Introducing The Fast Folk Musical Magazine

That is called love for the workers in song
Probably still is for those who are left.

Leonard Cohen

The Fast Folk Musical Magazine is a desperately needed venue for the expansion of the concept of the noncommercial artistic song. Noncommercial in the sense of intent. Commercially is an objective byproduct judged after the fact. So is art, for that matter, often reevaluated in the subsequent fads of academic endorsement.

What we are dealing with here is encouragement. By providing an outlet for songs judged on their potential artistic merits rather than on their potential commercial merits, we hope to encourage more experimentation, cross-pollination, and enjoyment of this musical/lyrical form.

Nowhere is it guaranteed that if one picks up a guitar one can or should earn his or her living by it. The obscene amounts of money made in the field of the popular song has created its own classification system, its own history, its own terminology. They talk of a bullet "on the charts." A "hit" song. An old "hit" song is "solid gold." A super hit song is called a "monster."

Also created has been a class of entrepreneurs as well as a legal class, who now run the music business. An acquaintance of mine has been on both sides of the fence has recounted stories to me of people in the business who have asked him, "Why do you want to be an artist? The money is in the business."

Indeed, the business has come to look down on the artist, with his art, his persona, becoming a "package," a commodity that can be bought and sold, traded, split up into 'points' and cast off if the return is not good enough and written off as a bad investment.

We need a wholly different set of values and terminology, not one that looks down on business or ignores it, but a separate set of criteria that can encourage writers to create, and that can reinforce and reward them for their work well done.

In looking at the eighteen issues produced by The Coop, a cooperatively produced, subscriber-supported record/magazine, we have seen the emergence of an alternative. The Fast Folk Musical Magazine will greatly expand this alternative. No longer tied to the economics and politics of a fledgling cooperative New York-based movement, the new record/magazine will branch out, actively soliciting songs and articles nationally and internationally. In the not too distant future we will acquire funding that can greatly expand our visibility through advertising, and improve our quality by paying for articles and paying at least mechanical royalties for songwriters. We hope to encourage a more active national and international intercourse on songs, helping good songs to surface and circulate.

Our subscribers will still be the mainstay of our operation. By subscribing, one is not paying after the fact for that which is already popular, but providing money up front to support what can be an exciting experiment. We would like as much feedback as possible, not just public letters to the editor, but private constructive criticism of the artists as well. No one creates in a vacuum, nor do we intend to publish in a vacuum. We intend to fill a vacuum, and fill it well, with music.

Jack Hardy

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Toward a Definition of Folk Music

by Byrne Power

Why define things? Why not let music be music? Why call it folk? Jazz? Rock? It's all just music, isn't it? I suppose so. At least enough people have been reasoning this way lately to make a boy like me feel guilty for attempting to divide the knot.

Yet circumstances have driven me to the onerous task of definition. When the wheels at Conglomerate Records Incorporated release this week's batch of presold vinyl to the Western World; when they stomp out the vital traditions of American music in the name of chart action and sales figures; when they justify themselves, saying, 'It's all just music, isn't it?', you get a little more suspicious about all the moaning at the consumer level.

Just where is this 'It's-all-just-music' line originating from anyway? Damned if I know! But when you go shopping for gospel records and end up with disco instead (not even good disco); when you go through the country music bins and have difficulty finding anything but easy-listening Nashville sleaze, a body has to stand up to ask if there isn't a limit to this madness.

Howlin' Wolf summed it up well. He asked for a glass of water; they brought him gasoline. Can't drink that. You've got to stop and ask what it is. That's a need for definitions of some sort. You don't want a belly full of unleaded, do you?

Our problems with definitions stem from the hardness of our scientific objectivity. When you ask what water is, what kind of answer do you usually get? H2O. Now that's a scientific compact complete answer. It's firm but it's also completely abstract. Unless you know the properties of hydrogen and oxygen, which is very doubtful. In our rational world view, all that matters is that which can be weighed, measured, quantified. But is H2O really a definition of water? Isn't it an abstraction upon the truth of what water is?

Water. Think about it. You swim in it. You drink it. You boil it. You're made of it. It's a home for ducks, sharks, and toads. It rises into the air to become clouds. It makes a rainbow possible. It drowns

the infant toddler who cannot swim. It can be sweet or salty. It reflects the sun at twilight. It floods the valley dwellers. We sail its storm-tossed oceans. 'H2O' is pretty limp when you think about it. How do you write a full definition in an encyclopedia? It's tidier to discuss 'H2O'.

The reality of water nearly defies definition. Nearly; but not quite. You can get a glass of water when you ask for it. It's pretty clear what's water and what's gasoline.

Two million years ago in the late fifties-early sixties, folk revivalists used to spend their time trying to define folk music, when they weren't singing to each other around campfires that blazed from the floors of Greenwich Village coffeehouses.

You couldn't write a folk song; it had to be passed mouth to mouth, said a few adament souls. Most everyone agreed. You could adapt a song for a modern setting, couldn't you? Oh sure, sure. That was permissible. What about Woody Guthrie? Surely his songs were folk songs...

Ah...well...that'll be the exception to the rule. His songs are so authentic. His songs about America and unions, and protest have eternal relevance.

Then someone spoke up from the back row. It might have been Phil Ochs.

'Look,' he said sincerely. 'My protest songs have eternal relevance too. Why can't I sing them as folk songs?' The elders looked at each other and said, 'Why not?'

Then a young heathen poet stood up. His name was Bob Dylan. 'Then it doesn't matter what I sing about. I spoke boldly. I could even write poetic songs about myself, couldn't I?' He sat down.

Just then young Joan Baez, a favored daughter of the elders, stood up. 'If he wants to write songs,' said she, 'I'll sing them!' Peter, Paul, Mary, and a host of others joined the chorus.

The elders conferred for a moment. Then they spoke. 'All right,' they said, 'poetry is allowed. But! You must always lean it leftwards and play acoustically. No electric guitars. No rock and roll.'

That sounded good for about five minutes, until the rebel Bob strolled back in whining with an electric guitar in hand. He sang something awfully cryptic and the elders banished him from the folk world forever. Most of the folkies sided with the rebel Bob and followed him out the door. A nearly completed definition of folk music was lost to the world as it was swept into the eternal campfire in the rush to sign contracts with the majors.

So what is folk music? Obviously there's no scientific answer to the question. Even if there was, what good would it do? It would be too hard, too constriciting. It would be a definition that, like the early sixties definitions, would break with the slightest breeze of dissent.

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You see, they were right in saying folk music is passed down word-of-mouth. But even they would admit that country music is folk music. And yet it was often freshly written material. Sometimes it could be said that gospel music or country music was folk even if it was new because the writers were writing unconscious of art or commerce. Yet Woody Guthrie himself, whose songs were universally accepted as folk, was no mythical naiif.

Quick definitions fall apart because they don't see broadly enough the issues at stake. I'm sure my own contributions here will need probing and extensive questioning. Perhaps I can expand only a little on a vast subject. Try it to technical: concrete definition of folk music would fill a twenty-volume set with ease, let alone a microscopic article in a tiny magazine. I must try though.

One of the most lucid statements of definition I've ever heard concerning folk music was tossed off by some nameless blues musician, who said of his blues, 'It's music for folks.' Folk music is music for folks. Simple, huh? Laughably simplistic, or so it seems. It looks like we're back with the 'It's-allofus-music' people.

We're not, however. There's something in the word 'folks' that connotes something fairly precise in our minds. Folks. Our parents are our folks. Our neighborhood is folks. America is not our folks. The Cajuns in Louisiana are folks. New Yorkers are not. Los Angelans aren't either. But Ireland is full of folks. A village is full of folks. A modern city has only people.

