

FAST FOLK

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CAFFE LENA 25TH ANNIVERSARY

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LETTERS

Dear Mr. Hardy:

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for inviting us to participate in the June 1985 issue of Fast Folk. It is our pleasure to share our music with you and with the "folk world." Certainly, Hugh Blumenfeld's song has a message in great need of being heard in this age of nuclear and military madness.

While we were most anxious to receive a copy of the June issue, we were most distressed when we did get a chance to look and listen to the record. The credits listed both on the album jacket and on the magazine incorrectly state the instrumental arrangement. Michael Allinger is our lead guitarist and did the principal guitar arrangement and performance on the cut. He is credited only with his vocal participation. Further, Mary Anne Christopher did not play the guitar on this selection. Inside the magazine, Mary Anne's last name is omitted beneath the picture.

While at first blush these may seem like simple typographical errors, we are certain that as a producer and as a fellow musician, you can well understand the frustration caused by such oversights. Having recorded the cut at the Fast Folk studio, and having supplied our names and arrangements to those assembling the issue, we were most distressed at this outcome. In conclusion, we would like to know what corrections will be made to the issue to rectify these omissions.

Finally, as musicians and also as fellow recording engineers, we feel a comment must be made about the quality of the recording. Obviously it is a most difficult task to assemble several different cuts from several different artists on one disk. The probability for inaccuracies in recording levels and mix is assuredly great. However, as engineers, it is also possible to account for the sound distortion resulting from the pressing process by mixing cuts within a modified range of volume and blend levels. It would seem from the recording that most cuts were mixed beyond this range.

If there is anything we can do in the future to assist you in this area, please do not hesitate to ask. The concept of the magazine and the assistance it brings to musicians attempting to bring their music and their message to the world community is greatly appreciated and greatly needed. With perhaps a bit more attention to detail, the magazine can demonstrate the professional quality and demeanor of its founders and participants.

Thank you very much for your attention and cooperation in this matter. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

SECOND CHANCE
New York, New York

Michael Allinger
Mary Anne Christopher
Ginny Connelly

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Dear Fast Folk,

Your magazine is truly wonderful! I haven't received an issue yet that I haven't listened to dozens of times and enjoyed even more each time I hear the songs again. The October '84 Women in Song is exceptional--I would have worn right through the album if I hadn't taped it. Thanks for innumerable hours of listening pleasure.

Susan Sullivan
Durham, New Hampshire

Fast Folk:

From an old beatnik, hippie, and sixties radical who never mentally left the folk music and hootenanny era; kudos to you for what I understand is a folk revival.

I have been sleepwalking through the musical wasteland of the past twenty years, impatiently awaiting the return of the acoustical guitar and meaningful lyrics. I've missed the humor, biting satire, and brilliant wit so often a mainstay of the late Fifties/early Sixties folk groups.

I wish you great success, not only for your sake and the sake of the literate public, but for my own selfish hunger for something that I think is needed.

Yours truly,

John W. Schmidt
Pittsburgh, PA

ERRATA

Credits, June 1984 issue:
Information for side one, second cut, was not available at press time. It is provided here:

I Think It's Time (Tom Porzungolo and Phil Salzinger)

Shepherd's Pie:

Tom Porzungolo/Lead Vocals
Phil Salzinger/Guitar & Vocals
Paul Mckenzie/Lead Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass, Drums & Electric
12-String Rhythm Guitar.

Credits for side one, third cut, should have appeared as follows:

All the Wood of Lebanon (Hugh Blumenfeld)

Second Chance:

Mary Anne Christopher/Vocal
Mike Allinger/Vocal & Lead Guitar
Ginny Connelly/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass

Finally, the names within the caption below the photo of Second Chance (p.23) should have read as follows: Michael Allinger, Mary Anne Christopher, and Ginny Connelly.

We apologize for any misunderstandings caused by these errors and omissions.

**Tight In The Night...
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celebrating 25 years

THE CAFFE LENA

by Mae G. Banner

The Caffe Lena is on Phila Street in Saratoga Springs, New York, just next door to Hattie's Chicken Shack. You enter through a pair of double doors made of barn wood, climb a flight of stairs, pausing to breathe in the homey smell of fried chicken from Hattie's.

At the top, you find yourself in a large L-shaped room, set with round wooden tables and bentwood and cane chairs--the kind you might remember from the old ice cream parlors you used to visit as a child. There's a small stage in the corner with an old upright piano, covered with a dusty red velvet scarf trimmed with gold fringe. In summer, window boxes full of bright red and pink petunias catch the light filtering through the half-opened shutters. On the walls are a couple of framed photographs of Lena--one in clown white makeup and red costume, delighting the youngsters at a local fair, another in smart brown jacket and broad-brimmed hat, playing the Headmistress in The Browning Version, one of the many dramas staged over the years in the tiny theater that adjoins the coffee house itself.

On a busy night, the cafe is filled with a varied group, including new babies, grandparents, and every age between, talking over espresso (if the performer is Dave Van Ronk) or herbal tea (if it's Margaret MacArthur) and tasting specialties from Lena's kitchen. She makes revanie (a Greek walnut cake), Italian cannoli, cinnamon coffee cake, and "the best chocolate chip cookies in the Western Hemisphere." People glance occasionally toward the stage as they anticipate an evening of guitar or banjo music, or maybe barrelhouse piano on the old upright. It's a bit like a big family party on a comfortable side porch.

Pasqualina Rosa Nargi Spencer sits at a little table at the top of the stairs, her head cocked to the right, her eyes glowing, and greets her guests as she has been doing every weekend since May 1960, when she and her then husband, Bill Spencer, opened the cafe. Their plan was to make enough money to go to Europe so that Bill, a sculptor, could continue his studies. Lena has told the story of the cafe so often



Lena Spencer

Christine Lavin

that it has become stylized, like one of the Elizabethan ballads Cindy Mangsen sings there. The plan didn't work out. The cafe was popular, but never very profitable. In a couple of years, the Spencers' marriage broke, Bill left Saratoga, and Lena chose to stay on and manage the cafe alone.

She has kept it alive for these 25 years, through political difficulties, economic recession, and the fickleness of popular tastes. It's been a musical home for kids like Tom Mitchell, who swept out the place in the afternoons when he was about sixteen, then sat up front to watch the fingering of Reverend Gary Davis or Mississippi John Hurt in the evenings. Mitchell is a performer in his own right these days--one of many who come back regularly to play at Lena's for an audience that seems to include the ghosts of those who went before.

Lena says hers is the oldest coffee house in the country, the only one to keep its doors open to traditional music for 25 years. In fact, the doors

were closed for a few weeks in the winter of 1968 when Saratoga's Commissioner of Public Safety gave her one day's notice to correct fire violations. Lena's piles of clippings from the cafe's history include editorials and letters of support for her place, some taking issue with the local reporter's words:

Reportedly, the establishment is frequented mostly by youths of the 'long hair' variety, although a smattering of middle-aged enthusiasts do attend the cafe's sessions.

Lena acknowledged the violations existed. She did wonder, though, why after eight years of regular inspections, she was faced with one day's notice to correct them.

The attempt to shut down the cafe fizzled, when the Albany Pickin' and Singin' Gathering sponsored a two-night benefit concert in Delmar, New York (an Albany suburb), which raised enough money to fix the fire escape and water heater. In March 1968, the cafe reopened. Performers at the benefit included the Greenbriar Boys, Sonia Malkine, Don McLean, Happy Traum, Tom Paxton, and Molly Scott. All of them except McLean still perform at Lena's. And, now that the cafe and its proprietor are recognized as local institutions, the framed objects on the walls include mayoral proclamations of Lena Spencer Days, attesting to her contributions to the community and to performing arts.

What keeps such a place going? On cold winter nights when half the audience is the kitchen help and the performer comes down from the stage to sit in a circle with us and just sing, the answer is clear. Lena's special gift has been to sustain the close connection between musician and audience that makes Caffe Lena a place artists--even those who can fill college auditoriums and concert halls--love to come home to.

Many did come home this spring, some to listen, some to sing, when Michael Cooney, Al McKenney, Tom Mitchell, and other friends organized an all-day party and testimonial to celebrate the twenty-five years of good times, bad times got through, and the enduring love of folk art and artists that Lena and her cafe symbolize.



Tom Wolke

(L to R) Margaret MacArthur, Heather Wood, and Andy Wallace join Michael Cooney on a song.

The cafe itself holds no more than 80 or 90 people when it's packed full, so we held the party a block away in the grand ballroom of the Canfield Casino, built in 1870 as a lavish gambling house and now part of Saratoga's Congress Park. A hundred years ago, local citizens and women were prohibited from the gambling rooms. Now the casino, with its coffered ceilings and floor-to-ceiling mirrors, is available to local groups.

