in a vast wilderness - wandering, oftentimes, in too many divided directions, but today his mind is on a more direct, more concerted path; his footsteps are directed toward freedom - a lasting FREEDOM!

The grandiose struggle is very much alive today and Black men and White men and Yellow men and Red men are taking part in it all - perhaps because more of us are beginning to realize that to make a country truly free - all men must have their freedom.

A Long Time for me is simply one path - a musical road - by which one might travel along to share in keeping black music alive.

The material we have chosen to relay this musical history with, includes GOSPEL SONGS, SPIRITUALS, WORK SONGS, BLUES and SONGS OF FREEDOM.

Inasmuch as Brother John, Joseph and I stem from different musical backgrounds, I thought our best delivery could be achieved by putting forth our own individual interpretations of the songs. Even Guy, our Guitarist, freely interprets. In the midst of all this freedom, we still employed the necessary discipline to bring about levels of harmoniousness that we were striving for - perhaps - this is what freedom's all about anyway.

This album is dedicated to the memory of an extraordinary black man - a GIANT of a MAN - a man rare in his love for people - a man gentle in his understanding of their problems; their anxieties - a non-violent man who paved the way for many of us today, now seeking and enjoying certain freedoms, a man who had a DREAM, a man who went to the MOUNTAIN TOP - DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JUNIOR.



Ella Jenkins

My musical life developed while I was attending Junior College in Chicago - it was then that I became aware of the beauty of folk songs and how different singers interpreted the same songs in different ways. It was also during this time that I became conscious of the fact that many of the songs and game rhythms that I sang and played as a child - learning them from other children and sometimes from adults - were in essence - true folk idiom. My musical life, I would say, took root during this period.

Growing up in a black community on the South Side of Chicago (constantly being referred to in the news media and on the radio as the "BLACK BELT"), one automatically seeped in some semblance of "musical background" because music encircled the area - at least where the poor people lived. Where I lived there were numerous basements of ordinary apartment buildings that had regular "policy" operations (newly named, "the numbers racket") going on. At least three times a day a car would pull up in front of the apartment house - the driver of the car or sometimes a man in the back seat - would thrust several rolls of multi-colored policy slips - kept together with rubber bands - down the basement steps while another man or woman picked them up. We use to play with the discarded policy slips because they were so colorful and it was fascinating to try to add the numbers in the columns. Almost always one could catch an ear of "down home" music flowing from the basement. We children sat around and listened to the good sounds.

If you lived in the "black belt" you couldn't help hearing a variety of church music - organ and piano playing, rhythmic foot-stamping, intricate hand-clapping, versatile tambourine beating and tambourine-shaking, some singing, some shouting - on a Sunday morning or afternoon because many

churches - large ones or little store-fronts - used to amplify their services to the outside so that anyone passing by could "catch a little goodness."

When I used to live with my Aunt Willie Mae we had a gigantic juke box in the dining room and a man came to change the records every month. There were at least three songs on the juke box by Big Bill Broonzy, Little Brother Montgomery, Muddy Waters and some other rhythm and blues greats.

If you were poor and living in the black belt in those days - when I was growing up - if you didn't have a record player at home or a juke box - you could always stand out side the small, local record shop that blasted the latest discs through the loud speakers. There were lots of spots and many corners where one could turn to get some "musical Training" - to get some "cultural background."

My religious background, for many years, has been a conservative one and the college I graduated from, San Francisco State, at the time was rather conservative so I had to go back and re-examine my "growing up" days after graduation because I had lingered a long time learning Latin songs and rhythms and then absorbed myself in Jewish folk songs and dances, almost forgetting my own musical heritage.

This album, * A Long Time, is very important to me in my career of music-making because most of my favorite folk material is included in it, because it is a vehicle through which I can be a part of sharing black material and because many friends and relatives have wanted me to do this for A Long Time.

* My record albums are generally aimed at younger children, however this one is geared to High Schoolers, College students and other adults.