If this all sounds like word games to you, I beg your pardon. It's not. The word 'folks' discusses locality and kinship with us. New York and America are just too big, too abstract, too mass, too modern to fit as folks. A folk culture is a regional, local, familial organism. Modern society is a technical organization. A folk culture makes its art, its music, its cooking, its living out of whatever is local and indigenous to its environment. You won't find an Eskimo eating a watermelon—unless he's being assimilated into the modern world.

Folk music is the music that comes natural to a local geographic community. That means that most fifties rock and roll music suddenly turns out to be folk music. Indeed there may be a better case for Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Little Richard as folk musicians than the case for much of the folk revivalists.

At this point I might be seeming a little heretical, but follow with me a little longer. I have reasons for what I say. Cajun music is the music of the Louisiana bayous. Tex-Mex is the folk style of the Texas Mexico border area. Stringband music and bluegrass are folk musics based on the original European styles brought over hundreds of years ago. Blues and gospel are Black-American folk forms that change from city to city. French-Canadians play music which is different than music played in France. And in France, folk styles change from region to region.

Indian cultures. There is a big difference though. The culture the white man originally brought to America encouraged other regional styles that naturally adapted themselves to the soil. But the technologies of the gun and the horse destroyed all regional distinctions. The McDonald's in France serves a substance which is identical to that which is served under plastic golden arches in Japan. America. It's quick. It's soft. It's bland. In these newer colonized areas, people have been subjected to mass culture for so long that they've actually developed a taste for blandness. Gumbo would taste like gasoline to them. And true regional folk music goes the route of home cooking.

Into this void stepped the folk revivalists. They weren't the real folksingers of a given region. Though we must give them a good word for bringing many of the real folks into town, saving them from regional obscurity. They were more like second stringers. They were interpreters.

In many ways an early Judy Collins folk song bore little relation to the genuine article in the hills. But it seemed much more real than a good many pop songs. And it seemed much more accessible than a good many artistic compositions.

So in the sixties we sang folk music with a popular face. Folksingers sounded very similar in San Diego, or Denver, or Cambridge. It wasn't a bad thing by any means. It triggered off a good deal of valuable questioning about our mass culture.

However, by the time Bob Dylan left folk music to be an artist (and a messiah); by the time Judy Collins had become another middle-of-the-road pop singer, most people had completely forgotten what folk music was. (I'm ignoring the traditional music scene here.) It is even doubtful, though perhaps not hopeless, that people in our society can even make folk music anymore. Still they try. And that is a good sign.

I've often wondered why so many of the men singing folk music these days sound reminiscent of Dylan and the women of Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell. Am I a dolt? I am. I suppose. I think there are people who think that by picking up an acoustic guitar, you're somehow mysteriously playing folk music. When in reality the fact that from
coast to coast the sounds are so
similar belies a poverty of true folk
styles. There were more regional
styles of fifties rock and roll than
there are in today's, though, if our
mobility doesn't get the best of us;
if some of us can stay put long
enough, we might be able to see new
styles re-emerge or old styles re-
kindled.

Now there's a folk form. It's
fragile, or course. The commer-
cial boys are working hard to
kill it. Yet there it is. There's
some hope there for music. It's
tough music developed out of the
rubble and waste of the South
Bronx. Let's hope we don't have
to be reduced to rubble before we
can recreate a folk culture. But
here's to the rubble if it can
make us more human.

When I ask for a glass of water,
please don't bring me gasoline.

A Special Quartet
of Canadian Musicians

by Marsha Necheles

A few Canadian songwriters have
become so popular with American
audiences that their geographical
birthrights have been totally
forgotten, artists like Neil Young,
Joni Mitchell and Gordon Lightfoot.
There are many other Canadian mu-
sicians who should be familiar to us,
but because they were born in Canada
and perform there, they are virtually
unknown to audiences in the United
States.

The dedicated music lover who is
adventurous enough to wander up
'north' can see new and exciting
music at folk festivals, concert
halls and coffee houses. Some of the
music is definitely worth the price of
the airfare or a trip to your local
record store bargain bins.

Case in point are four exceptional
Canadian artists, and it should be
clearly noted at the outset that these
four are only a few of the Special
musicians I could name. This quartet
of individuals has been chosen
primarily because their names came to
mind first when I decided to do a
piece on outstanding songwriters/
performers from Canada. These four
best exemplify what we're missing by
not hearing the music created by our
close neighbors.

Connie Kaldor, Bim, Willie P. Bennett,
and Ferron are musicians that you see
once and need to see again--soon.
They have an impact on audiences that
is powerful, as powerful and as moving
as their songs. The four also have in
common forceful personalities and a
desire to reach their listeners.
None of these characteristics is
necessarily unique, but these individ-
uals definitely are.

CONNIE KALDOR hails from the Canadian
prairies (a locale completely unknown
to most of us Yanks). But where she
comes from is secondary to what she
is--a superbly talented singer and
writer. Her songs come from the
heart, and she writes with a simplic-
ity and a conviction that are
eloquent. Kaldor has the added
ability of being able to treat with
humor subjects that aren't usually
tackled: women being ogled and
jaunted by groups of obnoxious macho
men ("Jerks"); the trauma and the
absurdity of seeing old relations-
ships again ("Old Boyfriends"); the
need for women to leave their
commitments and find personal freedom
("Wanderlust").

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Kaldor has a sense of style that is totally natural and engaging; one feels that the person on stage there making fun of her outfit and talking about her crummy dinner is the real woman. The art of Connie Kaldor is her lack of artifice and her belief in the passion of music to transmit emotions and experiences. Kaldor could be the newest 'star' on the contemporary music horizon, given the right direction and some luck, not to mention the right credentials from the Canadian government which would allow her to perform in the States, a difficult task for all Canadian artists.

Bim (alias Roy Harper) has been compared to Ray Charles and Roy Orbison or a combination of both, but he is really difficult to pigeonhole. An exceptional guitarist, Bim is an R&B singer whose roots are centered in rock n' roll, country ballads and blues. His original songs sound like standards; his renditions of Hank Williams and George Jones and Mick Jagger material sound more authentic than the originals and capture just the right essence of admiration and imitation to make it all his own.

Bim is one of the few singers around who can sing rock n' roll on an acoustic guitar and still make it move and throb with all the energy of a complete electric group. "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" is a three handkerchief affair; his own "Night on a Hill" is a perfect cinematic gem of a story about a girl, a guy, a car, and the right night; "In the Northern Sun" is a simple story of an afternoon spent with a little niece in the snow; and one could go on and on.

This guy burns with the desire to entertain, and his live shows elicit standing ovations even with jaded folk festival audiences and those who see him for the first time. Like Kaldor, Bim is himself on stage, sharing his love for the classic songs and writers and sharing his personal statements in verse. His voice is different, his high-pitched tenor switching easily from a bluesy tune to a rock n' roll classic. Bim is a semi-legend in his native British Columbia, some of his out-of-print records are rare and valuable finds, and he sells out wherever he plays. Except he doesn't play in the States, which is our very sad loss.

WILLIE P. BENNETT has been described as a lot of things, and I'm sure all of them are equally accurate and inaccurate; the man is an enigma and a mystery. I don't know where he is from, but his music has country and rock roots with a heavy blues feel. He has three albums out that I am aware of (and probably a few more that I don't know about), and each has great musicians playing on his own terrific, carefully produced tunes.

Bennett's harmonica playing is stunning and I've seen him on workshop stages playing with harp virtuosos who sit with their mouths open upon hearing Willie P. His voice is gruff, and he usually looks like he woke up on the wrong side of the bed after a night of no sleep—but he can move you and have you crying and laughing all at the same time.

My most vivid memory of Bennett was at a workshop at the Owen Sound Folk Festival entitled "Love Songs." After an hour of mellow and sappy love songs, Mr. Bennett got up and sang the raunchiest song he had written and proceeded to rip the guitar strings off his guitar while tearing off his shirt. Subtle, he ain't; talented, he's one of a kind. It would be nice to see the ubiquitous Mr. Bennett show up looking disheveled and disarming and full of new tunes in our neck of the woods.