About 300 people gathered there for the 25th anniversary of Caffe Lena, Sunday, May 19, 1985. It was a day of singing, of eating everything from Buffalo chicken wings to elegantly garnished paté--each dish the contribution of a different local restaurant, of hugging and reminiscing with old friends newly encountered. Waitresses and cooks from the long history of the cafe recognized each other in the crowd and confirmed that the menu has not changed in a quarter-century.

Well-known singers who began at Lena's shared the stage with others who are just starting out. Andrew Calhoun from Chicago and Jesse Winchester from Montreal stood quietly among the clusters of people who had come to honor Lena. Winchester told me later that he'd never heard Michael Cooney or Christine Lavin sing before. He said, "With everyone singing just two or three songs, it was the creme de la creme."

Lena herself sat like a queen in a damask-covered chair, listening and

smiling as Jackie Alper and Al McKenney introduced a succession of performers who began at 3 p.m. and made the ballroom resound until midnight. Nearly all of them were singer/songwriters. As Christine Lavin said, "Not only the singer but the songwriter must have a place to test and refine material, and Lena has given us that place."

So, Christine (another of the kids who hung around the cafe when she was a

teenager and who tells of going with Lena and Bob Dylan on one of his early tours) tried out a song in progress, and later, Kate McGarrigle's boy Rufus Wainwright made his first public appearance, harmonizing with his mother, his young cousins, and his aunt Anna on "The Star Cab Company." Happy and Artie Traum spiced their songs with irreverent jokes about the opulent casino: "Look at all the stained glass windows--somebody, get those stains offa that glass."

For the record, here's the list of performers at Lena's 25th anniversary concert: The Song Ladies; Ed Lowman, Dave Danks, Kurt Anderson, and Tony Markellis; Tom Mitchell; Carla Sciaky;



Christine Lavin

Victoria Garvey Armstrong and Don Armstrong



Tom Wolke

Lena Spencer (center) with hosts Al McKenney (left) and Jackie Alper (right).



Thom Wolke

Happy and Artie Traum

It was a shining day, Lena's day, a tribute she fully deserved. My neighbor on Church Street, Mrs. Izzo, says, "Lena's a good lady--she helps everybody." Ed McCurdy, singing at the cafe later that summer, said, "Folk music is an impractical form of art and it needs a place like Lena's to remain possible." Ralph Rinzler, one of the original Greenbriar Boys, now Assistant Secretary of the Office of Public Service at the Smithsonian, wrote this in one of the many letters that were read that afternoon:

Lena never took much for herself, but she gave to the musicians and to those who came to listen the chance to communicate openly. For those of us who benefitted from her vision and contribution, we have only a sense of thankfulness, indebtedness, and gratitude for her gift of how to make art possible in a market-place world.

Mae G. Banner is a former sociology professor, now a free-lance writer, who has been a regular visitor to Lena's for the past ten years, and who has been making the coffee and chocolate syrup in Lena's kitchen for the past two years.

Michelle Tondreau; Joe Virgo; Christine Lavin; Don Armstrong and Victoria Garvey; Jem Moore; Joan Kosby and Paul Mercer; Michael Jerling; Andy Wallace and Heather Wood; Michael Cooney; John Gorka; Scott McKenzie and John Phillips; the McGarrigles; the Traums.

Others who couldn't be there because of prior bookings sent messages of friendship and congratulations, which were read between sets, along with testimonials from Roger Stevens of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Ralph Rinzler of the Smithsonian Institution. Letters, drawings, and poems are still arriving for Lena from the scores of artists who have shown or read their work at the cafe.

Near midnight, when the bobbing babies had fallen asleep and the last crumbs of Lena's chocolate chip cookies were gone, Pete Seeger, whose surprise visit had been a well-kept secret from Lena, crowned the celebration, teaching us all "Somos El Barco" and, at the very last, taking his stance with his legs wide apart and his head tilted back, leading us in "If I Had a Hammer."



Thom Wolke

(L to R) Pete Seeger, Toshi Seeger, and Jackie Alper talk with Lena.



Thom Wolfe

Lena (in polka-dot) with many of the performers and friends who came to celebrate the 25th anniversary of her cafe.

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FERRON

by Annie Leung

I have seen a woman standing alone with a guitar and a glass and a bottle of juice on the stage, which stretched around her like the Great Plains, while she, a boisterous, indulgent pioneer, reaped us all like so much hay.

- Ariel Swartley,
The Boston Phoenix

It has been a good four years but I remember it vividly. I walked toward the tiny, once-white (now aged gray) cottage that housed the local feminist bookstore. Off in the corner of this shop was its meager but tasteful collection of what is termed "Women's Music." And as I wandered about eyeing what was new in the shop, that dark and brittle but incredibly rich voice made its way to me.

Memories in the quiet heat
When our words were trim
And our hope was neat
We said our purpose here
Was to be complete with "I want you"

It's a woman's dream this autonomy
Where the lines connect
And the points stay free
We said passion as an open sea
Would only haunt you.

- Ferron, "Our Purpose Here"

Those words made their mark on me immediately. And when I asked the shopperson who was on the stereo, the name echoed for quite some time. It echoes in me today. That person's name is Ferron.

This Canadian singer/songwriter has swept America's underground network of feminist and folk music. Born in Toronto and raised just outside of Vancouver, Ferron's music today is a reflection of her working class family's struggle in rural Canada and the Country and Western tunes that blared from their radio, the main source of entertainment in her parents' home.

Writing her own songs since age 15, Ferron's early lyrics were strongly influenced by those who "talked about emotional travel" (including Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, and Bruce Cockburn). By 1978, she had two albums that "sold out" and are now out-of-print collectors' items (Ferron and Ferron Backed Up). The business collaboration with Gayle Scott in 1978 led Ferron to third and fourth well-received albums. Testimony, produced on a shoe-string budget, paved the way to establishing Ferron in the feminist and folk music circles in America. The most recent work, Shadows On A Dime, produced by Terry Garthwaite, strongly confirms Ferron as one of the most sophisticated lyricists and passionate vocalists to emerge in recent memory.

What makes this woman Ferron? What is this sophistication and passion I speak of? Ferron has been compared to Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and Joni Mitchell, yet



Artwork by Charlie Hunter, from a photo by Gayle Scott

she duplicates no one. Ferron is simply Ferron. She speaks to all who have been blessed to experience the fullest range of feelings. She matter-of-factly talks to a dying friend in "Snowin' in Brooklyn" about life and then death with the verse...

It'll be cold in the ocean if you don't take the train.
But I hear if you know where you're going, you can beat half of the pain.

Ferron celebrates the spirit of women in the song, "Testimony"...

There's godlike and warlike
And strong like only some show.
And madlike and had like we know.
But by my life be I spirit
And by my heart be I woman
And by my eyes be I open
And by my hands be I whole.

Then, in "Ain't Life A Brook," she sings of the stark reality of parting ways. With the sentiments hardly romanticized, its rawness is almost a comfort...

I get to thinking our love's a polished stone.
You give me a long drawn look
I know pretty soon you're gonna leave our home.
And of course I mind
Especially when I'm thinking from my heart.
But life don't clickety-clack down a straight-line track.
It comes together and it comes apart.

She demands that her listener at the very least acknowledge if not confront emotions.

Although her work is introspective and at times a social commentary, Ferron does not wallow in morose tales. In her hypnotic and exorcistic way, she weaves the passionate sentiments of what it is to live, love, lose, and yes, to survive. Her lyrics do not neatly match syllable to syllable nor rhyme, but she is perhaps the most worldly and wise writer to come along in quite awhile.

Ferron's voice does not possess the saccharine sweetness of many "nice" women folksingers. It has some of the bleakness of Bob Dylan's voice, a darkness that resembles Janis Ian's, and a lingering simplicity reminiscent of Rosalie Sorrells.

Her sensitivity, earnestness, and frank common sense all abruptly bring the listener to a point of safe reality, even when the songs talk about most

distressing situations. Ferron's music is an enveloping experience.

In the streets or the 'after', in the churches or in memory
The light that will guide you is the source of the flame
While stumbling the back alleys in search of right action
I fell and wept darkly and acknowledged your name.
And the door to my prison dissolved right before me
But like a young fool I quick looked for a power to claim
And my wailing increased with the shock of the knowledge
That I often have needed something out there to blame.

