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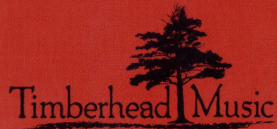
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16. *Bay of Fundy* 3:52
17. *Bolivius* 1:30

18. *Along the Famine Road* 3:49
19. *Weevily Wheat/Wheat in the Ear* 2:16
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# Then & Now

Song lyrics and more  
information available at  
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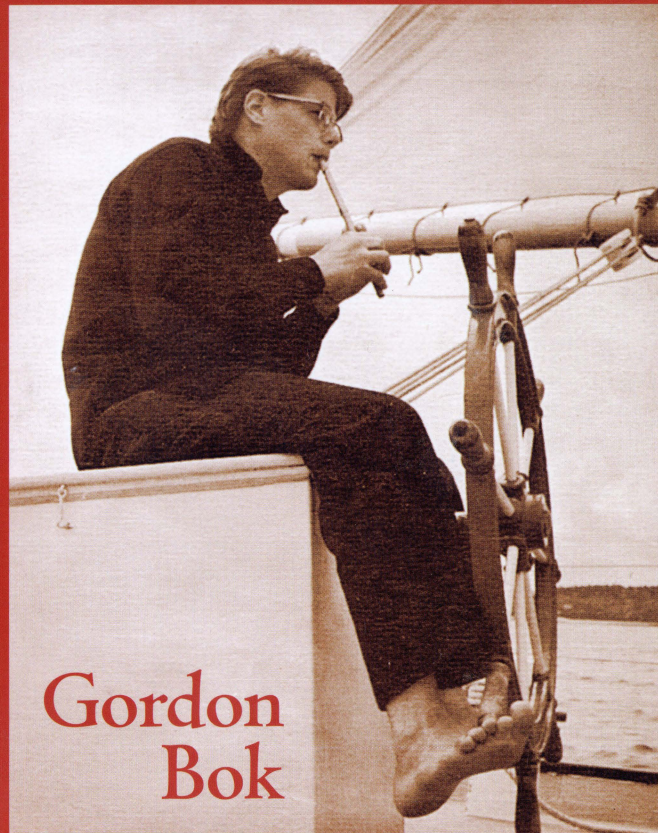
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Gordon Bok

Then & Now: 50 Years

THD CD20



Gordon  
Bok

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50  
years

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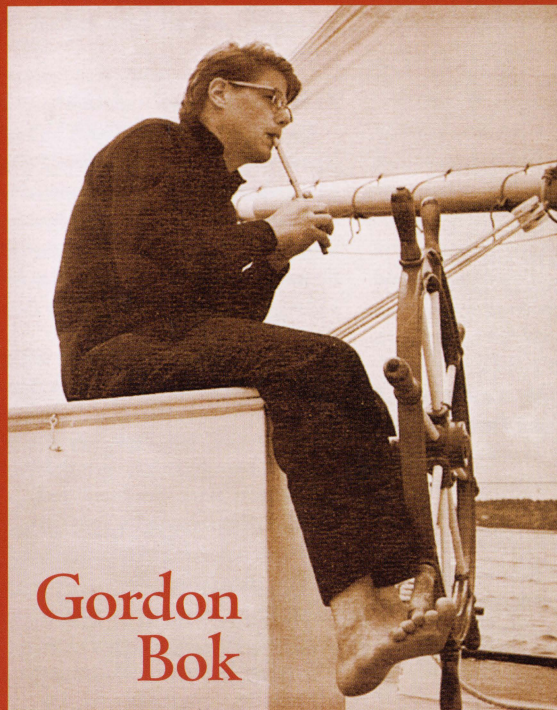
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ME 04843  
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Timberhead Music



Gordon  
Bok

*Then  
&  
Now*

*50  
years*

Some old songs I've re-recorded, some I've let go—like my life: so much of my past is with my present that it all flows together. All my days are the “good ol’ days,” and thank the world for that!

1. **Johnny Todd** 2:14 traditional  
*I learned this song in 1964 from a shipmate on the Brixham Trawler Provident in the Bay of Biscay. He told me the tune had been the theme music for a British TV show called “Z-Cars.”*

2. **A Blues for Sergei** 2:12  
©1985 Gordon Bok, BMI  
*Sergei Cherkassow had escaped from Bulgaria in the 1950s. My Mongol friends introduced us when I was working winters in Philadelphia in the 1960s. For a year or so our only common language was music. He was a good and wise friend. We improvised this tune together before he was killed in an auto accident.*

3. **I'm a Rambler, I'm a Gambler**  
3:44 traditional American  
*When I began working in Philadelphia in my late teens, I learned that the music my family*

*was singing was called “folk.” I don't remember learning this song but I have a hunch I heard it there.*

4. **Herring Croon** 3:41  
©1965 Gordon Bok, BMI  
*I grew up with the herring fishery feeding the folks around me. By the time I spent a little time out there in the sardine carrier Ida Mae, the fish had pretty much stopped coming into the coastal coves, and with advances in technology and bigger money, that fishery is on the way out.*

Here I include the last verse I felt compelled to write about ten years ago.

