JEAN RITCHIE
OSCAR BRAND
DAVID SEAR
A Folk Concert in
Town Hall, New York
Poor Howard
Randall, My Son
Henry, My Son
Inniskillen Dragoon
Trip Trap
Talking Atom
Aiken Drum
Fair and Tender Ladies
Blackeyed Susie
Short'n Bread
Ha Ha Thisaway
Shady Grove
The Rolling of the Stone
Pretty Polly
The Admiral
Drinbin
My Boy, Willie
Jenny Jenkins
It might seem to the untrained observer that, since the three folk singers programmed for Town Hall that November evening were of remarkably different temperaments and backgrounds, the program would have little cohesion. Jean Ritchie, youngest of the fourteen children of Abigail and Balus Ritchie of Viper, Kentucky, is a singer in a tradition that began with the first Ritchie who came ashore from an English sailing vessel in the early 18th century. Oscar Brand, born in Winnipeg, Canada, has been mainly concerned with the remarkably varied songs sung by lumberjacks, short order cooks, soldiers, sailors and marines met in his long journey through the midwest, the American Army, to the honor of having the longest-running folk music program in the world--broadcasting since 1945 for New York City's Municipal Station. Dave Sear is a New York-born boy, who fell in love with Folkmusic at an early age and has maintained this affair required and glowing--to the present day.

Despite the disparity of background, the three have already performed together on record, on radio, on television, onstage, in motion pictures and at many private parties. Jean Ritchie's simplicity in depth, Oscar Brand's rural urbanity, and Dave Sear's dedicated insouciance, all combine to make a remarkably complete picture of varying styles in American Folkmusic. And besides, they enjoy working together.

PO HOWARD: The song was a Southern Negro game song, but, as a result of the Weavers' arrangement, it has taken on some of the characteristics of a square dance banjo tune.

LORD RANDALL: (Child Ballad 21) This is probably one of the best known and oftentimes sung ballads--sung in every language in the world. The form is constant; a young man is poisoned and comes home to die. The version sung at the concert was first heard by Oscar Brand in Mineheart, Georgia, in 1942.

THE ENNISKILLIN DRAGON: Oscar Brand's first Christmas in New York was spent as a boarder with an Irish family possessed of an extensive repertory of old folksongs, vaudeville dialogues, and musical comedy gems. Years later, he discovered that the town in the song was really Enniskillen, a lovely North Irish community.

TALKING ATOMIC BLUES: Written originally by Vern Partlow, newspaperman practicing his trade in California, the song was recorded in 1946, banned from the network, and sung about in the well-known traditional manner. It came to Oscar Brand's attention in 1949, he made some minor additions and has been chanting it since.

FAIR AND TENDER LADIES: Each singer chose the version of this song he enjoyed singing--that night. Oscar Brand's version owes most of its form to the Carter Family's recorded performance.

BLACK EYED SUSIE: There are enough verses to Black-eyed Susie to keep the dancing alive until dawn. And that, of course, is the function of such a song. It's a banjoed-up play party song which, although it has enough verses of its own, has borrowed from "Dan Tucker", "Joe Clark", "Eliza Jane" and many other similar songs.

HA HA THISAWAY: Cecil Sharp has a British version of this children's game song, but Leadbelly's American paraphrase has more life, verve, and power in one phrase than the British song has in seven verses.

THE ROLLING OF THE STONES: Sojourning through a singing world, one hears many fragments of songs, distorted stories, and weird melodies. Oscar Brand admits that he doesn't remember where he heard this song, which is probably the old Scottish ballad that originally told of the brothers who loved the same beautiful woman.

THE ADMIRAL: Jean Ritchie taped the singing of Howard Mitchell, who had just been discharged from the Navy. Among the songs was this enlisted man's plaint. Oscar Brand learned the song and, subsequently, "collected" many new verses from Marines and Coast Guarders.