- Ferron, "Proud Crowd/Pride Cried"

discography

Ferron
Ferron Backed Up
Testimony
Shadows On A Dime

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SIDE BY R S ONE

MOLE IN THE GROUND

I wish I was a mole in the ground
I wish I was a mole in the ground
If I's a mole in the ground
I would root this mountain down
Wish I was a mole in the ground

Campy let your hair roll down
Campy let your hair roll down
Let your hair roll down
And your bangs curl around
Campy let your hair roll down

Campy wants a nine dollar shawl
Campy wants a nine dollar shawl
When I come over the hill
With a twenty dollar bill
It's baby where you been so long

Wish I was a lizard in the spring
Wish I was a lizard in the spring
If I's a lizard in the spring
I would hear my true love sing
Wish I was a lizard in the spring

Baby where you been so long
Baby where you been so long
I been out round the bend
With a rough and rowdy man
Baby where you been so long

Never marry a railroad man
Never marry a railroad man
A railroad man will kill you if he can
Drink up your blood like wine

Repeat first verse

Traditional, arranged by Michael Cooney

BLUE HEARTLAND

Jaybird squawks, the sparrowhawk circles in the air
Black crow dives on the white line
What he eats is his own affair
Redwing blackbird's got a cattail chair
In the Blue Heartland. In the Blue Heartland.

Cowboy boots, hobo suit, song about a train
Smoky bar, Fender guitar
Whiskey on the brain
Load you in the back, break down in the rain
In the Blue Heartland. In the Blue Heartland.

Cities rise before your eyes, a twisted fairy tale
Smokestack smoke
Chokes the wind from your prairie sail
Down on the South Side a bluesman wails
In the Blue Heartland. In the Blue Heartland.

Summer nights the catfish likes to sleep in a
catfish hole
Daddy likes a country song
Little sister likes rock 'n roll
In the Blue Heartland. In the Blue Heartland.

© 1985 by Michael Jerling

SHEETROCK THE BABY'S ROOM

Working on a family trying to fill a pantry
Praying that the car will start come January
Middle of the night
Oh why is it babies like to show up
In the middle of the night
They want to break you in right
Show up in the middle of the night

Sheetrock, tape, paint, sand down the floor
Hang the storm windows, shave the kitchen door
Patch up the chimney, pray it doesn't pour
Sheetrock the baby's room, sheetrock the baby's room...

Blue, pink, pink, blue, buy a new hat
There goes the woman all beautiful fat
Teddy bear, Cupey doll, baseball bat
You'd better sheetrock the baby's room...

Hank, Merl, Marylou, Beulah, Gracey Bell
Oh good god, better dig another dry well
Vern, Laura, Noa, Tom, Reba, Dewey, Al
Sheetrock the baby's room...

© 1984 by Tom Mitchell

LAKES OF PONTCHARTRAIN

Tw'as on one bright March morning
I bid New Orleans adieu
I took the road to Jackson town
My fortune to renew
I cursed all foreign money
No credit could I gain
Which filled my heart with longing
For the Lakes of Pontchartrain

I boarded on a railroad car
In the early morning sun
I rode the rods till evening
And I laid me down again
All strangers there no friends to me
Till a dark girl toward me came
And I fell in love with a Creole girl
By the Lakes of Pontchartrain

I said my pretty Creole girl
My money here's no good
If it weren't for the alligators
I'd sleep out in the wood
You're welcome here kind stranger
Our house is very plain
But we've never turned a stranger out
To the banks of Pontchartrain

She took me into her mammy's house
And treated me right well
Oh the hair upon her shoulders
In jet black ringlets fell
To try to paint her beauty
I'm sure 'twould be in vain
So handsome was my Creole girl
By the Lakes of Pontchartrain

I asked her if she'd marry me
She said that never could be
For she had got a lover
And he was out to sea
She said that she would wait for him
And true she would remain
Till he'd returned to his Creole girl
By the Lakes of Pontchartrain

So it's fare thee well, my bonny own girl
I never may see you more
But I'll ne'er forget your kindness
In the cottage by the shore
And at each social gathering
A flowing glass I will drain
And I'll drink a health to my Creole girl
By the Lakes of Pontchartrain

Traditional, arranged by Carla Sciaky



SWEET REUNION

(Dedicated to the memory of
Joyce Campbell)

Chorus:
Won't that be a sweet reunion
All our friends are gathered there
There'll be music there and singing
Sweet reunion in the air

Though the road be long and twisted
Dark and difficult the way
Keep your heart and mind on freedom
We shall see our home some day (Chorus)

There may be no one to guide you
As you travel day by day
Reach out to the one beside you
And together find the way (Chorus)

Each parting brings its share of sorrow
Broken links upon the chain
Still we may meet again tomorrow
And be joined in love again (Chorus)

Many friends who've gone before us
See them gathering around
Singing loud the welcome chorus
Oh how beautiful the sound (Chorus)

© 1985 by Paul Mercer and Joan Kosby

SIDE LYRICS TWO

THE HUNGRY DOGS OF NEW MEXICO

The hungry dogs of New Mexico
Are chewing on roots and bones until dawn
Well, the chill in their skin
Goes down with the first rays of sun
With the first rays of light
And I met a man, and he said he ran a junkyard

A man in a hotel in Reno
He gambled all night until his forearm was sore
And then he went with a woman who took him
And rolled him some more
Until the first rays of light
And I met a man, and he said he ran a junkyard

A waitress in eastern Nevada
Was serving out coffee to men all night long
Said she waits for the man who said
That he'd take her along
With the first rays of light
And I met a man, and he said he ran a junkyard

The hungry dogs of New Mexico
Are biting each others' backs to get home
And in the dry desert heat
They fight for the last piece of meat
Until the first rays of light
And I met a man, and he said he ran a junkyard

by Artie Traum, © Windstorm Music
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BYKER HILL

If I had another penny, I would have another gill
I would make the piper play "The Bonny Lass of Byker Hill."

Chorus: Byker Hill and Walker Shore
Collier lads forever more
Byker Hill and Walker Shore
Collier lads forever more.

When first I went down to the dirt, I had no cowl, nor no
pit shirt
Now I've gotten two or three, Walker pit's done well by me.

The pitman and the keelman trim, they drink bumble made
from gin
Then to dance they do begin, to the tune of "Elsie Marley."

Geordie Charlton had a pig, hit it with a shovel and it
danced a jig
All the way to Walker Shore, to the tune of "Elsie Marley."

Traditional, arranged by Wallace/Wood

WEST RUTLAND MARBLE BAWN

Come all you good people and attend for a while
To a story I will unfold
The truth I'll tell, you know full well
As I have plainly told
A dollar a day, it will be your pay
Go to work at the earliest dawn
It's a weary life to be pleasing a wife
And chipping the marble bawn

When I came to your state, 'twas very late
'Bout 9 in the afternoon
The night being dark and me being strange
I knew not where to roam
I boarded a train, to West Rutland I came
Where the steam mill is always sawing
The beautiful stone, the like never was known
They call it the marble bawn

The Irish boys that fear no noise
Will stand on the rocks so brave
The sound of the drill will be never still
But echoing always in your ears
They'll stand in line like the wild geese flying
And they'll never be scolding or jawing
They're the very best boys that ever wore frays
For chipping the marble bawn

Now when you're dead and in your grave
With a stone at your head and feet
Your parents will lament and be discontent
And bitterly mourn and weep
Will be your doom to lie 'neath in your tomb
With a cross so bravely drawn
Your name enrolled and prayers for your soul
Engraven on the marble bawn

My song I'll end, success to each friend
That ere left the shamrock shore
May you live in peace with the Yankee race
And by each other be dearly adored
We are free in the land of liberty
No tyranny for us will be drawn
We'll sit at ease and sing the praise
Of West Rutland marble bawn

by James Kearny (late 19th century)

SOMOS EL BARCO/WE ARE THE BOAT

The stream sings it to the river,
The river sings it to the sea,
The sea sings it to the boat
That carries you and me.

Chorus: Somos el barco, Somos el mar,
Yo navego en ti, Tu navegas en mi,
We are the boat, We are the sea,
I sail in you, You sail in me.

Now the boat we are sailing in
Was built by many hands,
And the sea we are sailing on,
It touches every sand.

Oh the voyage has been long and hard,
And yet we're sailing still,
With a song to help us pull together
If we only will.

So with our hopes we raise the sails
To face the winds once more,
And with our hearts we chart the waters
Never sailed before.

by Lorre Wyatt
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Spanish Translation:

SOMOS EL BARCO/WE ARE THE BOAT

El arroyo le canta al río,
El río le canta al mar,
Y el mar le canta al barco
Que lejos nos va a llevar.

Chorus: Somos el barco, Somos el mar,
Yo navego en ti, Tu navegas en mi,
We are the boat, We are the sea,
I sail in you, You sail in me.