FERRON is a writer of moody and brilliantly poetic songs, songs that don't come to life immediately but only after repeated listenings. The same can be said for the woman herself. With her hypnotic rough voice and unmelodic tunes, it takes time for the magic to take hold, but when it does, it is real.

Ferron has become known as a feminist performer and as such has been getting more work in the States by opening for performers such as Cris Williamson. But her songs do not only speak to the feminist/lesbian contingent; like Williamson, her songs are about human beings and the human conditions, and women are a secondary theme.

Ferron writes in lyric poetry much like Joni Mitchell or Dylan from years past. But it is not fair to describe Ferron only in terms of her
fellow artists as she is a talent in her own right and one that is still in the fragile stages of development. Her songs stay with you and get into your system ("Sadie!" has been running through my consciousness for two years now, and "Ain't Life A Broke" says it all). Her poetry is brutally honest and revealing and yet not the 'true confession' type of doggerel.

On stage, Ferron is modest and self-effacing, but her power over the audience comes through when one can hear a pin drop in a fully packed house of rapt listeners. Ferron has magic and one can only guess to what lengths she will take that magic in her music.

STAN ROGERS. Any article on Canadian songwriters would be incomplete without at least a mention of the late Stan Rogers, a man whose songs about the Canadian people and their history did more to call attention to Canada's music than anyone in recent memory. His impact on the contemporary Canadian music scene can only be imagined at this point in time, only months after his tragic death, but one hopes that the commitment and belief he had for the future of Canadian music to reach beyond its borders will be his legacy to other Canadian songwriters and musicians.

Kaldor, Bim, Bennett, and Ferron have in common the fact that they are Canadians and musicians, but the four are so special that they would stand out in any group of musicians from any locale. That their music and live performances are more difficult for American audiences to discover is beside the point. Discovering exciting new talent is always worth-

while, especially if the discovery takes a bit more effort. It's more than worth the challenge, and once you begin to search out these obscure Canadian songwriters you won't be able to stop and you'll hear people like Ken Whitley, John Allan Cameron, Eritage, Tim Harrison, Valdy, David Essig, Chris Whitley, Nancy Ahern, Amos Garrett...

Happy hunting!

Selected Discography

Connie Kaldor:
One of These Days (Coyote Records WRCL 1377) Coyote Records, c/o Lila Ross Agency, 10936-66 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 1Y2 Canada (in print)

Bim:
Raincheck on Misery (Casino CA 1009); Kid Full of Dreams (Casino CA 1007); Thistle (Elektra GE-132); Anything You Want (Stony Plain SPL 1044)
Stony Plain Records, Box 861, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2L8 Canada (The Stony Plain release is in print and others can be found in cut-out and bargain bins.)

Willie P. Bennett:
Tryin' to Start Out Clean (Posterity Woodshed PWS 004); Hobo's Taunt (Woodshed WS 007); Blackie and the Rodeo King (Posterity Woodshed PWS 013) (All are out of print but can be found in cut-out and bargain bins.)

Ferron:
Testimony (Stony Plain SPL 1036; first released on Lucy Records) (in print)

W.B.A.I.

Sing Out! Radio Bulletin
— with Pete Seeger
Bluegrass And Beyond
— with Citizen Kafka
The Piper In The Meadow Straying
— with Ed Haber

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A New Jersey Folkie in King Willie Nelson's Court

by Roger Deitz

There is no money in folk music he tells me. Now there's a revelation. I'm sitting at the get-the-message end of a mahogany desk and I'm listening to a sermon delivered by Randall Poe, general manager of The National Academy of Popular Music/Songwriters Hall of Fame in Manhattan. He suggests that country music is where the money is. Randy speaks in kind of a red neck drawl punctuated with New York Yiddish. In the music business one learns to touch all bases.

Mr. Poe says that if I am interested in solvency, I should come along with him to the Country Music Association awards ceremonies to meet some important people. Press some flesh. And consider writing country hits. "After all," he asks, "what's wrong with making a few bucks from your work? Plumbers get paid for their work, you're entitled also."

I would have preferred a different analogy, but my landlord would be the first to agree--what's wrong indeed? I'd trade my mother and a relative to be named at a future date if it would help me sell a song. My last regular paycheck went as a down payment on a brand new 1969 Chevrolet Nova--which I still drive. I find myself concerned, however, that Nashville might not be ready for my classic songs, for example, "The Sheep Dip," which is about love between consenting mammals. Yet the lure of fame, fortune, and new socks is great.

Randy, you've got yourself a deal. He leans back in his Times Square chair and smiles, taking on the look of a Baptist minister who has just saved a wayward soul, immersed a Catholic in the purifying waters. But could he turn a sinner away from demon folk?

Borrowed tuxedo, check. Velvet lapels were no longer current ten years ago, but a borrowed tux is always in style. I am a consummate scavenger, and wearing something for which I didn't have to pay releases me from feeling I might have had the poor taste to purchase something so hideous. Ruffled powder blue shirt, check. Nashville, I am ready to be taken to your bosom, or bosoms. Either way, I am in a swivel with the anticipation of glitter and grits.

I've been scratching around for a while, but I seem to have a penchant for writing noncommercial music. If fame and fortune lay down a path up a stream, I am a coho salmon with a proclivity for spawning in the wrong direction. Nashville has to be a better bet, for after all, Nashville has two rivers. Even a wayward salmon should get lucky there.

The best I can tell, in Nashville you are either a star or an astronomer. This town revolves around its music, and the money flows in not only from record sales, but also from tourism. Nashville is abashedly commercial. Every major and minor country music personality has a leather goods, souvenir, or fried chicken store established in their own name. My favorite is Twitty City. Johnny just calls his the House of Cash, and well he should. Tour buses unload continually at these places and cash registers ring out the true sound of country music as tourists plunk down big bucks on such essential items as banjo earrings, snakeskin boots, and "Jesus was a Capricorn" T-shirts.

Randy and I check these places out. People are very friendly and I feel comfortable. We drive about in our rented Ford Escort (maybe Randy isn't as highly placed in the music business as I thought). As Randy tunes and retunes the radio, I begin to discover that there are many types of country music. A partial list includes gospel, inspirational, country & western, western swing, old time, bluegrass and much more. We cruise on by the boarded up Ryman Auditorium, home of the original WSM Grand Ole Opry program. We are listening to "On the Wings of a Snow White Dove" for the third time. I begin to get a sense that there is more here than I had imagined. Country music is not a pastime; it is a religion. People actually worship country music here in Nashville.

Business is about to begin. Randy and I arrive at the first event, the American Guild of Authors and Composers picnic. True to form, I find that I have left my business cards back at my room. It's not easy spawning when you're a decerebrized coho salmon. The AGAC festivities commence with a fast paced game of marbles. Billy Edd Wheeler takes on all comers.
Afterwards it's on to fried chicken, volleyball, and horseshoes. Randy is introducing me to songwriters, executives, and artists, but I wish he would stop telling people that my name is Roger-Bo Bob Deitz, Roger-Bo Bob is a little too down home for me, but that's what folk are calling me.

After some talk about congress and royalties, Jim Conner ("Grandma's Featherbed") and I play banjo together--or as close together as I can get. He and Ginger Boatright invite us to move on to the Nashville Blue Grass Association International picnic which turns out to be on Mother Maybelle Carter's farm. Emmylou Harris and Peter Rowen are singing "Blue Moon of Kentucky" to about sixty people as John McCuen heckles. "Play Blue Moon of Kentucky!" he shouts after the song is finished. He repeats this procedure after each new tune ends. Guys who wear argyle socks are always funny.