BROTHER JOHN SELLERS

"I'm called 'Brother John' because it's part of my church custom - the same church that Sister Rosetta Tharpe attended. I was born and raised in the heart of the American South - Mississippi, and spent my childhood along the banks of that deep, dark river. I started attending church when I was just six years old, and there first saw the Holy Dance. Most people then called such churches the Holy Roller or Sanctified Churches because they used drums, horns, cymbals, and tambourines, which I play myself. During the Depression I often danced and sang for visiting minstrel shows which came to our small town.

But it was when I moved North that I met Mahalia Jackson, Leadbelly, Big Bill Broonzy and others who inspired me to take up the kind of singing which I do now. I can remember the songs of my people, the guitar strumming of a blind street singer, playing for pennies, the wail of the blues from a broken-hearted woman moanin' for her wandering lover, the gospel shouts in the Holy Roller church, and the folk songs of the roustabouts and hustlers on the Mississippi River Delta.

After singing with Mahalia and appearing in New York and Canada, I sang in London, Brussels, Paris, and made several engagements in Africa. Most recently, I toured Australia and the Far East under the auspices of ANTA and the President's Special International Program for Cultural Presentations, a U. S. State Department Project.

No matter where I go, or to how many wonderful audiences I sing, I'll always remember my proudest moment, which happened when I was a little boy. The minister of my church was the late Rev. Bobby Williams, and the first time my name was printed on a handbill was in something he said about me - 'Fire falls from Heaven when little Brother John sings.' I'll never forget that."



JOSEPH BREWER, TENOR

Mr. Joseph Brewer is on the threshold of being one of the important tenors of the 1970s. This young man, who debuted as soloist in the American premiere of Jean Martinon's *Song of Songs* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in 1966, has appeared in a number of operatic roles in the Midwest. He has also appeared on Artist's Showcase, a critically-acclaimed television show from Chicago.

Among the opera roles he has performed are included: a vendor of songs from *Il Tabarro*, Basilio and Curzio from *Marriage of Figaro*, Tamino from *Magic Flute*, Borsa from *Rigolletto*, and Rudolpho from *La Boheme*. In addition, Mr. Brewer has prepared many operatic roles which he has not yet performed.

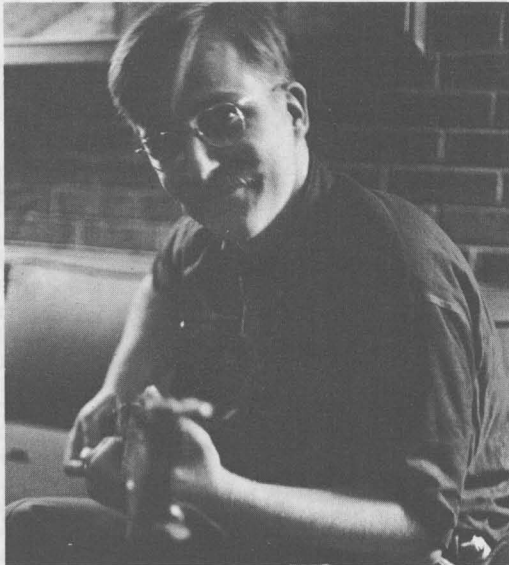
Companies for which he has performed include the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chorus, the Park Forest Symphony Orchestra, Music Foundation Orchestra, Cho Cho San Opera Theater of Chicago, Urban Gateways Chamber Ensemble, and Opera Workshop of Roosevelt University - where Mr. Brewer is a student under Mister Robert Long, head of the Voice Department.

Mr. Brewer has coached with Richard Schauwecker, who was Jussi Bjoerling's accompanist for many years.

At an early age, Joseph Brewer manifested a definite ability in music as a pianist. He pursued his studies in this area to lay solid foundation for the fine musicianship he today possesses.

Today, after studying choral direction under Miss Margaret Hillis, Director of The Chicago Symphony Chorus, when not singing Mr. Brewer teaches advanced choral music as director of the Lawndale Children's Choir and senior assistant director of world-renowned Chicago Children's Choir.