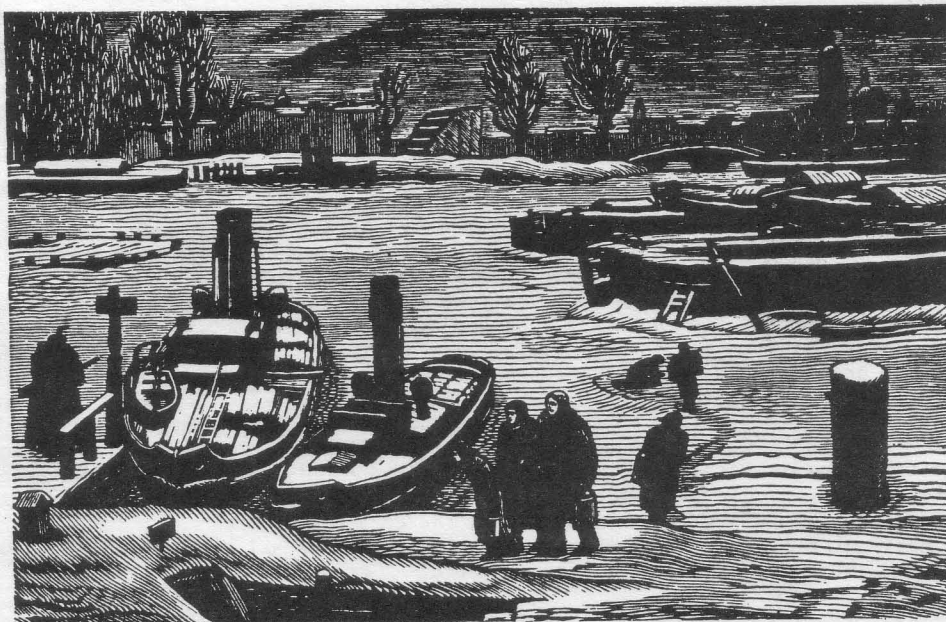
El barco en que navegamos
Fue hecho por muchas manos,
Y el mar que ahora surcamos
Muchas tierras tocará.

La jornada ha sido dura
Y aun seguimos navegando,
Desafiando las tormentas
Y así siempre seguiremos.

Con nuestras esperanzas
Altas velas levantamos,
Y con nuestros corazones
Nuevas rutas exploramos.

by Lorre Wyatt, Spanish translation of
verses by Salvador Ten, Lucía Calviño,
Jose Luis Pachon & David Shea.

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THE ULTIMATE FOLKIE SUMMER VACATION

a tour of nuclear power plants of the northeastern United States . . .

by Roger Deitz

These vacations are the latest craze. It is no longer enough simply to visit the Grand Canyon, or to sun oneself on the sands of Miami Beach, or to cruise the Caribbean. In the '80's one doesn't just jet to Paris (how boring); one visits the art museums of Europe, or tours the castles in England, or samples stout from various Irish pubs or wine from the vineyards of Napa Valley, California, or collects rubbings taken from colonial New England cemetery headstones. It is chic now to ski not one European slope, but the Swiss, Italian, and French Alps all in one trip.

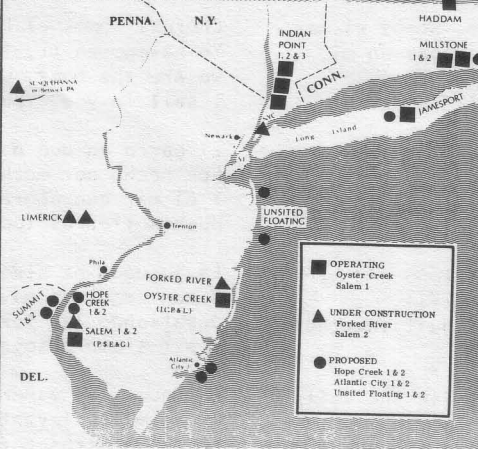
A travel agent tells me that one of the hottest tours she books is one on which the traveler takes a safari to shoot (SLR-wise) endangered species of wildlife throughout various African nations. On the domestic front, the popular Winnebago vacation is to tour the battlefields of the Civil War in the order in which the major historic battles were fought. My least favorite summer vacation has always been the madcap kibbutz vacation where the traveler may, for a fee of approximately a couple of thousand dollars, live and work in the desert heat and delight in picking oranges for a few weeks. I prefer to buy my oranges at the air-conditioned A&P down the block.

These vacations are all very Yuppie; and almost as if one had to apologize for having a good time, they are often termed "learning experiences." But at the very least, today's vacations seem designed to impress others.

They remind me of the family "Confirmation Sweepstakes" that, as a child, I was entered into, wherein each relative within my family in turn attempted to outdo the next by way of the grandness of their child's bar/bas mitzvah reception.

It's a great game in the tradition of Milton Bradley and Chuck Barris. The players may manipulate factors such as the size of the band, novelty of the menu, and theme of the grand affair. The instructions explain that "Confirmation Sweepstakes" is a game about the pathos, futility, and pressures in the young life of a poor, unfortunate thirteen-year-old foolsh enough to think that one can ever please one's parents. The child soon learns that

How Close are you to a Nuclear Power Plant? FOLK FESTIVAL?



life is a game, and that others often roll the dice and make all the moves if you let them.

The instructions go on to read that "Confirmation Sweepstakes" is "a high stakes game that must be played with skill and daring. Samuel and Selma are two short, curly headed kids who are mere pawns in the hands of the evil princess. Help them to escape as she attempts to manipulate her playing pieces across a game board labeled for Long Island catering establishments, prep schools, and cousins club meetings."

If you are playing along at home, the rules are that you must forget that such an affair has any religious value. Each couple playing gets at least one playing piece; a child selected at random for them by the great games-keeper in the sky. "Gott wurfelt nicht," suggested Einstein: "God does not play dice." If Einstein had only seen some of my cousins, perhaps he would have added that the good Lord does probably indulge in the occasional game of Russian roulette.

For identification purposes, the family members get to dress up in tacky clothing (extra points are awarded for multi-colored slacks and gold lamé-trimmed dresses). The object of the game is to put a claim on future

bragging rights whenever the subject of little Samuel or Selma resurfaces. A good bar/bas mitzvah reception (say, a big league spectacle boasting the Glenn Miller Orchestra, Barnum and Bailey's Circus, or a short QEII cruise) can win bragging rights until the next major games/events: the "Which Colleges," and the ever popular, "Which Medical Schools did your child gain acceptance to?" free-style.

I rather understand this madness. After all, people always want what's best for their children...at least they do until they really get to know them. But do children ever know what's best for themselves?

With this kind of need to compete often instilled in an individual at an early age, it seems natural that today's vacations are sometimes planned by people solely to lay claim to the "I'm just a bit classier than you" award. Today's vacationer must be more intelligent, sensitive, and wealthy--or at least the vacation chosen should suggest that these traits might exist in an otherwise dull individual. The vacation should also be an event.

So don't bother to return home with 35mm slides of the Bahamas unless they show you and Jacques Cousteau saving a rare species of Bottle-nosed Dolphin. A T-shirt autographed by Mick Jagger on which he writes he is glad you talked him into that "Live Aid" thing suggests quietly that you must have had one hell of a vacation. A note from Mother Theresa thanking you for providing the orphanage with pro-hockey equipment, and helping her with her slap-shot would also do nicely indeed.

Folkies too take vacations. Sure it's difficult to tell where a folk musician's vacation begins and workweek ends, but I assure you they do take vacations. They just don't take paid vacations. Usually their vacations are planned 'round about folk festivals, much in the way others might book a European tour.

I recently found myself in a conversation with a few folk music enthusiasts, and the topic of discussion was summer folk festivals. We talked about which festival was the biggest, which one was the most eclectic, which one was the most dreadful (hint: it was also one of the biggest and least eclectic), and of course, which one

was the best (name withheld in order not to offend the most dreadful).

It is apparent that most folkies have their own favorite festival or festivals. Usually they are rather vocal as to which they like best. Their choice might be based on a number of personal preferences such as whether a given festival is political or apolitical in nature, traditional or singer-songwriter oriented, requires the participant to camp or allows access to the day-tripper, has a fair amount of folk dancing or no dancing at all, is large enough to present a wide variety of acts, or small enough to offer the folk music lover an opportunity to meet the performers on a more intimate level.

At any rate, most people go to not just one folk festival, but make a summer tour out of going to the ones they like the best. Their itinerary is a very personal matter, but it is clear that folkies will go to great trouble to attend the ones they prefer, work overtime to impress each other with the merits of their own favorites, and decry the ones that they dislike.

Generally, there are a few major points that make up the overall character of a folk festival. The most basic of these is that if an event has any personality at all, it is as a direct result of the personalities, likes and dislikes, skills, shortcomings, and objectives of the people producing the event.

Remember, a group of individuals has worked for most of the year to bring the festival from the drawing board to reality. This means input not only from the booking chairperson who gets the show together; decides who plays, when they play, in what order, for how long, and for how much money. It also means input from the scores of publicity, press, and physical staff people, such as stage, grounds, and sound crews. There is a great deal to putting on a folk festival. I know. I was the booking chairperson for one this year, and by the time the festival was over, I required major rest and rehabilitation.