Where have you gone, little herring?  
What have you seen, tail-and-fin?  
Cold and black, dead and dark,  
Seaweed torn away,  
Draggers staving everywhere  
Drug this garden dry.  
Pair trawl, mid-water trawl  
—lord, they hunger after me—  
Tore my home to hell-and-gone:  
There's no more place for me.

Gordon Bok ©2009

5. **Grieve's Handy** (*Flowers of Edinburgh, I'll Get a Soldier for a Shilling*) 1:19  
traditional

*For a few years in my teens and twenties I played a lot of these tunes with four old fellows called The Old New Englanders, and with my employer of three different vessels, Capt. Havilah (Buds) Hawkins. They were helping to keep the threadbare contradance tradition alive around Maine. Everett Grieve was the piano-player in the Old New Englanders. I learned a lot from him.*

*I'd never heard these dance tunes like this as solo guitar pieces, but I worked them out over the winters because I missed playing with those folks. I made a noun out of the word “handy” because I couldn't remember the word “medley.”*

6. **The Old Bard Song** 3:39  
©2015 Gordon Bok  
My official Canadian title, awarded to me in the 1980s by James Stewart and Alden Nowlan, renowned bards of New Brunswick, is “Bard of the Southern Provinces.” Pondering this one day, I

wondered just what ingredients one would need to do a proper job of it.

7. **Coshieville** 3:56  
©1965 Stewart MacGregor  
Stewart sent me a tape and these words just after Archie Fisher had released the song with Folk Legacy. I was quite content with the way Archie sang it, but I remembered that Stewart wanted to hear how I would do it, so I started singing it again a few years ago for a fine songwriter who left us far too soon.

8. **Tehuacan** (*Lamento y Danza*) 2:37  
©1955 José Barroso, ASCAP  
I heard this in the 1950's, played by that lovely musical ambassador Laurindo Almeida, and I fell in love with it. Ken Laws of Carlisle, Pennsylvania helped me work it out by ear. He's an amazing jazz pianist with a wonderful ear. Nick Apollonio (builder of all my 12-string guitars) used to say, “You'll get your doctorate in that tune.” I'm still trying.

9. I'se the B'y 1:56

traditional Newfoundland  
This is probably the most well-known Newfoundland song. I played it for my old friend Leakyboot when I was a teenager, and he said, "You know how to kill a Newfoundlander? Nail his boots to the floor and play 'Tse the B'y.' He'll break every bone in his body."

10. Fifteen Ships on Georges Bank 3:14 traditional

Georges Bank is one of the great shoals off this coast. Once an abundant provider of fish, it can quickly become a lethal place in a gale. This is a true story of a winter gale that destroyed 15 schooners out of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

11. The Ballad of Billy's Man 4:14

©2005 Jon Broderick  
Jon is from Cannon Beach, Oregon, and every year he goes to Alaska's Bristol Bay to fish (set-netting in an open-boat, a potentially dangerous in-shore fishery). As I write this, he and his family are probably gill netting sockeye salmon. Jon is "the

one who made the first telephone call" that started the FisherPoets Gathering. Nushagak is one of the three major rivers that feed into Bristol Bay.

12. Kuulan Polska #1 2:20  
traditional Finnish

A "polska" seems to be a tune of any rhythm, any speed, from Poland-or-not, but that quite often emphasizes the beat before the downbeat of the tune. Sometimes it has an improvisational section near the end. This is one of many fine songs/tunes sent to me by my musician pen pal Pertti Markkula from Finland. It was made in memory of a beloved violin player and teacher, Toivo Kuula, a century-or-so ago.

13. The Sands of Dee 2:33

words Charles Kingsley (1819-75),  
music ©1964 Gordon Bok  
I learned this poem as a child and in a fit of teenage savagery edited it rather severely. I probably should have recorded it back "then," but I only remembered it a couple of years ago.

14. Acalento 3:38

© 1960 Dorival Caymmi

*It is late, morning is arriving  
Everything is sleeping, even the night,  
I watch over you, my love,  
Sleep, angel, or the Ox will rock your cradle.*

*Ox, Ox, Ox, Ox with the black face  
Rock this child who is so afraid of scary  
faces*

*Ox, Ox, Ox, Ox . . .  
Up in the sky all the singing has stopped,  
Even the angels have stopped singing.  
Little mothers must also rest.  
Sleep, angel, papa has come to watch over you.  
Ox, Ox, Ox, Ox . . .*

*I have a vague memory of Caymmi singing it with his daughter to an orchestral arrangement. I tried to stay close to that arrangement with the guitar, but the most fun I've had with the song was performing it a few times with Paul Winter and the Paul Winter Consort.*

*The reviewer Ralph Earle once described bearing the song as being hit in slow motion by a barrage of pillows.*

15. Rosin the Beau 3:20

traditional

*Another song I can't remember not knowing, but remember being charmed by the way the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem sang it, so this version is probably influenced by theirs.*