I wonder why the audience is so small. Is bluegrass taken for granted in Nashville? In New York this place would be packed. Randy leans back and takes in the show and informs me that this is a case of the entertainers amusing themselves.

Now it's Monday and time for the CMA Country Music Awards Show. It is a slickly produced show in which Willie Nelson becomes a stand-up comic. "How can Julio Iglesias call himself a super star? He ain't done a duet with me yet." (If Iglesias is country, Menudo is progressive bluegrass.) They do a song together. Anne Murray is almost wiped out by falling scenery, not a line is missed. What a trooper. Scores of awards are handed out. All week long hundreds of awards are handed out. I might be the only person in Nashville without an award.

All the receptions (CMA, BMI, ASCAP) are more or less a black tie blur at this point. I have met Kris Kristofferson, Willie Nelson, other performers, songwriters, execs, and radio people. I feel a bit like an insider. people are beginning to treat me as I am to treat them. I guess they don't know who I am, or who I am not. They just must assume that I have to be somebody since I am an invited guest. A good number of howdy-do and handshakes in to get the sinking feeling that now, having made some contacts, my talent could be my only limiting factor to success. A frightening thought indeed.

I could endear myself to folkies everywhere by saying how decadent this all is, but I can't. I'm having a good time. I am amused to see wealthy people dressed in tuxedos waiting in lines dozens deep in order to fill their plates with barbecued beef and biscuits. People with gold records wait in lines? They do if the food is good.

The most noticeable difference between the BMI and ASCAP dinners is that the songs honored by BMI are a little more familiar. At the BMI affair I am seated with Hal David, president of ASCAP. I am introduced to him as an ASCAP songwriter. He looks strangely relieved that someone in Nashville is. He is very gracious, but little does he know yours truly has made as much money for him (ASCAP) as have the BMI songwriters. Hal must realize he is not at the head table--I'm with him.

So now for the big question, why can't folk music make it as big as country? Perhaps folk needs a geographical center like Country's Nashville, or Motown's Detroit. Perhaps it's a question of marketing, or as noted before, people who are religious feeling strongly about their music. Folk music is grand stuff. Folk people sing prettily, play nicely, write neat songs, and collect food stamps. If there are places to play and people who listen, why can't this form of music reward performers and writers with more than applause?

Perhaps the answer would be to have a Folk Music Awards Show. Pete Seeger and Odetta might be asked to host, and oversee the handing out of awards in appropriate categories such as Worst Tuning Jokes, Most Homespun Singer from the Bronx, Close Enough for Folk Award, Best Vocalist Who Can't Play, Best Instrumentalist Who Can't Sing, and a special Guthrie Award for the artist who is bound for glory.

At the ASCAP dinner I am seated next to Ben Weisman, a man who made a great deal of money writing those memorable songs for Elvis Presley till they all start to run into place. Monetary success isn't all important. I'd hate to have to choose for my creative work. But when journeyman folk singers, looking very bit as if they consist on 400 calories a day, say that they're not in it for the money, that the music and the message are all important, that they actually like vegetarianism and hate thick juicy steaks, are they serious or only adjusting to the status quo?

Is making money from music inherently evil? Is making music without making any money inherently noble?

Perhaps making money and making music should be like yin and yang, the feminine and masculine passive principles in Chinese cosmology. Yin is exhibited in wetness, cold, or darkness; yang in dryness, heat, or lightness. Together yin and yang combine to form all that is to be. The music is free, but it must have a value also. Either side of the spectrum should be aware of the other. Ben Weisman and I are all too aware of each other.

Randy and I leave the ASCAP dinner quite early in the evening. Too much has gone on this week. My brain is about ready to go on sabbatical. We drive to an all night video arcade. The sight of two men decked out in tuxedos, playing Pac-Man causes no stir at all. Nobody wants to shake my hand. I explain to Randy that Pac-Man is just like the music business. If I run the board, it will be a sure sign that I will make it in country music.

I'm playing as never before. I ask Randy what he thinks about "I Do The Sheep Dip!" T-shirts. He leans back, smiles, and nods approvingly. He gives me a pat on the back, and I am distracted for a split second. I send Pac-Man in the wrong direction. I'm trapped. Blinky gets me. Yep, just like the music business. But as with all religions, you gotta keep faith.

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DON'T EVER CALL YOUR SWEETHEART BY HIS NAME

To look at me you may not think
that I'm a femme fatale
but I've got more boyfriends than I can count
you know I don't mean pals
well there's Andrew Barney Charlie Dan
and Ed to note a few
I used to get their names mixed up
but now here's what I do...

I call them Sweetheart, Baby Love
Angel Face, Turtle Dove
Honey Pie, Sugar Lamb
Huggy Bear, Lover Man
to avoid any possible embarrassment or blame
I never call my sweetheart by his name

My girlfriend Marsha's quite a dish
she meets boys by the dozens
she knows all the NY Jets
their brothers and their cousins
and each one thinks he is the one
that she is crazy 'bout
cause at that crucial moment
she's been known to holler out...

Oooo Sweetheart, Baby Love
Angel Face, Turtle Dove
Honey Pie, Sugar Lips
Macho Man, Motor Hips
to avoid any possible embarrassment or blame
she never calls her sweetheart by his name

TOM'S DINER

I am sitting in the morning
at the diner on the corner
I am waiting at the counter
for the man to pour the coffee

and he fills it only halfway
and before I even argue
he is looking out the window
at somebody coming in

"It is always nice to see you" says the man behind the counter
to the woman who has come in
she is shaking her umbrella

and I look the other way
as they are kissing their hellos
and I'm pretending not to see them
instead I pour the milk

I open up the paper
there's a story of an actor
who had died while he was drinking
It was no one I had heard of

and I'm turning to the horoscope
and looking for the funnies
when I'm feeling someone watching me
and so I raise my head

there's a woman on the outside
looking inside--does she see me?
no, she does not really see me
'cause she sees her own reflection

and I'm trying not to notice
that she's hitching up her skirt
and while she's straightening her stockings
her hair has gotten wet

Some people think this is dishonest
some people think this is not right
but have you ever said 'I love you, Thomas'
when Thomas was the boy
you were in love with last night?

Next time your sweetie calls you "dear"
maybe you should wonder
are they just trying to avoid a social blunder
I'm not trying to make trouble
monogamy is grand
but if it's not your style
better follow my plan

and call him Sweetheart, Baby Love
Angel Face, Turtle Dove
Honey Pie, Sugar Lamb
Lover Boy, Superman
avoid any possible embarrassment or blame
don't ever call your sweetheart by his name
don't ever call your sweetheart
no, never call your sweetheart
don't ever call your sweetheart by his name

© 1984 by Christine Lavin, Flip-A-Jig Music, ASCAP

THE GIRLS OF DENMARK

Milano is hot and dripping
The skies are filthy and gray
What isn't ruled by Roman ruins
is now prey to the Red Brigades
The pope was last seen in the jungles of Brazil
Such things don't concern the girls of Denmark

Everything is crumbling
Clothes are hanging from the lines
Latin lovers they get angry
'Cause the girls all go home at night
Milano, you're the most dangerous woman in the world
Such women never scare the girls of Denmark

There's something terribly wrong
There's too much noise everywhere
Everybody's running
But no one's going anywhere
Last night I dreamed my lover was with someone new
Such dreams never haunt the girls of Denmark

America be blessed
You're still alone
You're still the place that's right
For the ones who have gone wrong
The rain is cold and Hamlet's castle's made of ice
Men pay any price for the girls of Denmark

Milano is hot and dripping...