Producing a folk festival doesn't require a degree in engineering or nuclear physics. It's not quite as complicated an operation as a nuclear power plant, but it's still a people-produced undertaking, and therefore things can go awry.

Anything with that many components can't be 100% trouble-free. With so

much that could go wrong, it's a wonder that a folk festival can succeed at all. Will people find out about the festival? Will the newspapers run your publicity blurbs? Will you have enough staffing? Will people want to see the performers you have selected? Will the local Board of Health issue a license to your food vendors? Will the sound system that had been working like a charm in test situations start giving you trouble during the concert? Will you have the money to cover guarantees if there is a low turnout?

There are also factors not directly under the control of people. I hate these the most. It's sunny for weeks, a "drought emergency" is in effect, and then, just as your festival weekend nears, you start paying a bit more attention to the weather forecasts.

Every hour the forecast changes. You listen intently, mostly to the station that gives you the forecast you want to hear. All of the TV weathercasters contradict each other. Will it rain or won't it? Will the threat of rain keep people away? Or will the temperature zoom into the upper nineties and fry most of the attendees? Is it earthquake season in northern New Jersey?

Will the artists arrive on time? Will their plane be rerouted to Denver? Will they make their 2:30 workshop? Did anyone remember to purchase additional toilet paper for the porta-sans? Does anyone have another mike stand? a first aid kit? some aspirin? some toilet paper?

But the people who spend their hard earned money on admission tickets don't sympathize much. They shouldn't have to worry about toilet paper. They assume such things are taken care of. They pay their money and expect to be entertained. If they knew what things were really like behind the scenes, they'd bring toilet paper.

People don't want to be bothered with details. People expect that others have taken care of the details. People are trusting. People want to be dazzled with virtuosity, they want electricity. They want to be charmed with folk arts and crafts, they want to learn a new lick or hear a new tune, they want to see new artists and old favorites, they want their spirits to soar, they want to forget their troubles. They want to let somebody else worry about the details.

Because of this kind of attitude, there are 67 operating nuclear power plants in the United States alone. Therefore, not a single folk festival you attend

will ever be too far away from one of these unquestionably unsafe marvels of modern technology. They're designed and made in the U.S.A., and we all know what that means (those of us who have been fortunate enough to purchase a domestically made automobile recently). Anything with that many components can't be 100% trouble-free.

It's one thing if the water pump cuts out on your car, quite another if the water recirculator goes on the fritz at Indian Point One.

Be further comforted by this fact: the contract to build your neighborhood nuclear power plant was probably awarded to the lowest bidder. And then there's Herbie. Herbie who used to stoke the boiler at the local coal-fired, steam generator plant. Herbie, because of his seniority, now retrained to press buttons, watch blinking lights and gauges, and react in a crisis situation in his new nuclear plant job. Herbie used to nod off occasionally in his old job, but the flashing lights keep him awake now. Sure he can't figure out how to use the VCR his wife got him for Christmas, but he passed a two-week course in power plant operation!

All of this scary stuff shouldn't keep folks from dressing up in their finest get-out-into-the-fresh-air-and-let-it-all-hang-out festival attire, and making for their summer vacation tour, sporting their finest T-shirts (usually advertising bygone famous festivals, causes, and brands of chewing tobacco). Why shouldn't they head for their favorite festivals wearing headbands, straw hats, cut-offs, tie-dyed jeans, lugging coolers packed with veggie food and wine bottles? Why shouldn't they pitch their tents where they want?

Why shouldn't they meet old friends and talk about last year's festival, and festivals long past, talk about the time the motorcycle gang raided the grounds, the time Paul Cadwell stopped by their tent and gave them that first banjo lesson? And remember the night they sat in on the campfire jam with Bromberg, Goodman, and Prine long before they knew who Bromberg, Goodman, and Prine were... long before they realized how dumb they acted showing Bromberg a new playing technique?

Then there was the year the hurricane almost blew the tent down--was that '71 or '72? The faint hearted slept in the station wagon. There was the year it rained all weekend, and you hardly noticed after a while. There was the first time you saw Gamble

Rogers, and you were really hooked on this kind of stuff. There was the first time you realized you could survive on six hours of sleep for an entire weekend. There was the first time you shared your camp cooking with strangers, and found out how many friends could be made at a folk festival.

Yes, you could do a lot worse than to build a summer vacation tour around folk festivals, folk festivals that you may remember for years to come. But these memories last an instant compared to the length of time plutonium wastes from nuclear power plants have to be kept out of the environment--250,000 years. Two hundred and fifty millennia, now that's a long memory.

The fact that nuclear products remain radioactive for thousands of years, and that there are no acceptable means for disposing of the stuff shouldn't ruin a vacation. The fact that nuclear reactor waste provides the material needed for the production of bombs and missiles, or that this excess supply of plutonium could easily find its way

into the hands of terrorists shouldn't weigh constantly on one's mind.

Yet it is sometimes worthy of thought every now and again. One great tour idea has been brought to my attention by two fine Rhode Island based folk-singers by the names of Kate Katzberg and Stephen Snyder. Katzberg and Snyder do a most entertaining contemporary music hall type show, and they never fail to include just a few songs about the way things are, and the way they might better be. Their most recent album is entitled *Atomic Love*, after Snyder's song of the same name (CD Records, P.O. Box 3005, Providence, RI 02906).

Here seen catching a few rays at Three Mile Island, Kate and Steve seem to be suggesting that they have stumbled onto the perfect undiscovered summer vacation spot. What a great vacation idea for next season! I'm sure that if we all gathered about our favorite nuclear power plants next summer and sang a few songs about the way we feel about nuclear power plants, it would be just

like a folk festival and we could have a fine time. It could even fit into our summer tour schedule. After all, people always want what's best for their children, but do children ever know what's best for themselves?

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Stephen Snyder and Kate Katzberg 'soak up the rays' at Three Mile Island.

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LEON ROSSELSON

by Andy Nagy

You poor take courage, you rich take care.
This earth was made a common treasury
For everyone to share.
All things in common, all people one.
We come in peace--the orders came to
cut them down.

- Leon Rosselson, "The World Turned Upside Down"

These words have become something of a rallying cry in folk clubs and concert halls in Britain and Europe, and throughout North America. Already recorded by a wide range of artists, and performed by countless others, it is now having the same effect on rock and punk audiences. Popular English singer Billy Bragg gave the song a stirring interpretation when he recorded it for the flip side of his hit song, "Between the Wars." This recording has given a surprise boost to songwriter Leon Rosselson's long and already illustrious career, particularly after Bragg invited Rosselson and his occasional singing partner Roy Bailey to appear with him on the BBC television program, Oxford Road Show.

Still something of an unknown quantity in the United States, Rosselson has made three tours of the East Coast and several more of the West over the past four years, building a growing audience for his detailed views of life, love, and politics.

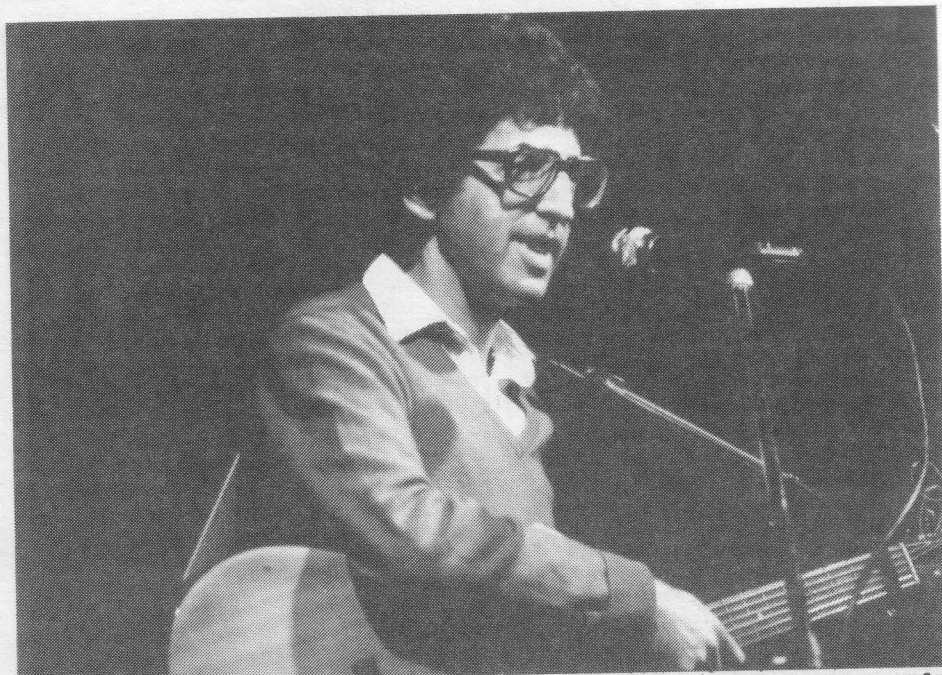
Going back to the early days of the post-skiffle start of the British folk song revival in the late '50's to early '60's, Rosselson became known as a talented arranger of songs and accompanist on guitar, banjo, mandolin, and occasionally accordion. As a member of the Galliards, with Shirley Bland and popular Scottish duo Robin Hall and Jimmy MacGregor, he recorded several albums of mostly Scottish traditional material. He soon found himself in demand as a session musician (which included an ill-fated and never released single for Topic by Vanessa Redgrave!).