JENNY JENKINS: According to British song-books, this song has been a favorite of the Empire for centuries. In America, it's a play-party song with as many verses as there are colors. Jean and Oscar have recorded this song before and sung it many times in concert, but the colors are always different and the answers are never the same.
SIDE I, Band 1: "SHORTENIN' BREAD"

sung by Jean Ritchie
accompanied by Oscar Brand and Dave Sear

Ever since my dog's been dead
Hogs been rootin' my 'tater bed

CHORUS:
I do love shortenin' bread
Mama loves shortenin' bread
Papa loves shortenin' bread
Everybody loves shortenin' bread

Two little children a-layin' in bed
One was sick and the other 'most dead
Sent for the doctor and the doctor said
Why, all they needs if some shortenin' bread

(CHORUS)

Some folks say the preacher won't steal
But I saw three in my cornfield
One had a bushel and one had a peck
And the other had a roasin' ear around his neck

I do love shortenin' bread
I do love shortenin' bread
Mama loves shortenin' bread
Papa loves shortenin' bread
Davy loves shortenin' bread
Oscar loves shortenin' bread
Jeanie loves shortenin' bread
Everybody loves shortenin' bread

SIDE I, Band 2: "HA HA THIS-A-WAY"

performed by Oscar Brand
introductory comments by Oscar Brand

"Leadbelly used to sing this song in which I used to join him. Clap your hands three times while you sing "Then Oh Then." At progressive schools, I sometimes get four claps, for as you know, at progressive schools the children are forced to do what they want to!"

CHORUS:
Ha Ha this-a-way
Ha Ha that-a-way
Ha Ha this-a-way
Then oh then

(REPEAT CHORUS)

Now, when I was a little boy, a little boy, a little boy
When I was a little boy a few years old
M' Daddy went and left me, left me, left me
M' Daddy went and left me, I've been told

(REPEAT CHORUS TWICE)

My Mama came and got me, she got me, she got me
M' Mama came and got me, to save my soul
My Mama didn't scold me, scold me, scold me
M' Mama didn't scold me, I've been told

(REPEAT CHORUS ONCE)

They put me in the school there, school there, school there,
They put me in the school there to save my soul
I learned the Golden Rule there, Rule there,
I learned the Golden Rule there I've been told

(REPEAT CHORUS ONCE)

I learned my lesson, my lesson, my lesson
I learned my lesson to save my soul
Now wasn't that a blessin' blessin' blessin'
Wasn't that a blessin' I've been told!

(REPEAT CHORUS TWICE)

SIDE I, Band 3: "SHADY GROVE"

performed by Jean Ritchie
introductory comments by Jean Ritchie:

"In Kentucky we didn't have many forms of entertainment. We didn't have movies, television, radios and things like that. And so we had to make our own fun. It usually took the form of a Saturday night "play-party". It was called a play-party because if you called it a square dance the preachers wouldn't let you do it! They didn't have baby-sitters back then - that's sort of a new-fangled thing. The babies were always taken along too, and pretty soon, even over all the nois and the shuffling feet, the babies would get tired and have to go to sleep. They would be put to sleep in the back room on some feather-bed. One of my earliest memories was of hearing this wonderful dancing sound going on outside; fiddles and such, and feet pounding the floor. It was an unusual lullaby, and it was nice. SHADY GROVE is one of our mountain play-party tunes."

CHORUS:

Shady Grove, mountain love, Shady Grove my love
Shady Grove, mountain love, mountain Shady Grove

Cheeks as red as the bloomin' rose, eyes the deepest brown
You are the darling of my heart, stay till the sun goes down

(CHORUS)

Went to see my Shady Grove, she was standing in the door
Shoes and stockings in her hands, with her feet on the floor

(CHORUS)

Wisht I had a big fat horse, corn to feed him on
Pretty little girls stay at home, feed him when I'm gone

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 4: "THE ROLLING OF THE STONES"

performed by Oscar Brand
introductory comments by Oscar Brand:

"The funny thing about folk songs is that in transition in the oral tradition so many things are lost and so many things are gained. There's an article I remember about Lady Monigreen who died with the Earl of Murray. Although many
verses of THE ROLLING OF THE STONES are missing, somebody killed somebody, and it is a very lovely song!