Mr. Brewer has an excellent background in oratorio and has appeared during the oratorio season with the famed Rockefeller Chapel Choir and other choirs.



GUY GILBERT, GUITARIST

Guy Gilbert, who joins Ella on this album, is an outstanding Chicago guitarist and bass player. His career has included network television and many record sessions.

A friend and admirer of Ella for over ten years, this album gives them a chance to work together at last.

Currently Guy is a partner in Djange Music Productions, a company working out of Chicago, producing commercials, film sound tracks and record albums.

SIDE ONE

Band #1: THE WILDERNESS

Traditional - Adaptation by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP - 1970

The Wilderness is my favorite song - it has been - for A LONG TIME. It was taught to me by a group of friends, all of whom, were related and sang at church on Sundays - they sang mostly spirituals and gospel songs.

I like the Wilderness so much, I think, because it seems to sum up some very basic attitudes about life with other humans. In other words - expressing it in the language of today - you work out your

own "hang-ups," your own kind of wilderness first then you can extend this understanding to other people - in fact you can free yourself to such a degree that you can "love everybody."

Today the Black Man is freeing himself from the wilderness - and if you look closely at the young blacks, their movements - they have "a brand new walk, a brand new talk, a brand new song" and a brand new approach to working towards FREEDOM.

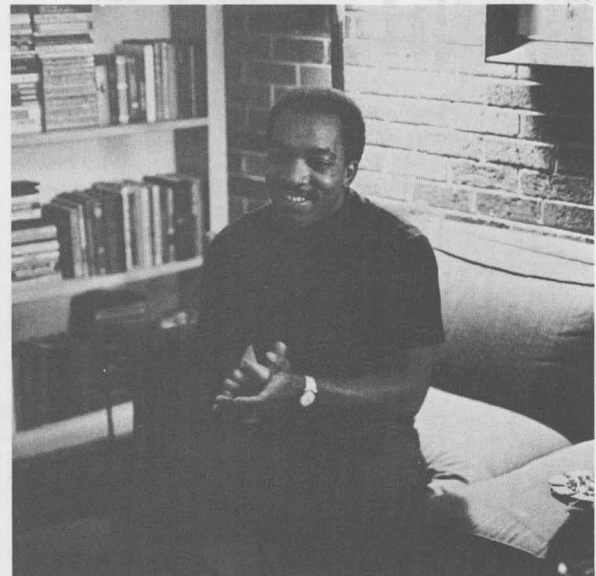
VOICES: Brother John, Joseph, Ella - INSTRUMENTS: Guy accompanies on each of the bands with either a 6-string or 12-string guitar unless otherwise indicated. The baritone ukelele and the drum are played by Ella and Brother John plays the tambourine.

Band #2: I'M GONNA TELL GOD ALL MY TROUBLES

Traditional - Adaptation & some new words by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP - 1970

This song and the next two catches the black man looking beyond the agonies, the frustrations of slavery. Anything would be better than slavery. Any location would be an improvement on where the slaves seemed destined to be. So "going home," "heaven," "the promised land," and "up there" did not always mean spiritual abiding places - it oftentimes meant places - situations - away from the slaves' bondage.

VOICE: Ella



Band #3: HEAVEN

Traditional - Adaptation by Joseph

VOICE: Joseph (harmonizing with his own voice) Acapella.



Band #4: WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP
YONDER

Traditional - Adaptation & Arrangement by Brother John

VOICE: Brother John

Band #5: TOL' MY CAPTAIN

Adapted by Ella Jenkins in fond memories of JOSH WHITE who used to sing this song years and years ago.

The chain gang system was another life of bondage for imprisoned men. Many black men were a part of this scene also. The "ball and chain" and "the captain" or "cap'n" were a part of a link of words and phrases known to those participating in chain gang life. I once witnessed a group in action while on tour in the late fifties. This song and the following three songs dwell on the chain gang setting, with variations.