Meanwhile, Rosselson quit his job as a school teacher, and teamed with another nascent force on the English folk scene, Martin Carthy, to form the 3 City 4 (with Ralph Trainer and Marian McKenzie). It was here that his writing skills began to develop, as his own compositions became a major component of the group's repertoire of contempo-

rary topical folk songs and songs written by other authors in a traditional style. Their 1965 album for Decca (alas, long out of print) included his visionary apocalyptic "Across the Hills," with three other self-penned songs, alongside songs by Ewan MacColl, Sydney Carter, traditional Israeli and South African songs, and a classic Martin Carthy solo rendition of "Sally Free and Easy."

After Carthy left to pursue his traditional song-oriented solo career, Roy Bailey joined the group, signalling the beginning of a strong partnership that would last for most of the next twenty years. The 1967 3 City 4 album Smoke and Dust featured seven new Rosselson compositions, two of which continue to play prominently in his current repertoire.

Rosselson's 1968 album, A Laugh, a Song, and a Hand-Grenade, with poet Adrian Mitchell, contained "Palaces of Gold," his classic song of class injustice inspired by needless deaths at a pit-heap disaster. Martin Carthy made a grand recording of it eight years later on his solo album, Crown of Horn, introducing a lot of people, particularly in America, to the pen of Leon Rosselson.



Leon Rosselson, Saturday night in Marblehead, Massachusetts, April 27, 1985.

Rosselson's writing, already perceptive, witty, and occasionally sardonic, reached full maturity by the time he recorded his 1971 solo album, The Word is Hugga Mugga Chugga Lugga Humbugga Boom Chit. The title song effectively lampoons the generals and politicians whose logic makes no sense in explaining the reasons for wars and government policies. Mixing various folk idioms with childlike sing-song, touches of cabaret, and always an astonishing flow of words, the songs touch on a variety of topics, from the senselessness of war and pointless class distinctions to fears of losing love, and a children's parable promoting individuality.

Rosselson's songs are often motivated by strong political feelings, and indeed observation of politics and the effects of democracies on the freedom of individuals plays a large part in his personal life. But unlike most other writers who write in a political mode, he cleanly escapes proselytizing or preaching to the converted. His views are often uniquely his own, but the sheer quality of his writing and detailed narratives point no fingers directly, and force the listeners to come to their own conclusions.

The period from 1974 to 1984 has been the strongest in Rosselson's career.

Iris S. Miller

Seven albums were recorded, six of them available on his own Fuse Records label. One was a collection of favorite and requested songs from the old out-of-print '60's albums, and three were powerful collaborations with Roy Bailey. Bailey's warm and hearty voice contrasts effectively with Rosselson's own, more distinctive vocals, which range from gentle sensitivity to grit-teethed anger or irony.

That's Not the Way It's Got to Be was the first. Recorded in 1974, and later re-issued in America on Paredon Records, it contains the original version of "The World Turned Upside Down." Based on the words and actions of the Seventeenth Century radical thinker Gerard Winstanley, it tells of the group he became the spokesperson for, The Diggers. They were a peaceful movement who believed in the abolishment of private property, rent, and wages. A community they had set up on wasteland in Surrey in 1648 was destroyed a year later by the local officials who felt threatened by their attempts to "turn the world upside down."

Another song, which takes the words of Winstanley directly and sets them to a traditional tune, appears on If I Knew Who the Enemy Was, one of Leon's strongest albums. Equally strong is Love, Loneliness, Laundry, a thematic album describing the difficulties of love and life in a society bound by rules. "Abiezer Coppe" is another historical song based on the life of a free thinker again deemed as revolutionary and therefore a threat. "Invisible Married Breakfast Blues" is a chilling description of a marriage gone stale and frozen, and "Don't Get Married, Girls" is yet another song that has gone on to become an anthem, sung by numerous performers. The album also contains the controversial "Stand Up For Judas," which has recently been covered by Scottish singer Dick Gaughan on his album, A Different Kind of Love Song.

1981's Nuclear Power, No Thanks!!!, on the independent Plane Label, was not a solo album, but deserves special mention as possibly the singlemost powerful musical statement on any political topic. Done in collaboration with an all-star cast that included Frankie Armstrong, Roy Bailey, and Martin Carthy, it is unfortunate that the album never found distribution in the United States, and was never easy to come by.

Much easier to find is Frankie Armstrong's latest album for Flying Fish, I Heard a Woman Singing. Rosselson contributed guitar, vocals, and/or authorship to five of that album's songs. The most significant is his "I Don't Want Your Red, Red Roses," a delightfully sarcastic kiss-off to an ex-lover, and Leon's first venture into the realm of Country-Western. It will be exciting to see if Nashville picks up on it.

Rosselson's latest solo album, Temporary Loss of Vision, seems to mark the opening of a third chapter in his career. Produced by Martin Carthy (who has been a regular contributor to Rosselson's recordings since the 3 City 4 days), it contains two immediately classic Rosselson observations of military politics--"No-One is Responsible" and "The Enemy's Poised to Attack," a quick foray into electric folk with the help of Fairport Convention's Simon Nicol ("Penny for the Guy"), a reworking of the Lord Randall ballad in modern paranoid parenting terms ("My Daughter, My Son"), a comical look at society's addiction to medication, and four other songs.

But the centerpiece of the album, and the track that sets it apart from all of his previous recorded work, is the nearly twelve-minute spoken and sung prose piece, "The Last Chance." Backed

with simple piano accompaniment, it is an extraordinary description of two characters at a desert nightclub in Israel at the end of the 1950's. The effect on the listener is hypnotic, as Rosselson draws clear and vivid descriptions of the sad idealist, Sam, and the hardened realist, Meir. Like a chapter from Camus, it leaves you moved and reflective by its starkness and clarity.

He performed "The Last Chance" in only a few of the places he played on his East Coast tour this past April, and its effect was just as powerful as on the record.

In concert Rosselson mixes in readings from newspapers, sexist paragraphs from British school books, hilarious but frightful passages from nuclear war handbooks, and other writings, giving fuller dimension and meaning to his songs. His guitar, at first seeming to provide simple accompaniment, actually runs intricate and clever counterpoints to his melodies, and frequently throws snatches of traditional dance tunes and ragtime in between verses.

Leon Rosselson is a consummately honest and unique performer. Hopefully, with increased exposure he will soon have the following in this country that he deserves.

albums

The following albums by Leon Rosselson are still in print and available in America from SILO, Inc. (Box 429/South Main Street, Waterbury, Vermont 05676) and Down Home Music (10341 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, California 94530) or directly from FUSE Records (28 Park Chase, Wembley Park, Middlesex HA9 8EH, England).

The Word is Hugga Mugga Chugga Lugga Humbugga Boom Chit (Trailer/Highway LER 3015)

Palaces of Gold (FUSE CF 249)

That's Not the Way It's Got to Be (FUSE CF 251 or Paredon P-1036)

Love, Loneliness, Laundry (FUSE CF 271)

If I Knew Who the Enemy Was (FUSE CF 284)

For the Good of the Nation (FUSE CF 381)

Temporary Loss of Vision (FUSE CF 384)

JOSH JOFFEN

by Peter Brown

Josh Joffen looks from SpeakEasy's stage in New York to the informal chaos in front of him. People are shouting to each other over the loud hum of an air-conditioner. Smells of Middle Eastern cuisine waft in from the restaurant outside along with the punchy sounds of pop radio. In here, the dark, smoke-filled room with its red velvet walls resembles a brothel more than a folk club.