CHORUS:
Oh will you go to the rolling of the stones
The tossing of the ball
Or will you go and see pretty Susie
Dance among them all
I will go to the rolling of the stones
The tossing of the ball
And I will go and see pretty Susie
Dance among them all

They had not danced but one single dance
Nor half a floor around
When the sword that hung at his brother’s side
Gave him his fateful wound
They picked him up and carried him in
Laid him there on the ground
And there he lay for many a day
Nor made one single sound

Then Susie charmed the birds from the sky
The fish from out the bay
Until she came to her true lover’s side
And there was contented to stay

(Chorus)

SIDE I, Band 5: "PRETTY POLLY"

performed by Jean Ritchie
introduction by Jean Ritchie:

"Some love songs do have tragic endings. This one is about pretty Polly who met with an awful fate. When I was a little girl, we used to hide our heads under the feather bed when we sang this song at home! Everybody in Kentucky thinks this happened in the next town. My grandfather said he knew those people. Yet, when I travelled in different parts of the world, I found the same story all over - the story of the girl who is murdered by her own sweetheart."

Oh Polly, pretty Polly, come go along with me
Oh Polly, pretty Polly, come go along with me
Before we get married some pleasure to see

Oh Willy, oh Willy, I’m afraid of your ways
Willy oh Willy, I’m afraid of your ways
I’m afraid you will lead me poor body astray

Oh Polly, pretty Polly you’re guessin’ about right
Oh Polly pretty Polly you’re guessin’ about right
’Cause I dug on your grave the best part of last night

He led her over mountains and valleys so deep
He led her over mountains and valleys so deep
And at last Pretty Polly began for to weep

Oh he stabbed to the heart and her heart’s blood did flow
He stabbed to the heart and her heart’s blood did flow
And into the grave Pretty Polly she did go

Oh he threw a little dirt over her and started for home
Oh he threw a little dirt over her and started for home
Leavin’ no one behind but the wild birds to moan

It’s a debt to the devil poor William must pay
It’s a debt to the devil poor William must pay
For killin’ pretty Polly and running away

Oh where is pretty Polly - over yonder she stands
Oh where is pretty Polly - over yonder she stands
With rings on the fingers of her lily-white hands

SIDE I, Band 6: "THE ADMIRAL"

performed by Oscar Brand
introduction by Oscar Brand:

"This is the story of a famous admiral who had a great navigational sense. There was only one thing he did that made him seem queer. Every morning he would get up with a puzzled look on his face. He would then rush to the safe, take out a slip of paper, read it very carefully, and then get this beatific, secure smile. One day he died and everyone came to read the slip of paper which had done so greatly for him. It said, "Asaftboard right, port left". Howard Mitchell of the battleship Leyte taught me this song."

CHORUS:
Singin’ too-ra-li oo-ra-li oo-ra-li
Singin’ too-ra-li oo-ra-li-ay
Sing too-ra-li oo-ra-li oo-ra-li
Sing too-ra-li oo-ra-li-ay

Now the enlisted men ride in a motorboat
The admiral he rides in a barge
He don’t go a darn night faster
But it makes that old bastard feel big!

(Chorus)

The enlisted men ride in a motorboat
The admiral rides in a gig
It ain’t that he goes any faster
But it makes that old bastard feel big!

(Chorus)

The enlisted men eat in the ward-room
The captain won’t eat with the mob
It ain’t that he eats any better
He don’t want us to know he’s a slob!

(Chorus)

The enlisted men sleep in their hammocks
The admiral he sleeps in his bed
He don’t sleep a darn night better
But he’s forty feet nearer the head!

(Chorus)

SIDE I, Band 7: "DHRINNIN’ DHRINNIN’"

performed by Dave Sear

Tis a mournful sad ditty I’ll tell you right now
About an old man and he had but one cow
He sent his old cow to the field to be fed
When word came to him that Dhrinrin was dead

CHORUS:
Oh oh-ru mush-a sweeter than thou
Oh oh-ru mush-a sweeter than thou

When the old man was told that his cow was so dead
Over hedges and ditches and fields he fled
Over hedges and ditches and fields that was plowed
And he never cried thwack till he came to his cow

(CHORUS)
I'd sooner lose Patsie, me only first born
Than to part with you Dhrinnin now that ye are gone
So now I'll sit down and I'll eat me dry bread
And I'll have no butter since Dhrinnin is dead!