© 1984 by Eric Andersen, Wind and Sand Music, ASCAP
INDIANA

Laying brick until his day is done
5 o'clock you find him on the run
driving to town with the radio playing
out a memory
Liars poker at the back of the bar
he's always leaving but he never gets far
taking chances when a sky full of
stars chase the light of day

Chorus:
Indiana in the afternoon
with the sun so bright
on an empty room

Fountain city right by the state line
waiting for something that can change
her mind
Tracy thinks of a life that she longs
to leave behind
serving drinks down at the Neptune Bar
living on tips they leave in a jar
two kids at home with the memory
of a man who's gone too far

He walked in, she'd seen him before
later on they talked, their backs to
the door
nothing was said either of them had
never heard before
and they knew it when the time came
to go when the lights were turned way
down low with the evening
ahead of them moving on oh so slow
driving through the Indiana night
with the moon up above
such a beautiful sight

In the morning both unable to rise
holding the moment such a thin disguise
telling each other all the lies they
both want to hear
check out time come a rap at the door
picking their clothes up off of the floor
saying goodbye for the whole, wide,
whispering world to hear

Italian translation:
OTTOMANELLI

ottomanelli, i cugini e sua moglie
oltre l'Atlantico vollero andar
un contadino e l'altro un fornaio
ed uno un pittoresco pubblicista

ottomanelli seguiva un suo sogno
di mangiare e bere e di vendemmia
fuggi' dai fascisti, fuggi' dai Tedeschi
per una cascina, lassù, nel nord-est

Ritornello:
E nella notte, nel freddo dell'ombra
pensava al suo sogno, alla patria d'un di
cercando di poter mettere a fuoco
in quel barlume, Gesù', segui'

Credeva nel Papa, cost', ebbe figli
più' bocche che han fame ma pur braccia in più
per mangere le mucche, per portare il latte
per mettere il grano e per vendemmia

Dopo anni di pace, furon disturbati
da dei venditori di altre città
i figli, ormai grandi, cercarono lavoro
per comprare le cose che non eran la

Quello più' grande trovo' per lavoro:
congegni di mera per Colt M-Sixeens
molto richiesti per la guerra in Asia
con gli stranieri, cosi', s'arricchi'

Un giorno guardava, in TV, la partita
bevendo una birra, mangiando popcorn
'sospediamo il programma per darvi notizia
la guerra e' finita col vostro lavoro'

ottomanelli, ormai, era vecchio
più' non coltivava la sua proprietà
venute ha le mucche perché' non poteva
competere con le lattie di città

Nessuno poteva far il suo mestiere
ne' mettere il grano ne' vendemmia
il terrano e' richiesto per costruire case
cosi', dove va quando il sogno tuo va

Translation © 1983 by Germana Pucci

OTTOMANELLI

ottomaneli, his wife and two cousins
had crossed the Atlantic to see what they'd find
one was a farmer and one was a baker
and one was a painter, a maker of signs

ottomaneli had one dream above all
to eat and to drink and to make wine in peace
he'd run from the fascists, he'd run from the germans
he'd now run a dairy farm in the northeast

chorus:
late in the night he grew cold in the shadows
tried to recall his homeland his dream
and all to what end were they following jesus
trying to focus and follow the gleam

because he believed in the pope he had children
there were more mouths to feed but more hands to help
to milk all the cows and deliver the produce
to cut all the corn and make wine in the fall

the years that were peaceful they soon were unsettled
by salesmen come calling with things they don't need
the children grew older the children grew bolder
went looking for jobs to buy all those things

the oldest went out took a job in a factory
making the gunsights for colt M-sixeens
they were much in demand for a war off in Asia
so he worked overtime and grew wealthy and clean

one day he was watching a televised ball game
a can of budweiser and popcorn in hand
"we interrupt program to bring you the great news
the war it is over your jobs have been canned"

ottomaneli was too old to farm now
the fields they lay fallow he sold all the cows
he could not compete with the lobbying dairy-marts
and their certified pasteurized homogenized now

and no one had learned how to plant all the cornfields
or help make the wine in the warm autumn sun
the real estate people want land to build houses
so where do you go when your dream is all done

© 1984 by Tom McGhee
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SO LONG TO LOVE

Lately I've been wearing green
Wearing green, wearing green
Lately I've been wearing green
Wearing green and living a dream

But my better half says leave it alone
There's no going back and there's no going home
My better half says leave it alone
But I see only dreams

Chorus:
And it's so long to love
Once I did love you but now you are sorely missed
So long to love
Once I did love you but now you don't even exist

Lately I've been wearing white
Wearing white, wearing white
Lately I've been wearing white
Wearing white and walking at night

And my better half says leave it alone
There's no going back and there's no going home
My better half says leave it alone
But I walk at night

Chorus

© 1984 by Brian Rose

I SAW A STRANGER WITH YOUR HAIR

I saw a stranger with your hair
Tried to make her give it back
So I could send it off to you
Maybe Federal Express
'Cause I know you'd miss it.

I saw another with your eyes
The flash just turned my head
I went to try them on for size
But they looked the other way
And they wouldn't listen.

Chorus:
But you're never hard to find in a crowd
The people around you smiling out loud
The feet don't touch the ground
No, the feet don't touch the ground
No, the feet don't touch the ground.

I heard a stranger with your voice
It took me by surprise
Again I found it wasn't you
Just an angel in disguise
In for a visit.

By the way, how is my heart?
I haven't seen it since you left
I'm almost sure it followed you
Could you some time send it back?
I'll buy the ticket.

Chorus

I saw a stranger with your hair
I saw another with your eyes
I heard an angel with your voice
By the way, how is my heart?
By the way, how is my heart?

© 1984 by John Gorka
A BIG MISTAKE
You're makin' a big mistake
You don't know who I am
You're makin' a big mistake I tell ya
I'm not your man

My name is Jesus I'm really harmless
I'd never hurt a fly
My dad's a big-shot, his name is Yahweh
He wouldn't let me die

You're makin' a big mistake
Please let go of my hand
You're makin' a big mistake I tell you
I'm not your man

I'm really sorry I busted up your temple
I guess I lost my temper
I know it's no excuse
But that's no reason to string me up for treason
I beg you fellas please turn me loose

You know my father
Who art in heaven
He could make it worth your while
He'd be so grateful
If you'd release me
We could work it out somehow

You're makin' a big mistake
You don't know who I am
You're makin' a big mistake I tell ya
I'm not your man
I tell ya
I'm not your man

© 1982 by W. D. Neely

RAIN
They say, "You need someone to tell you everything's gonna be all right...
Someone to hold you, all those lonely nights."
Well, the rain that's fallin' now, to me feels real good...
It's coolin' the air and the heat and my cares
Just like I knew it would.

Chorus:
Rain, Rain, Rain...
Soak the ground and wash the street,
Refresh my soul, make the season complete.

Rain, Rain Rain...
I hear your sound and it soothes my brain,
And the Sunshine would mean
Nothin' without rain.

They say, "Where are all the heroes like in times of the past...
It's all been said and it's all been done, and now the dye is cast.
The problems that we live with are very much the same...
But I don't need nobody tellin' or sellin'
When I'm listening to the rain.

They say, "Too much of a good thing can be so wonderful...
Too much of a bad thing can make the devil call."
Too much of anything's not what's concernin' me...
With a bad newspaper over my head, in the rain
I feel free.

Chorus (twice)

© 1984 by Jim Glover

DON'T SLIP AWAY
In the darkened alleys of circumstance
The bastards of war await their chance
Where your back is strung with ignorance
And the conscience of knowledge lies in a trance.

Chorus:
Don't slip away or plead in vain
Just ask the sun to stop the rain.

In the trenches of freedom the TV is on
Technology whistles a new battle song
Where having a job means building a bomb
Which side of defense do we belong?