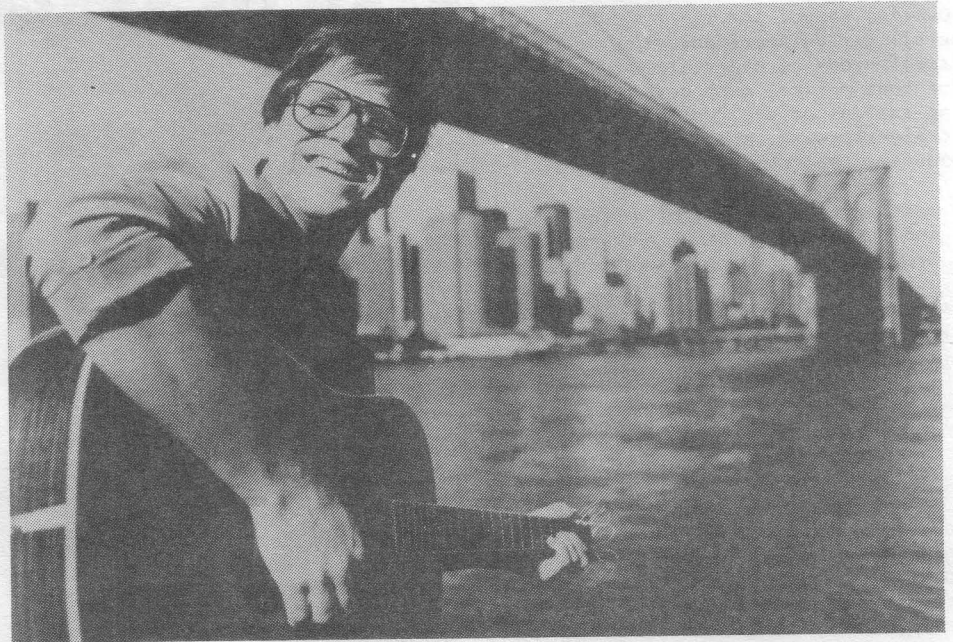
Josh pauses a moment as if to say something, then pauses again as if to say "forget it." Instead he sounds the lush, opening chords to "Pandora." Instantly, a benign order comes to be. As his voice rings clear into the verse, noises quiet and conversations drop mid-sentence. There is suddenly no doubt where people are or why they are here. They have come to hear Brooklyn-born Josh Joffen, a rising star of the new generation of folk musicians.

In a way Joffen is an unlikely folksinger. When I first met him he was serving in the role of Finance Committee Chair of SpeakEasy's Musicians Cooperative. I thought him then to be the quintessential accountant. He wore glasses and tie, and while other musicians bandied about generalizations, Joffen spoke dollars and cents.

Indeed, like many a folksinger, Joffen was not formally trained as a writer or a musician. He studied physics and then psychology at the University of Chicago and picked up guitar while helping to run a local coffee house. Inspired by the likes of Bob Gibson, Steve Goodman, and others, he started writing songs.

Through the years, Joffen has developed a style that blends old and new, the universal and the modern, a style that matches sophisticated lyrics with singable melodies. His themes range from the personal to the political, from the cynical to the sublime. His guitar playing is versatile, ranging from funky blues to harmonious ballads. His singing, clear and resonant, pronounces lyrics as if they mattered. And his songs, many of which can be heard on *Fast Folk* and *The Coop*, stay with you.

"Pandora" (*Fast Folk*, May 1984) is a good example of Joffen's use of metaphor. In this song, as in others, he employs the use of a single word or



phrase that is rich in symbolic or associative meaning in the chorus, and uses the verses to explore those meanings. Here, the mythical box of evil and hope becomes the metaphor for a promising relationship. Pandora's choice is between the stale security of an old relationship and the sincerity and excitement promised by a new lover. Pandora's choice is clear, and her seducer's voice bounces off the rich, driving accompaniment with delight:

And I hope you never regret that you
turned the key
And raised up the lid, made it easy
for me

"Chain of Love" (*Coop*, May 1983) is another of Joffen's enduring love songs that uses a powerful metaphor. Here the song is sung a cappella, with vocal harmonies, and has the earnest, linear feel of a chant.

"Monkey See, Monkey Do" (*Fast Folk*, September 1984) and "Video Arcade" show a lighter side to Josh Joffen's writing. In "Monkey See, Monkey Do," Joffen takes a cynical poke at the workings of the modern political world. Here, the monkey is the fitting symbol for politicians and generals:

Monkey see, monkey do. I am a better
monkey than you
Let's have ourselves a war and when
we're through

We'll see who gets the biggest
banana

It is a song one might laugh at were it not so uncomfortably accurate.

Joffen keeps tongue in cheek as he sings of a peculiar form of modern escapism and romantic love in "Video Arcade":

When we get old
And our response time's shot
When our noses are running
But our feet are not
We'll think back on our loving
And the scores we got
Playing down by the video arcade

For me this song does not work as well as the others simply because the key phrase, "video arcade," has too many syllables for the musical line. The moving bass line and heavy-funk feel, however, get people banging on their tables. And clever lines like the ones above keep them smiling.

"Crazy Horse" (*Coop*, December 1982/January 1983 and *Fast Folk*, May 1985) is a major work and a testament to Joffen's breadth as a songwriter. The song is as much an ode to the sculptor of Crazy Horse Mountain as it is an ode to the great Sioux general himself. It is the story of a man's life mission to redeem the history of a people by sculpting a huge monument to its greatest hero.

The song works particularly well because the concept is both unusual and specific. Because the idea of the mountain-sculpture is itself such a powerful symbol for the tragedy that befell Native Americans, the song itself needs no overstatement, nor, for that matter, much description of the Indians at all. Joffen's song is straightforward, and his ear for the double-entendre--

Man carves a man out of a mountain
And the mountain draws a mountain
from the man

--makes listening a particular pleasure.

"In a Dream" and "Miami" are two introspective songs. "In a Dream" has a driving beat and eerie dissonances reminiscent of the style of Suzanne Vega. It is the fragmented story of a woman haunted by the choices she's made.

Josh's voice drops into the low register for single words in "Miami," the moving song of an attempt to regain something lost:

Been trapped by times and places
That had laid their claim to me
I threw away my heart's desire
And dated that living free
And now I am trapped behind this
freedom
That I won at such a cost
And I found out how to win so much
That I'm completely lost.

Josh Joffen's first recorded song is also my personal favorite. "Wild Willow" (CooP, April 1982) is an exquisite gem of a song, with a lingering melody and rich associative lyrics. Set against a lilting, jazzy accompaniment, and kissed by Mark Dann's lead guitar, "Wild Willow" sings playfully of the duality of life and love.

Josh Joffen's songs are remarkable for their wit, deftness, and sophistication of lyric as well as their musical variety and singability. Joffen is currently finishing an album with singer/songwriter David Roth. The album will be released this fall and features Joffen on one side and Roth on the other.

For information write to:

Joffen/Roth Album
300 Ocean Parkway
Suite 3K
Brooklyn, New York 11218

addendum to **STAR OF STAGE AND SHEA**

by David Massengill

As promised, here are the correct answers to last issue's fill-in-the-blank puzzle of "The Drunkard's Errant Codpiece" (sung to the tune of "The Star Spangled Banner").

1. p	5. m	9. s	13. a
2. z	6. s	10. f	14. b
3. h	7. f	11. p	15. h
4. k	8. d	12. g	16. d

Most of these letters are the first letter of common cuss words. For a more complete rendering of "The Drunkard's Errant Codpiece," see the June 1985 issue of Fast Folk.

As mentioned in the last issue, Francis Scott Key's "The Star Spangled Banner" borrowed the melody of "To Anacreon in Heaven," a popular British drinking song by Ralph Tomlinson. Anacreon was a drunkard and a Greek (no connection), who died choking on a grape seed. I found the words to this piece in Oscar Brand's The Ballad Mongers.

To Anacreon in Heav'n where he sat in full glee,

A few sons of Bacchus sent a petition,
That he their inspirer and patron would be;

When this answer arrived from the jolly old Grecian--

Voice, fiddle, and flute,
No longer be mute;

I'll send you my name and inspire ye to boot;

And besides I'll instruct ye, like me to entwine

The Myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's vine.

Francis Scott Key was not the first to parody the tune: witness this anonymous verse on George Washington, America's first president.

Should the tempest of war overshadow the land,

Its bolts could not rend Freedom's temple asunder,

For unmoved at the portals would Washington stand,

And repulse with his breast the assaults of the thunder,
His sword from the sleep
Of his scabbard would leap,
And conduct with its point every flash to the deep,

And ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,

While the earth bears a plant or the sea rolls a wave.

In the last issue I suggested that Francis Scott Key may have been under the influence when he wrote "The Star Spangled Banner." This is untrue. A closer reading of history reveals that it was not Key who was drunk, but his friend and fellow member of the Baltimore Chapter of the Anacreontic Society (primarily dedicated to drinking), the redoubtable Doctor Beane.

It was during the War of 1812: the drunken and foolhardy (the two are connected) Dr. Beane tried to take two British soldiers prisoner. Apparently, he was so drunk he forgot that he was unarmed. The British were not amused and promptly took Dr. Beane off to be executed.