(CHORUS)
SIDE I, Band 8: "MY BOY WILLY"
performed by Jean Ritchie and Oscar Brand

"This is one of Jean Ritchie's variants of the Billy Boy songs".

Where have you been all the day, my boy Willy
Where have you been all the day, Willy won't you tell me now
I have been, all the day, courtin' with my lady gay
But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy
But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy
Can she brew and can she bake, my boy Willy
Can she brew and can she bake, Willy won't you tell me now
She can brew, she can bake, she can make a wedding cake
But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy
But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy
Can she weave and can she spin, my boy Willy
Can she weave and can she spin, Willy won't you tell me now
She can weave, she can spin, she can do most anything
But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy
But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy
Can she make up a bed, my boy Willy
Can she make up a bed, Willy won't you tell me now
She can make up a bed, fifty feet above her head
But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy
But she is too young to be taken from her Mammy
Did you ask her to wed, my boy Willy
Did you ask her to wed, Willy won't you tell me now
Yes I asked her to wed, and do you know what she said
I am much too young to be taken from my Mammy
I am much too young to be taken from my Mammy!

SIDE I, Band 9: "JENNY JENKINS"
performed by Jean Ritchie and Oscar Brand
introduction by Oscar Brand:

"Jenny Jenkins has many different versions but in all of them the main joke is on the person who plays Jenny Jenkins, for the onlookers are trying to catch her by making her rhyme to all sorts of strange colors".

Oh will you wear blue oh my dear oh m'dear
Oh will you wear blue Jenny Jenkins
No I won't wear blue the color ain't true

CHORUS:
I'll buy me a fol-de-rol-dy-til-dy-tol-dy
Seek-a-double, use-a-cause-a, roll the find me
Roll Jenny Jenkins roll

Oh will you wear black oh m'dear oh m'dear
Oh will you wear black Jenny Jenkins
No I won't wear black, it's the color of a sack

(CHORUS)

Then what will you wear, oh my dear, oh m'dear
What will you wear Jenny Jenkins
Oh I'll just go bare with a ribbon in my hair!

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 1: "POOR HOWARD"
performed by Jean Ritchie, Oscar Brand and Dave Sear

They say poor Howard's dead and gone
Left me here to sing this song
Poor Howard's dead and gone
Left me here to sing this song

CHORUS:
Poor Howard's dead and gone
Poor Howard's dead and gone
Poor Howard's dead and gone
Left me here to sing this song

Now who's been here since I've been gone
A pretty gal with a green dress on
Who's been here since I've been gone
A pretty gal with a green dress on

CHORUS MELODY WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS:
A pretty gal with a green dress on
A pretty gal with a green dress on
A pretty gal with a green dress on
Left me here to sing this song

Who's been here since I've been gone
Oscar Brand with a new suit on
Who's been here since I've been gone
Oscar Brand with a new suit on

CHORUS MELODY:
Oscar Brand with a new suit on
Oscar Brand with a new suit on
Oscar Brand with a new suit on
Left me here to sing this song
SIDE II, Band 2: "LORD RANDALL MY SON"

Performed by Oscar Brand and Jean Ritchie

Introduction by Oscar Brand:

"Experts say that Lord Randall My Son is one of the original versions from which My Boy Billy came. I heard this one many years ago in Alabama."

Where did you dine Lord Randall my son
Where did you dine my handsome young one
I dined with my true love, mother
I dined with my true love, mother

CHORUS:
Make my bed soon
For I'm weary at heart
I fade away, adieu

What did you eat Lord Randall my son
What did you eat my handsome young one
Eels fried in eel-broth, mother
Eels fried in eel-broth, mother

(CHORUS)
I fear you've been poisoned Lord Randall my son
I fear you've been poisoned my handsome young one
Yes I have been poisoned, mother
Yes I have been poisoned, mother

(CHORUS)
What do you leave to your mother, Lord Randall my son
What do you leave to your mother my handsome young one
My gold and silver, mother
My gold and silver, mother

(CHORUS)
What do you leave to your true love, Lord Randall my son
What do you leave to your true love my handsome young one
A rope to hang her, mother
A rope to hang her, mother

SIDE II, Band 3: "ENNERY MY SON"

performed by Jean Ritchie

introduction by Jean Ritchie:

"When I was in England in 1953 I found a school where the little children sang Lord Randall My Son. They developed their own children's version called ENNERY MY SON. Ennery is the cockney dialect of Henry."

