

MCD 61580

The Collector's **PAUL ROBESON**

A MONITOR INTERNATIONAL COMPACT DISC

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The distinction of Paul Robeson as a singer does not lie in the physical range of his voice, but in the range of feeling which moves the singer in his choice of songs. The breadth of his appeal may lie in his ardent rejection of all songs – no matter how popular – which do not reflect his own feelings. Thus, Robeson and his songs merge into an indivisible expression.

It is surely unique for a singer of folk songs – for so Robeson has designated himself – to have drawn forth the most impassioned eulogies from the severest music critics, men of learning in entirely unrelated fields and, at the same time, to have appealed for so many years to average people – from miners to housewives.

In essence, Paul Robeson's mode of singing has never changed, only his repertoire of songs has expanded. It is no exaggeration to say that he is the only singer in the world who has mastered with equal ease a Chinese song, a Hebrew chant and an old English ballad.

When asked to discuss himself, Robeson has

frequently said that he feels that the songs he sings are more expressive of his exact feelings than anything he can articulate about himself in words. Robeson has sung to the world not for the sake of individual fame, but to communicate to the world through song.

His father was the Reverend William Drew Robeson of the Witherspoon Presbyterian Church of Princeton, New Jersey, where Robeson was born, (1898-1976). His mother was of Quaker faith and of Negro, Indian and English descent. He was born and bred in the heritage of the spiritual, which embodies the deepest emotional and spiritual aspirations of the American Negro.

The Negro Church which bred Robeson and nurtured his natural bent towards singing has fostered every great Negro singer, be it Roland Hayes, Marian Anderson or Mahalia Jackson. The church – the social as well as the spiritual center of Negro life – has had a place for every type of singer. Thus, during his school days, his college years and as he struggled to put himself through law school,

Paul Robeson often sang in Negro choirs.

It is not generally known that Robeson first went to England in 1922 while he was still a law student at Columbia University and there he raised his tuition fees by appearing in a play called *VOODOO* with Mrs. Patrick Campbell. This was the beginning of an acting career that later brought him fame through his roles in Eugene O'Neill's *ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT WINGS* and *EMPEROR JONES*.

The climax of his acting career came with his appearance in the title role of Shakespeare's *OTHELLO*. (Another high point was his singing of *OLD MAN RIVER* in Jerome Kern's *SHOW BOAT*.)

Throughout the war years in America he continued to sing the songs of the people of the world in their own language, the "Songs of Free Men" as his record album was called. Perhaps his most triumphant musical achievement was the interpretation of the cantata, *BALLAD FOR AMERICANS* by Earl Robinson, which received a coast-to-coast broadcast by CBS in November, 1939

and which Robeson sang to many large audiences thereafter.

With the end of the war, Robeson found himself cut off from the mainstream of American concert life. During the years of his "exile" he continued to study the music of the peoples of the world. In his book *HERE I STAND* he wrote, "I found enormous satisfaction in exploring the origins and inter-relationships of various folk music...Interested as I am in the universality of mankind – in the fundamental relationship of all peoples to one another – this idea of a universal body of music intrigued me, and I pursued it along many fascinating paths."

On May 9, 1958 Robeson appeared in his first Carnegie Hall concert in eleven years and convinced critics and audience that his voice still retained its power and beauty. Shortly after this concert Robeson went to Europe, and was greeted everywhere with tremendous enthusiasm.

The present recording offers a true cross-section of his repertoire: folk songs, work songs, spirituals and art songs. *Notes by MARIE SETON*

The Collector's **PAUL ROBESON**

1. **HAMMER SONG** 2:05
With Sonny Terry, Harmonica, Brownie McGhee, Guitar
2. **WATER ME FROM THE LIME ROCK** 1:35
3. **SCANDALIZE MY NAME** (Arranged by H.T. Burleigh)
1:55
4. **JACOB'S LADDER** 2:55
5. **WITNESS** (Arranged by Lawrence Brown) 2:10
Lawrence Brown, Vocal and Piano
6. **STAND STILL JORDAN** 3:20
7. **TAKIN' NAMES** 2:28
8. **SWING LOW, SWEET CHARIOT** 2:08
9. **HASSIDIC CHANT: KADDISH** (Arranged by J. Engel)
2:40
10. **WANDERER** (Finnish Folk Song, arranged by S.
Palmgren) 2:22
11. **SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME** (Dvorak) 2:04
12. **VI AZOI LEBT DER KEYSER** (Yiddish Folk Song) 3:10
Lawrence Brown, Piano
13. **THE MINSTREL BOY** (English Ballad; words by
Thomas Moore) 1:57
14. **THE ORPHAN** (Mussorgsky) 1:35
15. **ZOG NIT KEYNMOL** (Song of the Warsaw Ghetto) 2:00
(Arranged by Lawrence Brown)
16. **JOE HILL** (Earl Robinson and Alfred Hayes) 3:00
17. **NO MORE AUCTION BLOCK** (Arranged by Lawrence
Brown) 1:20
18. **SOME DAY HE'LL MAKE IT PLAIN TO ME** 3:30
19. **DIDN'T MY LORD DELIVER DANIEL** (Arranged by
Lawrence Brown) 1:20
20. **MOUNT ZION: "On My Journey"** 2:19
21. **LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER ON OUR
KNEES** 1:55
22. **AMAZING GRACE** 3:30
23. **SKYE BOAT SONG** (Hebridean Folk Song) 2:09
24. **SHLOF MEIN KIND** (Yiddish) 3:02
25. **NOW SLEEPS THE CRIMSON PETAL** (Quilter) 2:00
26. **PASSING BY** (Purcell) 1:50
27. **LITTLE GAL** 2:45
28. **KEVIN BARRY** (Irish) 2:10

ALAN BOOTH, PIANO (Except Nos. 1, 5 & 12)



MCD-61580

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 67:55



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