16. Bay of Fundy 3:52

©1965 Gordon Bok, BMI

*We left Maine in Ed and 'Lainie Porter's schooner Surprise in a light wind and fog, and rolled and slatted our way across to Nova Scotia. It took us 11 days to reach Halifax, and I think we never had a clear day until we were in the Bras d'Or Lakes of Cape Breton Island.*

*So there was plenty of time for the sounds and smells and motions of the swells and horns of that trip to soak into the song. Some of the words were inspired by letters from my brother Tony, fishing out of Vinalhaven in those years. 'Lainie Porter was always singing a little, private comfort tune on that soggy trip, but when I tried to remember it, all that came to mind was the endless drone of the diaphone on*

*Sambro Island. Ed is an old shipmate who has supported my music and art for many years.*

*Noel Paul Stookey took time from his musical career with Peter, Paul and Mary to produce this album. I was having trouble trying to get the feeling of this song in a recording studio in Manhattan, so Noel turned off the lights in my part of the studio and opened the windows so I could hear the rain outside, and that was enough to take me where I needed to be with the song.*

**17. Bolivius 1:30**

*traditional from Savedra, Bolivia,  
arranged by Peter Platenius*

*Peter was one of the friends who used to work in South America during the summers and who brought me my first large doses of those musics in my late teens.*

**18. Along the Famine Road 3:49**

©1999 Brian Flynn

During the Great Famine (mid-1800s), Ireland's common people were forced to build roads that were never intended for travel. These roads, many located in the rural west, started in isolated areas and ended nowhere. An estimated 500,000

men, women, and children were forced to build them in exchange for food.

The Burren is a unique area of County Clare. It is rich with stark beauty and contains ancient and pre-Christian ruins, as well as one of the Famine Roads. It took me several years to find this road but when I did, it had a profound impact on me. It looked like it had been built yesterday, each stone in its place where it was set more than a century and a half before.

— Brian W. Flynn

**19. Weevily Wheat/Wheat in the Ear**

2:16 traditional

Again, out of my childhood. I do recall seeing a part of it in a novel about the Gloucester fishing fleet. The "Lead her to the altar" verse was given to me by Greg Brown, a singer and fiddler from Newfoundland whom I met in Texas.

**20. A Blues for Sergei 2:42**

©1985 Gordon Bok, BMI

I play the tune differently now. As I get into it, I remember our times together, and what a nice groove it was.



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Camden, ME 04843  
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## *Then & Now*

Fifty-five years ago, Noel Paul Stookey offered to produce an album of my music. I had another good trade at the time and didn't feel ready to commit to that, but in 1965 we went into a studio in New York and he guided me through the process.

I was ambivalent about being a professional musician, but in the fifty years since then I have been grateful to him and Betty for that great boost of confidence and encouragement.

So here are selections from that original recording (that so many of you have asked for) and some that I've recorded in the last year or so in my home in Camden. [The 1965 recordings are all referred to in italics, the recently recorded in regular type.]

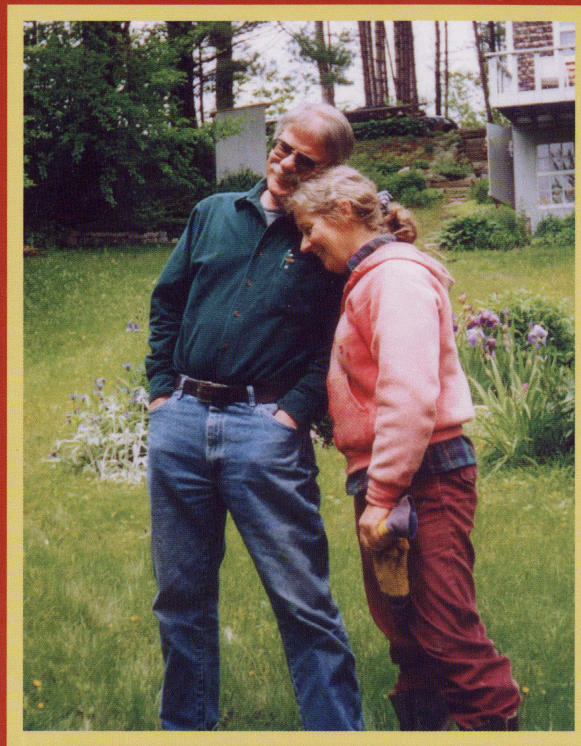
— Gordon Bok

we were young, we were untried, we were true: to one another and to the songs, songs which, in their timelessness, now restore the deepest of our certainties.

— Noel Paul Stookey

Photos:

Gordon on the schooner  
*Alice S. Wentworth*, ca. 1958;  
in Philadelphia, 1967;  
with Carol Rohl in  
Warren, Maine, 1990s



Recording: Hamilton Hall  
Editing: Duncan Hall  
Programming: Carol Rohl  
Mastering: Grey Larsen,  
Grey Larsen Mastering  
Graphic design: Ken Gross  
Producer: Gordon Bok