Where have ya been to, Ennery my son
Where have ya been to, my beloved one
Woods, dear mother; woods, dear mother

CHORUS:
Make my bed, I've a pain in me head
And I wants to lay down and die

What did you see there, Ennery my son
What did you see there, my beloved one
Gypsies, dear mother; Gypsies dear mother

(CHORUS)
What did they give you to eat, Ennery my son
What did they give you to eat, my beloved one
Snakes, dear mother; snakes, dear mother

(CHORUS)
What color were the snakes, Ennery my son
What color were the snakes, my beloved one
Green and yellow; green and yellow!

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 4: "THE INNISKILLIN DRAGON"

performed by Oscar Brand

introduction by Oscar Brand:

"When I was young I boarded with an Irish family who taught me many Irish ballads. One of my favorites is the Inniskillin Dragoon."

A handsome young damsel of fame and renown
A gentleman's daughter from Monathan town
As she rode by the barracks this beautiful maid
She stood on her coach to see the dragoons on parade

Fare thee well Inniskillin, I'll see thee in awhile
And all thy bright waters and every green isle
When the wars they are over we'll return in full bloom
And they'll all welcome home their Inniskillin Dragoons

They all were dressed up like gentlemen's sons
With bright shiny sabres and carrabine guns
She said: William dear William you've enlisted too soon
You brave, loyal, royal Inniskillin Dragoon

Oh Marths, dear Martha, your pardon I crave
It's now and forever I am your slave
But your parents have slighted me morn, night, and noon
Because I am just an Inniskillin Dragoon

Oh William, dear William, never heed what they say
For we must forever our parents obey
But when you leave Ireland they'll soon change their tune
Saying: The good Lord be with you Inniskillin Dragoon

Fare thee well Inniskillin, I'll see thee in awhile
And all thy bright waters and every green isle
When the wars they are over we'll return in full bloom
And they'll all welcome home their Inniskillin Dragoons

SIDE II, Band 5: "TRIP TRAP ROBBERS IN THE SEA"

performed by Jean Ritchie

introduction by Jean Ritchie:

"When you are at the age of jumping rope, that's when courtship begins. That's the way it was with me. I had several sweethearts, more when I was four, five and six years old than I have had since, and I probably enjoyed it just about as much! I collected this song in the northern part of England."
Trip trap robbers in the sea
Please turn the rope for me
Come come come to the fair
Oh no the fair isn't there
I must not miss a loop
Up in the north a long way off
The donkey took the whooping cough
What shall we give him to make him better?
Salt - mustard - vinegar - pepper
I'll tell Mommie I saw Mary Anne
A-walkin' up the street with a nice young man
High-heeled shoes and a feather in her hat
I'll tell Mommie - saucy cat
Policeman, policeman don't catch me
I've got a wife and a family
How many children have you got?
Mind your own business
And that's the lot!

SIDE II, Band 6: "THE TALKING ATOM"

performed by Oscar Brand
introduction by Oscar Brand:

"This is a typically American talking-blues. It was recently written by Verne Partlow of the west coast and rewritten slightly."