Chorus

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WE DON'T PLAY NO ANDREWS SISTERS
I no drink cola
You no drink cola
We no drink no rum and cola
We no Andrews Sisters
We no drink cola
We no drink no rum and cola
Our lovers take coke and I don't mean cola
We just play blues on our victrola
We don't play no Andrews Sisters
We don't play no Andrews Sisters

I play piano
You play piano
We don't need no candelabra
We don't play no Liberace
We play piano
We don't need no candelabra
We got a bunch of fingers
Like a bunch of bananas
We play blues on our piano
Can't play no Liberace

No I no look like Groucho
You no look like Chico
We no look like Harpo Marx
We not no Marx Brothers
We no look like gumbo
We no look like Zeppo Marx
We play blues on our harp
Can't play no heavenly airs
We smoke big cigars
We wear fright wigs on our hairs
We not no Marx Brothers
We not no Marx Brothers

© 1984 by Baby Gramps
Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger

by Jean Freedman

On October 7, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger performed at Town Hall in New York with their sons Neill and Calum. They sang a lot of traditional songs and a lot of songs that they had recently written—on such varying topics as gypsy life and Tory politics.

At most concerts, there's a clear line of demarcation between artist and audience, but not with Ewan and Peggy—they talk to us as if we were family friends in the living room. They insist that we join in on choruses and make us an essential part of their concert. They provide the music and we provide the folk, and it works well.

They are so different, Ewan and Peggy, in terms of background, age, and—to belabor the obvious—sex. The songs that they write and the way in which they sing are very different. Yet their personalities and talents mesh in a remarkable way, a sort of communion that is both productive and joyful. Their delight in each other is obvious; it communicates to everyone and embarrasses no one. Yet neither seems insufficient without the other; they are simply two interesting and exciting people who would rather be together than not. After all, there are certain things that a person cannot do alone—things like getting married, having children, and singing duets. Ewan and Peggy have done them all. And a great deal more besides.

Ewan MacColl was born in Scotland in 1915 to a father who was an ironmolder and left-wing militant and a mother who cleaned houses and offices for a living. Ewan was the only one of his parents' five children who lived. His father was a trade unionist who was blacklisted throughout most of Scotland, and the family never had enough money. At one point, Ewan's father, tired of being unemployed and of the Scottish climate which irritated his asthma, went to Australia and stayed there until he was kicked out for union activity. (It took three years; Australia, in a desperate attempt to get its country populated without admitting blacks or Asians, cherishes its European immigrants. At times, it has literally paid the way for British people who were willing to settle in Australia.)

Ewan shared his parents' political dedication—and their love of music. (His father was a top-notch singer.) When Ewan left school at the age of fourteen, he was unable to find work, so he turned to politics and theatre. He worked with several political and street theatres and with the highly successful Theatre Workshop that was formed in the mid-1940's.

He wrote eight plays for the Theatre Workshop—two of which are ballad operas that use folk music, one an updating of Lysistrata entitled Operation Olive Branch, one that deals with the rise of fascism after World War II and the coming of World War III, an experimental play called Uranium 235 that consists of sketches on the theme of nuclear physics, several psychological dramas that concern soldiers who will not conform to their armies, and a fairly new play (just two years old) about a sea captain who cannot adjust to mechanically run ships.

One can see Ewan's political identification in his plays, his songs, and even in ordinary conversation. He speaks eloquently and without apology—of the anger and the hopes and the memories of the working class. Political dedication frightens many people—for nearly ten years, Ewan was considered too dangerous to be allowed on American soil. Fortunately for American folk devotees, that time is over.

Peggy Seeger was born in 1935 in New York. Her father was a teacher and musicologist, and her mother, Ruth Crawford, a composer and pianist—the first woman to win a Guggenheim Fellowship to study music in Europe. Her half-brother Pete and brother Mike—as well as Peggy herself—have made the Seegers one of the best-known folk music families in the world.

Peggy grew up in a big house in Chevy Chase, Maryland, where folk people were always popping in and out. She fondly remembers Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie and was very impressed with Guy Carawan because he could make bread and do his own laundry. ("I never seen a man wash his own clothes in my life.") Peggy's mother was originally a student of her father—he was fifteen years older than

Peggy Seeger
she, and according to Peggy, they stayed in love the whole time they were together. The parallels to Peggy's own marriage are striking.

Peggy first met Ewan when she was 20 and he was 40. At the time, Alan Lomax was in London doing a television production of Dark of the Moon with a group called the Ramblers, of which Ewan MacColl was one. Lomax needed a female singer and banjoist for the production, so he contacted Peggy. She arrived in London exhausted and disheveled after a 26-hour train ride from Denmark and was told that she was to meet the producer (and the Ramblers) in four hours. Lomax's girlfriend—a model—went to work on Peggy and turned her into a high-fashion banjo player. That's the first glimpse that Ewan got of Peggy—all done up in a glamorous hairdo and fancy make-up and somebody else's clothes.

After Dark of the Moon Peggy returned to the States for a few months, then went to Moscow for the World Youth Festival—a huge gathering of people interested in music and politics. The festival lasted for two weeks, during which time Peggy met people from all over the world. She teamed up with Guy Carawan (apparently still doing his own laundry), and they did a few concerts together. Then, the American delegation to the festival was invited to go to China.

This was 1957, and the United States did not admit that China, a country of more than half a billion people, actually existed.

All 300 members of the American delegation got individual telegrams from the State Department threatening fines, prison, and loss of passport if they ventured into this nonexistent country. However, 40 people decided to go anyway—Peggy Seeger among them. For five weeks, the Americans toured China—absorbing the culture, watching a society completely different from their own. "It was the first time I'd ever been in a country where almost everybody looked happy or constructive," said Peggy.

After China, Peggy travelled back to Russia, then to Poland and France, giving concerts and exploring. Then she returned to England. The United States had, as promised, taken away her passport but she had already decided to stay in England with Ewan MacColl. England has been her home ever since, and she now travels with a British passport.

For 25 years now, Ewan and Peggy have lived together, gone on protest marches together, and, of course, sung together. They have three children—Neill, who's 24; Calum, who's 20; and Kitty, who will be 11 in December. They both write songs—Ewan has written hundreds, and Peggy has written about 80, of which she says "30 are good, 15 are mediocre, and nobody else is ever going to see the other ones."

As I mentioned earlier, their styles of writing are quite different. Peggy's songs are topical and personal; they are in the voice of an intelligent, independent woman. Though their language is simple and without modern cliche, they bear the stamp of their time.

Ewan has also written a good many topical songs—full of wit and world play and melodies that roll along so fast it's hard to keep up with them—but they are not what he is best known for. Ewan's most famous songs are timeless; they seem to stretch back through all people who have been hurt and exploited and who count small pleasures as big ones. More people know Ewan's songs than have ever heard of Ewan. Gypsies and travellers in Britain swear that they have been singing Ewan's songs since before Ewan wrote them. I once found "Freeborn Man" in an Irish songbook that hailed a Ewan's name to "McColl." Ewan has seen his songs in books that change his name to "Anonymous." And surely there are few English-speaking people who do not know the thing called The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face!

Ewan's method of songwriting is quite interesting. First he chooses the sort of feeling that he wants his song to have and picks a folk song that has this sort of feeling. Then he hums the tune over and over. Once the tune is firmly settled into his brain, he changes the first line. Then he hums the changed first line with the rest of the tune unchanged. Then he goes on to the second line or perhaps the third. He fits in the words somehow—perhaps he starts out with a text that he wants to set to music, or perhaps the act of changing the traditional melody gives him ideas for the words. Thus his songs are born of older songs in true folk tradition. Peggy suggests that this is one reason why his songs are so readily accepted. Certainly there is a sense of familiarity in Ewan's tunes, the same sort of familiarity that most folk songs have. The surprises come in the form of words, but the tunes are like a homing pigeon.

If you caught their concert at Town Hall, you were able to see the difference in performing styles. Ewan, who left school at fourteen, uses long words and complicated syntax and will introduce a song by giving a bracing lesson. Peggy, who attended Radcliffe, speaks more simply and usually introduces a song with an anecdote about the time she learned it or something her father used to say or the time she sang it for a bunch of English schoolchildren. She speaks like a storyteller, but it is Ewan who usually tells the stories—in Scots dialect.

