SHARON MOUNTAIN HARMONY
A Golden Ring of Gospel
Almost twenty years have passed since we released the first "Golden Ring" recording in 1963, and over a decade since a reunion produced its sequel, in two volumes, entitled "Five Days Singing." People have often asked when we planned another record in that series, and we have tried to explain that the Golden Ring was a concept, rather than a fixed group. As Sandy wrote in 1971, it was "an approach to informal, non-competitive music-making by people who simply enjoyed singing together." It involved, he explained, "a spirit of genuine ensemble singing and playing, conceived and executed with a great deal of affection for the music and for the people with whom it is being shared."

"Sharon Mountain Harmony" is an album conceived and executed in the same spirit as the Golden Ring recordings. The participants are different, but the feeling and the sharing are the same. For this reason, we have given it the subtitle: "A Golden Ring of Gospel."

Lucy Simpson's discovery of the folksong revival was relatively recent and, as this record proves, a great boon to the rest of us. Here is a lovely new voice and some wonderful, fresh material. We will be eternally grateful to her for discovering such gems as "Blessed Quietness" and "Angels Hovering 'Round" in her large collection of old hymnals.

Bill Destler, Wally Macnow and Tom McHenry (otherwise known as Rock Creek) are an exciting trio specializing in beautiful arrangements of a wide variety of traditional songs. Wally's dynamic baritone often takes the lead, with Bill's sweet tenor on the high harmony. Tom usually sings bass with the group, but he is one of those remarkable singers who can sing with strength in almost any range he chooses.

Rock Creek had enjoyed singing informally with Lucy at a number of folk festivals and "getaways," and we got the idea that we should invite them to gather at our barn-home-studio on Sharon Mountain for a weekend of gospel singing and recording. Lucy had enjoyed singing with Peter and Mary Alice Amidon at Pinefoods Camp in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and it was decided that they would be the perfect addition to the group. So we all got together—Lucy from Brooklyn, Rock Creek from Washington and Baltimore, and the Amidons from Brattleboro, Vermont. Sandy was busy with the recording, but I got to sing along on some of the choruses, a joyful experience for which I am most grateful. Lucy and Rock Creek took turns leading songs, with the rest of us joining in, and Peter and Mary Alice thrilled us with two splendid duets.

The result is a unique collection of unusual and beautiful hymns drawn from both black and white tradition. We are certain that this record, like its predecessors, will catch you up in its infectious spirit, so that you will feel compelled to sing along. Please don't refrain—that's what refrains are for!
I'VE BEEN LISTENING
Side 1, Band 1.

Lucy (lead) and group.

The first two verses of this song are in the Rodeheaver Collection for Male Voices (The Rodeheaver Co., 1916), one of my many crumbling old hymnbooks. It is in a section called "Plantation Songs." I copied the third verse from another hymnal in a bookshop. (L.S.)

I've been listening all the night long,
Been listening all the day,
I've been listening all the night long
To hear some sinner pray. (2X)

Some say John was a Baptist,
Some say he was a Jew,
But the Bible does inform us
He was a preacher, too. (2X)

I've been listening...

Go read the Fiftieth of Matthew,
Go read that chapter through;
It is a guide to Christians
And tells them what to do. (2X)

I've been listening...

There was a search in Heaven
And all the earth around;
John stood in sorrow, hoping
A Savior could be found. (2X)

I've been listening...

GLORY BOUND
Side 1, Band 2.

Wally (lead), Tom, Bill.

This song, from the singing of Estil and Orna Ball of Grassy Creek, North Carolina, is an example of the best of the white radio-gospel music that can still be heard throughout the South. Estil, who recently died, and Orna have left a fine legacy of white gospel music, some of which is available on recordings (e.g., Rounder 0026). (B.D.)

I'm glory bound; I'm on my way
To my eternal home.
I'm going there with Christ to stay
Around that starry throne.
The Lord has healed my sin-sick soul
And set my spirit free.
I'm glory bound,
Won't you come and go along with me?

He said for me He would prepare
A mansion in the sky.
He said His glory I could share
In that sweet by-and-by.
As I look forward to that day,
I'm happy as can be.
I'm glory bound,
Won't you come and go along with me?

I'll hear the angels singing there;
I'll hear there harps unfold.
It'll all be glory everywhere
And none will e'er grow old.
But, beat of all, I know someday
He'll bless me facelessly.
I'm glory bound,
Won't you come and go along with me?