I'm gonna preach you a sermon about ole man Atom
And I don't mean Adam in the Bible for Adam
Don't mean Adam that mother Eve mated
But I do mean Atom science liberated
Einstein said he was scared
If Einstein said he was scared, I'm scared
I'm not always green, friends.
Stop the world, I want to get off!
To stay around longer all we gotta do
Is get all the people together with you
'Cause if we don't get together and do it
Well, one of these days we'll be shot
Right up to hell
And that's no future for a growing boy
Or a shrinking girl
The moral of my sermon I'm trying to say
Is: the atom bomb is here to stay
It's going to stay fixed, that's plain to see
But oh my dearly beloveds -- are we?
We hold these truths to be self-evident:
All men can be cremated equal!
You know, life used to be such a simple joy
And the cyclotron a super toy
You got born and lived, sometimes married
Atom was a word in the dictionary
One of them four-letter-words
But science was marching on
Some science boys from every clime
Got together and worked overtime
Worked and worked and when they were done
Why, they harrassed up the power of the doggone sun
They were splitting atoms
Hey Ma; look at me I'm splittin' atoms!
The diplomats are still splitting hairs!
Then the jingo boys they put on a show
Turned back the clock on the UNO
Got a court order on atoms to maybe extinguish
Every doggone atom that didn't speak English
Darn the foreign-born atoms
America is for American atoms
Well, the atoms are in a national state of hysteria
That flourishes in Utah and Siberia
Whether you're black, white, red, or brown
The question is the same if you boil it down
To be or not to be, that is the question?
It isn't a question of military doubt
Like who gets there firstus with the mostus atoms
It's the people of the world who decide their fate
Stick together or disintegrate!

It's up to the people 'cause the atom don't care
He just flits around and sears the air
He doesn't give a darn about politics
Or who gets whom into whatever fix
All he wants to do is settle down
And have his nucleus bombarded by neutrons!
Well, I've come to the end
And I hope I made it clear
About what you gotta do
And what you gotta fear
Here's the finish and here's my thesis:
Peace to the world
Or the world in pieces!

SIDE II, Band 7: "AIKEN DRUM"

performed by Dave Sear who says:

"Here's a Scotch ballad I learned from Tony Salatan of Boston."

CHORUS:
And he played upon a ladle, a ladle, a ladle
He played upon a ladle
And his name was Aiken Drum

There was a man lived in the moon
Lived in the moon, lived in the moon
There was a man lived in the moon
And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)
And his head was made of cream cheese
Of cream cheese, of cream cheese
His head was made of cream cheese
And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)
And his coat was made of good roast beef
Of good roast beef, of good roast beef
His coat was made of good roast beef
And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)
And his breeches were made of haggis bags
Of haggis bags, of haggis bags
His breeches were made of haggis bags
And his name was Aiken Drum

(CHORUS)
There was a man lived in the moon
Lived in the moon, lived in the moon
There was a man lived in the moon
And his name was Aiken Drum

SIDE II, Band 8: "FAIR AND TENDER LADIES"

performed by Jean Ritchie, Oscar Brand and Dave Sear
introduction by Oscar Brand:

"In preparing a program of this sort, one of the major problems is selecting which version we should sing together. This often occurs when we record our albums. Instead of solving this problem, each one of us will sing his own version!"
JEAN RITCHIE'S VERSION:

Come all you fair and tender ladies
Take a warnin' how you court young men
There lies a bright star on a cloudy mornin'
First it appears and then it's gone
I wish I was a little sparrow
And I had wings and I could fly
I'd fly away to my false true lovers
And while they talk I'd sit and cry

DAVE SEAR'S VERSION:

But I am not a little sparrow
I have no wings, neither can I fly
So I'll just sit here to weep in sorrow
And try to pass my troubles by

JEAN RITCHIE, DAVE SEAR AND OSCAR BRAND SING:

Come all you fair and tender maidens
Be careful how you court young men
There lies a star on a cloudy mornin'
First it appears and then it's gone
First they appear and then they're gone!

SIDE II, Band 9: "BLACK-EYED SUSIE"

performed by Jean Ritchie, Oscar Brand
and Dave Sear

Black-eyed Susie she's full grown
She jumps on a man like a dog on a bone

CHORUS:
Hey pretty little black-eyed Susie
Hey pretty little black-eyed Susie
Hey pretty little black-eyed Susie, hey!

Here she comes, boy she's a honey
All dressed up and waitin' for Sonny

(CHORUS)

Well, there's two old maids sittin' in the sand
Each one wishin' that the other was a man

(CHORUS)

Now I got me a gal in Vera Cruz
She's got ten kids the Lord knows whose

(CHORUS)

Here I come a-ridin' ole Blindy
She'll carry double: - come and get up behind me

(CHORUS)

Now Susie and the boys went berry pickin'
The boys got drunk and Susie got a lickin'

(CHORUS)

You've been tryin' your level best
Let's all go home and take a rest!
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