What I like best about their performances is that they sing with dignity and artistry yet never do they compromise the words. Everyone is familiar with disastrous renditions of folk music done by people who concentrate on one half of the process and forget the other. There is one school that emphasizes the music and forgets the folk, so that the gritty realism of the songs gets lost in pure vowels and Baroque harmonies. Then there is the school that thinks folk musicians shouldn't have good voices or any hint of musicality. "I don't quite understand this," Peggy says with a subtle prejudice against the working classes—those who wrote most of the folk songs. Though able to write
well, they should not be able to
sing well.)

But Ewan and Peggy have good voices
and are inherently musical, though,
of course, there are differences.
Peggy is a trained musician, but in
her voice you can sometimes hear
the plaintive twang of the mountain
women who have sung these songs
before her. Ewan, whose parents
sang to him because there weren't
any radios, has a rich, full baritone
that would sound quite at home in
front of a full orchestra.

Human beings desire conformity, and
art demands variety; thus artists
have traditionally been lonely people.
Ewan and Peggy are luckier than most,
because in each other they have found
someone who respects and enjoys the
differences between them. In a
moment of relaxation on the day she
was to leave for London, Peggy said,
"They say that working class people
should marry middle class, and vice
versa, because they're com-
plimentary. They each bring the best of
their class to the other, and they
can temper the worst."

This is not meant as general advice
to the lovelorn; "Marry outside of
your class" is as senseless as
"Marry within your class." But
it's a good view, a view unhindered
by the everyday evils of cowardice
and prejudice, and a view that speaks
to the strength that arises from
dissimilarity. Purity is useful
only as a moral absolute; in
everyday life, variety is much more
interesting.

with a giggle. The fat guy starts run-
ing to impress his girl, begins to
sing it for its own sake, and gets
his revenge "looking even better
than you." The unfortunate snob is left
in the dust as her now-handsome suitor
runs off after someone else.

"Try a Little Harder" is an inspira-
tional lyric set to a rhythm derived
from Miles Davis. Andy's guitar play-
ing has the fullness of a piano part.

"I Blew It" has a guitar vamp that
takes the guitar-for-piano substitu-
tion even further. The lyrics are an
ode to frustration with a wild vocal
outro. The song ends with our narrat-	or yelling, weeping, pleading. It re-
minds me a lot of "No One to Love Me"
by the Sha-Weez (Aladdin Records).

The album's first love song is "Warm
and Precious Love." It's a strong,
simple song with flavorful guitar over-
dubs and a nice vocal chorus.

The choir reappears on "City Bike
Ride," the album's one instrumental
and my personal favorite. It's an airy
piece, cinematic, impressionist.

"If We Only Had Some Music" starts off
side two. Lyrics about the healing
power of music bring out the curmudge-
lon in me, but the music is pretty
and there's a nice Chet Atkins/Jerry
Reed feel to the guitar part.

"Baby You've Got Me Spinning!" is a
John Hurt-style exercise with a roar-
ing, shouting vocal--another personal
favorite. After this there's another
ballad, "Running From Myself," with
a nice set of changes and the reap-
pearance of the choir. Human voices
make a great accompaniment, as this
track amply proves.

But we don't want to get too soft-
hearted here on side two, so Andy runs
down a barrelhouse number called "It
Hurts All Over Now." It's a boogie
style piece reminiscent of Blind
Blake's "That'll Never Happen No Mo."
The consequences of marital infidel-
ity are in this case painful to the narra-
tor but pretty funny to the audience.

The title song finishes the LP on a
more sophisticated note. "Mad Met-
ropolis is a catalogue of urban wierdness
leavened by the narrator's desire to
get next to the girl of his dreams.
Andy Polon is a fine player with a
fluent pen, and one can't help but
wish him luck.

Mad Metropolis is available from AOP
Records, 237 East 26th St. Suite 5H,
New York, NY 10010.

up Front so every word can be heard
clearly. The instruments all sound
like they do in real life. The music
seems to jump out of the speakers at
you. There is even, gasp, a slick
cover with a color picture.

"Jogging For Your Love" opens side one

RECORD REVIEWS

Andy Polon
Mad Metropolis

by Peter Spencer

There are days, in this most tech-
nological of worlds, when the folksinger
finds a precedent (Michael Hurley,
Dylan's Basement Tapes, Robert John-
son) for the argument that technology
is antithetical to the unique one-to-
one communication that is folk music.
In this way one sees technology, espe-
cially the newest recording technol-
ogy, as a kind of mark of the beast.
Artists whose records show too much
state-of-the-art perfection can be
stigmatized as too "sleek" or "commer-
cial."

Yet the technology won't go away; and
like every other machine since the
days men hunted with sticks, a machine
is only as good or bad as the people
using it. So the folksinger is left
with questions. How much recording
technology is too much? How does one
strike a balance between illusion
and reality?

Mad Metropolis goes a long way toward
answering those questions. Andy Polon
has produced a remarkably good sound-
ing LP. The vocals are clean and mixed
The Johnson Mountain Boys
Play Bluegrass

by Roger Manning

Bluegrass music came about in the 1940s when a mandolin player from Kentucky named Bill Monroe conceived of and developed a new sound and style of playing the old country and folk songs. For the most part, this sound involves combining elements of Anglo musical traditions with Afro-American music styles. Bill Monroe himself puts it this way: "It's a hard drive to it. It's Scotch bagpipes and ol' time fiddlin'. It's Methodist and Holiness and Baptist. It's bluegrass and jazz, and it has a high lonesome sound. It's plain music that tells a good story. It's played from my heart to your heart and it will touch you." (From Bill Monroe, Bluegrass Specials, edited by Jeff Yates, Hansen House)

Instruments found in the bluegrass group include mandolin, guitar, fiddle, banjo, bass fiddle, and sometimes a dobro (forerunner to the steel guitar, played with a slide). There is a lot of high tenor and tight harmony singing. There are a lot of bluesy riffs during frequent solos. And there is the all-important "bounce" feel that one gets from listening to the group as a whole. Quite often an actual boogie riff can be heard coming from the bass or the banjo.

A good place to hear the real thing would be on recordings made by Bill Monroe (especially from the early fifties) or the Stanley Brothers. (Bill Monroe and Ralph Stanley are still actually touring.)

The most up-to-date version of the "real thing" is the Johnson Mountain Boys, a relatively new group from Maryland that has shown itself to be extremely sensitive to the essential elements of bluegrass music.

In their October 8 performance at New York University (sponsored by the Bluegrass Club of New York) they did it all, from the high harmonies to the bounce.

Guitarist and lead singer Dudley Conneely sang all the high tenor parts with clarity and emotion. His exceptional performance was especially evident during "Get Down on Your Knees and Pray," a gospel quartet arrangement (there's nothing quite like a JMB quartet). Dudley was responsible for the group's foundation around 1975.

Ernie Stubb's incredibly solid fiddling bounced and weaved its bluesy, lonesome sound into the hearts of the audience. Applause was not uncommon after one of his solos. Ernie also sings bass.

David McLaughlin provided solid coverage on the mandolin while singing harmony and some lead.

Richard Underwood makes the banjo do what many fail to. He makes it bounce, even on the incredibly uptempo pieces where it's easy to let all the notes melt together and lose their identity. The set included a couple of his instrumental compositions. (The JMB write much of their own material.) Underwood also sings lead and harmony.

Larry Robbins plays the upright bass and does it well, which means more than I can say in such a rhythmically oriented group.

The Johnson Mountain Boys hit the stage wearing matching suits and western hats. They immediately stepped up to their microphones picking away. They are very impressive and professional. When singing the harmonies they gathered closely around a centrally located microphone setup, spreading out again in time for the instrumental portion of the song without missing a beat.