I'm glory bound...

I'm glory bound...

I'm glory bound...
Turtle Dove
Side 1, Band 3.

Peter & Mary Alice.

We learned "Turtle Dove" from David Olive of Washington, D.C. We've found the chorus to be fantastic for group singing. The last lines of the chorus, "Sa so la sa do, on sa la sa ree," sound suspiciously like singing the shapes of a Sacred Harp song. (P.A.) Ed. note: Dave Olive tells us that he, in turn, learned the song from the singing of Bessie Jones.

Turtle dove done drooped his wings,
Now, turtle dove done drooped his wings,
Turtle dove done drooped his wings
High on Zion's hill to sing.

Adam and Eve, do, do,
Adam and Eve, won't you tell it to me,
Meet me at the door, won't you tell it to me,
Sa so la sa do, on sa la sa ree.

When I get to Heaven I know the rules,
When I get to Heaven I know the rules,
When I get to Heaven I know the rules,
Skip on down to the bathing pool.

Adam and Eve...

My name is written on David's line,
My name is written on David's line,
My name is written on David's line,
I'll go to Heaven on the wheel of time.

Adam and Eve...

(repeat first verse and chorus)

Climbing High Mountains (M. C. Durham)
Side 1, Band 4.

Lucy (lead) and group.

I learned "Climbing High Mountains" from one of my favorite secondhand bookstore finds — a disintegrating, coverless, 24-page booklet of gospel hymns that, judging by its copyright lines and credits, was probably published in Chicago around 1939. It is a collection of hymns and spirituals sung by such groups as the Truelight Gospel Chorus, the Terre Haute Gospel Choral Union, and the Famous Five Soul Stirrers. One song was noted, "As sung by Addie Thomas and the First Church of Deliverance," a Chicago church I had visited as a teenager with my church youth group. The visits were arranged by our pastor, who loved black gospel music. The booklet credits Rev. M. C. Durham as the writer of the song. (L.S.)

Lord, I'm climbing high mountains trying to get home,
Lord, I'm climbing high mountains trying to get home,
Lord, I'm climbing high mountains, climbing high mountains,
Lord, I'm climbing high mountains trying to get home.

(Similarly:)

Lord, I'm bearing my burdens trying to get home...
Lord, I'm having hard trials trying to get home...
Lord, my way's sometimes weary trying to get home...

Lord, I'm climbing high mountains trying to get home...

Peace Like A River
Side 1, Band 5.

Wally (lead) and group.

Bill originally learned this song from a friend who had heard it at a Friends Yearly Meeting, and for several years we assumed it was a Quaker song. Then, on the day before Christmas, 1978, a black gospel group wandering the streets of south Baltimore sang the very same song, standing outside Bill's door.

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

(Similarly:)

I've got pain like an arrow...
I've got joy like a fountain...
I've got peace like a river...

DONE FOUND MY LOST SHEEP
Side 1, Band 6.

Lucy (solo)

You provide the harmony on this one!

"Done Found My Lost Sheep" is in James Weldon Johnson's Book of American Negro Spirituals (Viking, 1925). I lead a fairly hectic city life and I like this song's reminder that sometimes the best way to get things done is to sit still and let them happen. Sometimes. (L.S.)

Done found my lost sheep,
Done found my lost sheep,
Done found my lost sheep.
Hallelujah, I done found my lost sheep,
Done found my lost sheep,
Done found my lost sheep.

My Lord had a hundred sheep;
One of them did go astray.
That just left him ninety and nine.
Go to the wilderness; seek and find.
If you find it, bring it back,
Across your shoulders, across your back.
Tell the neighbors all around
That lost sheep has sure been found.

Done found my lost sheep...

In that resurrection day,
Sinner can't find no hiding place.
Run to the mountain and the mountain move,
Run to the hill, the hill run, too.
Sinner-man travellin' on tremblin' ground;
Poor lost sheep ain't never been found.
Sinner, why don't you stop and pray?
You might hear the shepherd say:

Done found my lost sheep...

I WANT TO DIE EASY
Side 1, Band 7.

Wally (lead), Bill, Tom.

This is also from Johnson's Book of American Negro Spirituals. (B.D.)

I want to die easy when I die,
I want to die easy when I die,
I want to die easy when I die,
Shout "Salvation" as I fly,
I want to die easy when I die.

I want to see my mother when I die,
I want to see my mother when I die,
I want to see my mother when I die,
Shout "Salvation" as I fly,
I want to die easy when I die.