VOICE: Ella

Band #6: I'M GONNA RIDE THIS TRAIN

Words & music by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP - FORSTER MUSIC PUBLISHERS, INC. 1970

VOICE: Ella

Band #7: JIMBO

Adapted from traditional poem - new words & music by Ella Jenkins ASCAP - Forster Music Publishers, Inc. - Copyright 1962, 1963

VOICES: Joseph, Brother John, Ella

Band #8: ANOTHER MAN DONE GONE

Traditional - adapted by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP - 1970

VOICE: Ella

SIDE TWO

Band #1: SOFT PEDAL BLUES

Music by Ella Jenkins - Words by (?)

Adapted by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP - 1970

This song was sung by Bessie Smith long ago - thought she had written it but she did not.

During the Depression lots of people didn't have lots of money. In black communities the "buffet flat" and "house rent parties" were popular to help keep things going. For instance, some one would give a party - there was admission charge at the door, there was good food and drink for sale and sometimes there might have been a little extra charge if a band was present. But the rent was paid for another month for the party giver.

The four songs to follow depict some of those "hard times."

VOICE: Ella

Band #2: PO' MAN'S BLUES

Adapted & arranged by Brother John Sellers - ASCAP

VOICE: Brother John



Band #3: A FRIENDLY LOAN

Words & Music by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP - FORSTER MUSIC PUBLISHERS, INC. 1970

VOICE: Ella

Band #4: HOW HIGH'S THE WATER?

Traditional - Adapted by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP - Forster Music Pub. - 1970

VOICES: Joseph, Ella

Band #5: AN OLD LADY AND HER HORSE

Words, except bridge, traditional - music by Ella Jenkins

VOICES: Joseph, Ella

Band #6: IF YOU EVER GET DOWN

Words & Music by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP
- Forster Music Pub., Inc. 1970

I wrote this song about numerous black blues singers and musicians who have migrated from the South to northern places. They often write and sing songs about their home towns and they sometimes get lonely for the old crowd "down home."

VOICE: Ella



Band #7: FREEDOM'S COMING MIGHTY SOON

Words & Music by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP -
FORSTER MUSIC PUB., INC. 1970

This is kind of jubilation on the note of FREEDOM.

VOICES: Brother John, Joseph, Ella

Band #8: A LONG TIME

Words & Music by Ella Jenkins - ASCAP - Forster Music Publishers, Inc. Copyright - 1962

A Long Time is a musical dialogue I've lived with a long time and wanted to share with my friends. Working with Guy, Joseph, Brother John, Stu Black, the engineer and Bernadelle Richter, Photographer made it all move quite smoothly. My mother, Mrs. Annabelle Smith, inspired the song, but I must surely express my gratitude to Moe Asch of Folkways for allowing me to depart temporarily from my children's albums. The album cover portrays the black man moving forward on the sands of time.

SHEET MUSIC, BOOKS AND RECORD ALBUMS
BY ELLA JENKINS

Sheet Music

1. A Long Time
2. Jimbo

Forster Music Publisher, Inc.
216 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Books

1. This Is Rhythm
2. The Ella Jenkins Song Book For Children

Oak Publications
c/o Music Sales Corporation
33 West 60th Street
New York, New York 10023

Record Albums

1. 7652 - This Is Rhythm
2. 7653 - Rhythms Of Childhood
3. 7654 - American Negro Folk And Work Song Rhythms
4. 7655 - Songs And Rhythms From Near And Far
5. 8273 - Adventures In Rhythm
6. 7308 - Call And Response Rhythmic Group Singing
7. 7056 - Counting Games And Rhythms For The Little Ones
8. 7057 - Rhythm And Game Songs For The Little Ones
9. 7665 - Play Your Instruments And Make A Pretty Sound
10. 7664 - You'll Sing A Song And I'll Sing A Song
11. 7656 - Seasons For Singing

Photo credits: Bernadelle Richter
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Studios, Chicago.