The tempo ranged from intense speed (even by bluegrass standards) to slow and lonesome. By their own choice, few of the selections are recognizable standards. It is their ability that carries the set.

The Johnson Mountain Boys love their music and are dedicated to it. This gives rise to a cheerful, good-natured attitude that is sincere and felt by all who hear them.

The audience is a sensitive one and aware that this group is special. Other than the music and the thunderous applause between songs, you could hear a pin drop. There was no talking or footstomping, just people listening.

Since the fifties, there has been a lot of experimentation producing various offshoots of bluegrass (pro-
gressive bluegrass, newgrass, dawg music (jazz), melograss, etc.). Various musicians were either looking for greater commercial success or to "expand" musically. The Johnson Mountain Boys are showing a lot of people that actual bluegrass music still has plenty to offer.

The Johnson Mountain Boys have three albums on Rounder Records.

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Continued from "Lyrics Side One," page 10.

**DRUMMER BOY**

(To The Poets And Musicians of the Streets
And of The Underground)

sometimes when I wake in the morning
I want to go up to Limisfree
often enough and again
I want to lay down in bed
and drink in the dreams
of a lover long gone across the waters
it's then when the chords of the drummer
come alive in my head

'wake up! sing the drummer boy'

'come arise now for the dawn is come'

and he laugh and shake his tambourine

start to tapping on his tympanum

when you work for a living, well
the system has a tendency to 'get to' you
and taking the tubes into town'll take it
out of your hide

but it's alright

I hear the swift, sweet musical interlude

banged out by a drummer

playing on the platform on Manhattan-side

O Drummer Boy!

I'm wondering how did he get there
and I hear his voice reverberate

as we ten thousand stumble up the subway stair

on any given day (now) you can hear him

in the heart of the city

beating his wings like a dove

in the belly of the whale
among the clinders and girderen
the concrete and ashes

he seems compelled
to tell his tale

of being born as a drummer boy

soon apprenticed to a mummers band

refugee gypsy of the angry night

sojourner in the foreign land

singing 'go up!'

It's a shame what we do to the language

not to mention other miracles

the moon rolls around

we only mark it as a number on the Dow

I must put it down, hit the pavement

consult inner oracles

hey, could that be a drummer

playing on the corner to the lunchtime crowd

O Drummer Boy!

sing his song and trope in rhyming tongue

indeed he's got me wondering how

he get the six string sound out of his steel drum

he tells the tale

of the outlaw, renegade lover

he could not deny her

who loved her the best of his kind

marred in moonlight and water

they sail on the Rubicon

not knowing what Eden

or land to the east they may find

time is tapping on the drummer boy

lovely lady re-arrange her plans

and he has given up his Wall Street job

to sing in a Rock of Gibraltar band

he was born to the drum

was a drummer boy's son of a drummer boy

seven generations of preparation

posed at his command

now he tunes up his timbrels and bass

in the shadow of the marketplace

turns to his countrymen and

proclaims his demand

'I give a dollar to the drummer boy

I give him something with an open hand

think it over for a moment now

you may never pass this way again

and if you go, go up!'

nowadays I'm amazed
to make it home in the evening

a certain kind of peacefulness

is singing alive in the air

have a drink with a friend

as the dusk come down over Brooklyn

once again

and drink one for the drummer

I hear his music everywhere

O serenade me drummer boy

tide me over till the dawning's come

when I'm going down for dreaming now

heartbeat pounding like the drummer's drum

Jack he live on alone

and without Ezekiel

Elizabeth and Thomas are"

living in Paris he say

I think of old friends

well I guess how all have got to travel

I think of one lover

am I ever going to see her someday

O tell me truly drummer boy

is that happy morning still to come

I'm listening for hints and clues

every time you play your scales and runs

and go up!

© 1983 by David Indian,
ON THE RECORD

ERIC ANDERSEN, one of the more poetic folksingers to emerge from the sixties, has tried on several musical coats during his career. Audiences across the U.S. and Europe have enjoyed his solo performances and his newfound intensity when accompanied by a rock band. His two latest LPs, Midnight Son and Tight in the Night, released in Europe, capture the transition, incorporating his fine sense of lyric into viable rock pieces.

JACK HARDY has released five albums on the Great Divide label, some of which have been reissued by First American in this country and Pastels abroad. He was the editor of The Coop for the past two years. He is now the editor of The Fast Folk Musical Magazine.

DAVID INDIAN is a pen name of David Joshua Ruderman, adopted in emulation and respect for those Native Americans whom he has known. Their societies give birth to individual personal, communal, and cosmic purposefulness, despite centuries of exploitation and genocide (not to mention the contemporary malaise). Thanks to Yeats. He is a Brooklyn Indian.

CHRISTINE Lavin has been in New York for six years, has recorded two LRs and one EP. Dave Van Ronk is her idol and one day she hopes to be able to sing like him. (Ed. Note: Christine's song on this issue, "Don't Ever Call Your Sweetheart by His Name," has been banned by Gracie Mansion, the mayor's residence in NYC, for fear that it promotes promiscuity.)

LEFT FIELD is Elizabeth Emmert, Thom Weaver, Bill Neely and Gordon Swift. Weaver and Neely started working together in western Pennsylvania in 1972; they began singing with Emmert in New York in the mid-seventies. Left Field was born during the 1981 baseball strike, and Swift joined the team about a year later.

TOM MCGHEE lives in Brooklyn and drives a truck.

GERMANA PUCCI was born in Italy to a family of singers and farmers who lead singing in the fields and are hired to sing the Maggio (peasant's opera) after harvest. Germana moved to New York in 1977. She loves to cook.

BRIAN ROSE is a 25-year-old New York songwriter and photographer. He was one of the founders of The Coop magazine and the musician's cooperative at SpeakEasy in New York City.

SUZANNE VEGA is from New York City. She is a Barnard College graduate and is 24. She has been active in dance and theatre, writing and staging a production on Carson McCullers.
1. Drummer Boy (David Indian)
   David Indian/Vocals & Guitar
   Mark Dann/Drums & Keyboards

2. Don't Ever Call Your Sweetheart by His Name
   (Christine Lavin)
   Christine Lavin/Vocals & Guitar
   Mark Dann/Bass

3. *The Girls of Denmark (Eric Andersen)
   Eric Andersen/Vocal & Guitar

4. Ottomanelli (Jack Hardy)
   Germana Pucci/Vocal, Guitar & Translation
   Jill Burke/Handcuff
   Peter Lewy/Cello
   Mark Dann/Bass

5. Indiana (Tom McGhee)
   Tom McGhee/Vocal & Guitar
   Mark Dann/Guitars & Bass

6. Tom's Diner (Suzanne Vega)
   Suzanne Vega/Vocal

*Recorded at The Lone Star by Joe Lang and Jace Reijken

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1. So Long to Love (Brian Rose)
   Brian Rose/Vocal & Guitar
   Mark Dann/Keyboard Bass
   Christine Lavin/Background Vocal
   Jack Hardy/Background Vocal

2. I Saw a Stranger with Your Hair (John Gorka)
   John Gorka/Vocal & Guitar
   Mark Dann/Guitar & Bass

3. A Big Mistake (W. D. Neely)
   Left Field:
   Elizabeth Emmert/Vocal
   Thom Weaver/Vocal
   Bill Neely/Vocal & Guitar
   Gordon Swift/Fiddle

4. Rain (Jim Glover)
   Jim Glover/Vocal & Guitar
   Ned Treasure/Background Vocal
   H. G. Ivie/Background Vocal
   Mark Dann/Bass & Guitar

5. Don't Play No Andrews Sisters (Baby Gramps)
   Baby Gramps/Vocal & National Steel Guitar

6. Don't Slip Away (Cyrus Clarke)
   Cyrus Clarke/Vocal & Guitar