(Similarly:)

I want to see my father when I die...
I want to see Jesus when I die...
I want to die easy when I die...

BLESSSED QUIETNESS
Side 1, Band 8.

Lucy (lead) and group.

"Blessed Quietness" was collected for me by my subconscious in the summer of 1975. I was attending my first Folk Music Week at Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth Massachusetts, and had reached the fifth day of frantic feasting on classes, workshops, concerts, all-night singing, and non-stop tunes drifting through the woods as musicians practiced, swapped, and jammed. I had hardly slept a wink and was definitely on the verge of collapse.

I tried to nap in my cabin, but was overstimulated and unable to relax. Reaching for something to read (I had brought only songbooks), I started to learn "Blessed Quietness." I didn't notice until the next day how exactly appropriate it was to the situation. It has been my favorite hymn since then. The hymnal was The Golden Trumpet, published by the Christian Witness Co. of Chicago. No date of publication is given, but the song copyrights range from 1882 to 1906. Mrs. Manie Payne Ferguson is cited as writer of the words, and William J. Kirkpatrick is credited for the music. I've seen it in other hymnbooks with another (far less satisfying) tune. (L.S.)

Joy's are flowing like a river
Since the Comforter has come;
He abides with us forever,
Makes the trusting heart His home.
Blessed quietness, holy quietness,  
What assurance in my soul.  
On the stormy sea, speaking  
peace to me,  
How the billows cease to roll.

Like the falling rain from Heaven,  
Like the sunlight from the sky,  
So the Holy Ghost is given,  
Falling on us from on high.

Blessed quietness...

See, a fruitful field is growing  
Blessed fruits of righteousness,  
And the streams of life are flowing  
In the lonely wilderness.

Blessed quietness...

What a wonderful salvation  
Where we always see His face;  
What a peaceful habitation,  
What a quiet resting place.

Blessed quietness...

And I will praise Him when I die;  
Shout "Salvation" as I fly.  
Oh, He's taken my feet...

And I will tell to sinners 'round  
What a dear Savior I have found.  
Oh, He's taken my feet...

LORD, I WANT MORE RELIGION  
Side 2, Band 2.

Wally (lead) and group.

I found "Lord, I Want More Religion"  
Korson states that it was sung to him by  
Hiram H. White, in Greene County, Penn­sylvania, in 1930. It has only one verse. The hardest thing about singing  
this song is knowing when to stop. 
Wally thinks I never sing it enough times through, so he learned it himself  
and leads it here. (L.S.)

Lord, I want more religion,  
Lord, I want more religion,  
Lord, I want more religion  
To get me unto God. (2X)

Religion makes me happy  
And then I want to go  
To leave this world of sorrow  
And trouble here below. (2X)

Lord, I want... (etc.)

TROUBLE SO HARD  
Side 2, Band 3.

Lucy (lead) and group.

The recording sessions for this album  
were such a pleasure that I forgot to  
stick to the songs I had planned to record. "Trouble So Hard" just popped out because I suddenly wanted to sing it then, with these good singer/friends. Only weeks later did I think about the fact that I had learned the song from Dwayne Thorpe while singing harmony on  
his record (Minstrel JD-209) and that recording it myself was perhaps not in good taste. Dwayne says it's fine with him: "That's what I like to see happen - more people singing the songs." Dwayne
learned it from the singing of Vera Hall Ward.

Oh, Lordy, trouble so hard,
Oh, Lordy, trouble so hard.
Well, there ain't nobody knows my trouble but God,
Ain't nobody knows my trouble but God.

Well, I woke up one morning
And there in the bed,
Oh, there was brother,
My brother was dead.

Oh, Lordy, trouble...

Well, he'll fix your foot
Till you can't walk;
He'll lock your jaw
Till you can't talk.

Oh, Lordy, trouble...

One of these mornings,
It won't be long,
You'll look for me
And I'll be gone.

Oh, Lordy, trouble...

I WILL ARISE
Side 2, Band 4.

Bill (lead on verses), Wally (lead on choruses), Lucy.

Learned from the singing of the legendary autoharp player, Kilby Snow, who, appropriately enough, was born in the hills of Virginia on the waters of Rock Creek. The song may also be found in George Pullen Jackson's *Spiritual Folk Songs of North America*, although with completely different verses.

I will arise and go to Jesus;
He will embrace me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
Oh, there are ten thousand charms.

Come, thou fount of every blessing;
Move my heart to sing Thy praise.
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

I will arise...

Teach me some melodious songs
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Here's the Mount; I'm fixed upon it,
Songs of Thy redeeming love.

I will arise...

Here I'll raise my songs in praises;
Hither, by Thy help, I'm bound.
And I pray, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

I will arise...

BRIGHT MORNING STAR
Side 2, Band 5.

Mary Alice (lead), Peter.

Mary Alice remembers that we learned "Bright Morning Star" from a record in the New World series entitled *I'm a Long Time Traveling Here Below*. It is sung by a man and a lady, accompanied by guitar. Mary Alice took to the song and introduced it to me; I worked out the harmony. We love the uneven phrasing of the melody and the powerful imagery of the words. (P.A.)

We are the true-born sons of Levi;
We are the true-born sons of God.
We are the roots and the branch of David,
The bright and glorious morning star.

When Joshua and I crossed the Jordan,
Two leaves of corn were lifted high;
To the high priest and the grand master
We bore the ark of God and Son.

Come all ye Knights, ye Knights of Moliti,
And learn to do what we have done.
You might have been a guard much brighter,
When in the new Jerusalem.

When Moses planted the rod of Aaron,
And in one night that rod did bud;
When Moses smote Egyptian water,
That very night it turned to blood.

(repeat first verse)
IM HAS MADE A CHANGE IN ME (H. Freye)
Side 2, Band 6.
Lucy (lead) and group.

This song is being sung by many Northeasterners these days, thanks to Richard Moss, a shape-note singer from Shooting Creek, North Carolina, who was on the staff at Pinewoods Camp in 1976 and 1977. He told us in 1976 that "dad" Speer had written the song, but in 1977 he somehow left some campers with the impression that he had written it himself, and others with the notion that he didn't know who had written it. (Moss was 82 that summer and may have simply forgotten the song's origins.) During a morning of research at the Archive of Folk Culture in the Library of Congress, I learned that "Time Has Made a Change" was written by Harkins Freye, a "West Virginia boy" who wrote and published gospel music in the 1920's. Several of his songs are in my three 1950's Stamps Music Co. hymnals. The song is referred to in The History of Gospel Music (K & S Press, 1971) as one of the "classics" recorded by the Speer family, early pioneers of radio and television gospel music. "Dad" and Lena Speer are in the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. (L.S.)

Time has made a change since my childhood days;
Many of my friends have gone away,
Some I never more in this life will see.
Time has made a change in me.

Time has made a change in the old home place;
Time has made a change in each smiling face.
And I know my friends can plainly see
Time has made a change in me.

In my childhood days, I was well and strong;
I could climb the hillside all day long.
I am not today what I used to be.
Time has made a change in me.
Time has made a change...

When I reach my home in that land somewhere,
With my friends who wait to meet me over there,
Free from pain and care I'll forever be.
Time has made a change in me.

BEEN IN THE STORM SO LONG
Side 2, Band 7.
Wally (lead), Bill, Tom.

This song, one of the most moving in all of American traditional music, is from the singing of Mary Pinckney of Johns Island, South Carolina. We first learned it from Merle Schlesinger. (B.D.)

Been in the storm so long,
Singing: been in the storm so long.

Singing: oh Lord, give me more time to pray.

Singing: feel like a motherless child,
Singing: feel like a motherless child.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time to pray.

Singing: this is a needy time,
Singing: this is a needy time.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time to pray.

Singing: Lord, I need you now,
Singing: Lord, I need you now.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time to pray.

Singing: been in the storm so long,
Singing: been in the storm so long.
Singing: oh Lord, give me more time to pray.

THERE ARE ANGELS HOVERING 'ROUND
Side 2, Band 8.
Lucy (lead) and group.

I found "Angels" in World Wide Revival Songs No. 2 (title page missing; probably published around 1921). It is a favorite among my friends, because it is beautiful and easy to sing along with, even if you haven't heard it before. It had no composer's name in that hymnal, nor in any
other in which I've found it. I like the fact that, sometime during the years I've been singing it, my feminist consciousness unwittingly changed "Let him who heareth come" to "Let all who heareth come." (L.S.)

There are angels hovering 'round,
There are angels hovering 'round,
There are angels, angels hovering 'round.

(Similarly:)

To carry the tidings home...
To the new Jerusalem...
Poor sinners are coming home...
Let all who heareth come...
We're on our journey home...
There are angels hovering 'round.