Francis Scott Key heard it through the grapevine and rushed to his fellow lush's aid and pleaded for clemency to the officer in charge. As fate would have it, the British officer was a charter member of the London Chapter of the Anacreontic Society and was only too glad to spare Dr. Beane and set him free. However, the two were detained overnight while the British bombed the shit out of Fort McHenry. Key wrote his song during the course of the night, and when put ashore the next day, he sang it for his friends. It finally caught on. On March 3, 1931, President Hoover signed a bill making it our national anthem.

I'm sorry I was unable to secure permission from David Bromberg and Erik Frandsen to reprint their song, "My Wife Has Big its." It's a charming little ditty about marital bliss. We'll be glad to print any parodies our readers send in. Don't be shy. ■

RECORD REVIEWS

Eric Andersen: *Tight In The Night*

by Ellen Berkowitz

There aren't a lot of musicians who can claim to have survived twenty years in the music business and still be around today, their music as strong as ever. Eric Andersen is one who can.

His excellent new, upbeat album, *Tight In The Night*, reestablishes Andersen as one of the most accomplished writers and performers ever to emerge from the folk scene of the mid-sixties.

Although his career has suffered some setbacks, culminating in the necessity of recording and releasing albums solely in Europe in the last few years, Andersen's writing, at its best, remains head and shoulders above most of what passes for lyrically intelligent music nowadays.

1985 has seen Andersen reemerge in America, this time at the helm of his own record company, Wind and Sand Records. Recorded with two excellent backing bands (The Rockin' Deltoids from Canada and a crack team of session players--among them ex-Hollie Mikael Rickfors--from Sweden), *Tight In The Night* showcases Andersen in the somewhat surprising setting of modern pop-rock.

The opening cut, "Walking In My Sleep," starts out softly, lulling the listener into believing that this album is of a piece with previous Andersen efforts. But as the song progresses, it becomes apparent that this is something new from Andersen; dense layers of synthesizers nailed down with a tight bass/drum bottom provide the backing for that familiar voice. A travelogue of sorts, "Walking In My Sleep" details the mishaps that befall the narrator as he stumbles around the globe. Andersen claims the song was inspired by "reading The New York Times travel section and dreaming." It is a fitting opening for the album--Andersen as eternal wanderer, observing, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, what's going on around him.

There are two real standouts on side one: the somewhat Dire Straits-ish "Jonah" and the haunting "Girls of Denmark," a song that has gotten Andersen major airplay around the country.

Now you've come back
You've got something to share
Ah, where have you gone
Jonah, I'm scared
You say dreams can get lonely
'Cause dreams, they don't care

- "Jonah"

"The Girls of Denmark" is a real leap for Andersen. With eddying synthesizers echoing around his voice, Andersen sings:

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

- "The Girls of Denmark"

Andersen has never written another song like it, and it stands as one of the finest songs he has penned to date. Throughout "The Girls of Denmark" his songwriting is right on the money, not one rhyme or line out of place. Although not all the songs on *Tight In The Night* retain this exacting standard, excellent songwriting remains an Andersen hallmark.

The opening cut on side two, the song that most listeners would first associate with the "traditional" Andersen, is "What Will You Do With My Heart," a lovely ballad. Again the songwriting is so assured that one can easily take the lyric for granted. A simple, stately beat throughout the song echoes Andersen's yearning ("I'm not scared of shadows/The dark scares me more/I'd give anything/If you darkened my door"), and the song works perfectly as a piece.

The straight-ahead rocker and title track, "Tight In The Night," and the almost Indian "Count On You" both work well and are skillfully constructed, in keeping with the general tone of excellence on the album.

However, there are a couple of clinkers. "Straight Life" never really develops its central theme, and there are a few excruciatingly bad lines ("People in suburbia/Not getting all

that they deserve/People in the Harlem mess/Only seeing hopelessness"). From a writer of Andersen's stature, lines like these are especially grating. The man obviously has intelligence--and, doubtless, after five years between albums--songs to spare. That he chooses to squander time on vinyl for "Straight Life" is surprising.

Despite a couple of weak points, though, *Tight In The Night* is a welcome collection of new songs from a man who has not been heard from enough of late. Wind and Sand, his new label, is slowly releasing previously unavailable material in America, and plans to husband further Andersen ventures, including a possible foray into books. Until then, however, it is simply making available Andersen's recent recorded works. The first releases are *Tight In The Night* and Andersen's 1980 CBS Scandinavia lp, *Midnight Son*. Later this year will come the soundtrack to the movie *Istanbul*, a Belgium film starring Brad Dourif that Andersen scored last winter and this spring.

Until the release of that record, followed by a new Andersen studio album, fans must content themselves with *Tight In The Night*. Although probably not destined to be a classic, *Tight* contains at least four Andersen gems that should find their way into many a singer's repertoire, as well as further enhance their writer's stature as one of the U.S.A.'s best.

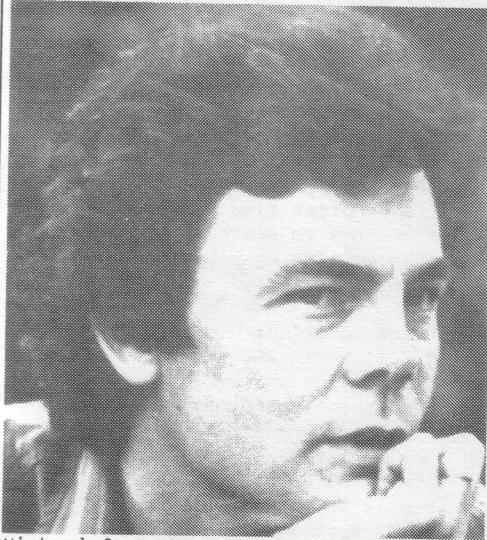
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ON THE RECORD



Michael Cooney

MICHAEL COONEY has been traveling and performing since he was 18. He has four solo albums to his credit. Since 1972 he has served in some capacity for *Sing Out!* magazine: on the board, the editorial board, or as a columnist. He has performed, lectured, or done residencies at hundreds of U.S. and Canadian universities. He now lives in Toronto.

CROSSOVER presents traditional music from both sides of the Atlantic, both accompanied and a cappella. HEATHER WOOD was part of the Young Tradition, an English folk group that toured extensively in the United States during the late sixties. ANDY WALLACE has performed solo and with Jonathan Eberhart and Helen Schneyer, in the U.S. and Japan, and on a State Department tour of Latin America. He also ran the National Folk Festival in Washington, D.C., the folk events of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and the Festival des Deux Mondes (French Canadian music).

MICHAEL JERLING, originally from Illinois, moved to the East by way of California. He performs his songs at clubs and colleges around the country, and his album, *On Top of Fool's Hill*, is available from Moonlight Magic Records, Box 718, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

JOAN KOSBY and PAUL MERCER met when Joan left New York State to study folklore in Paul's native Newfoundland. They now live in Saratoga Springs, New York, and have toured in New York and surrounding states. They perform



Joan Kosby and Paul Mercer



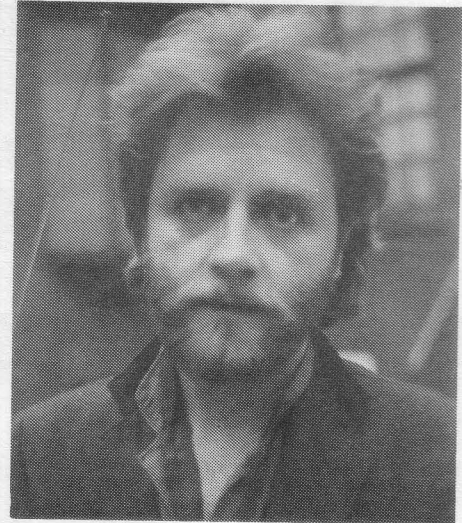
Margaret MacArthur

original and contemporary songs and the occasional traditional piece. Both Joan and Paul play guitar. Joan also plays English concertina.

TOM MITCHELL's songs have been recorded and/or performed by Rosalie Sorrels, Mary McCaslin & Jim Ringer, the Woodstock Mountains Revue, and Huxtable, Christensen & Hood, to name a few. Tom is currently working on a new album to be released in the spring. His first album, *Philo 1027*, came out in 1976. For information, contact The Maple Agency, P.O. Box 24, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

JEM MOORE is a self-styled musician from Saratoga Springs, New York. Hammer dulcimer is his main love and constant companion now, but he claims to have casual affairs with tin whistle, ocarina, and flute. As an aspiring musician, he's recently made

Christine Lavin



Tom Mitchell



Jem Moore

his debut in Philadelphia, at the Bothy Club, and is working towards making a career of performing.

CARLA SCIACKY lives in Denver, Colorado. She's still searching for a real niche, since being a versatile player (guitar, violin, Bulgarian fiddle, plucked psaltery, and bowed psaltery) makes one hard to label. She tours five to six months a year, and has two records, *To Meet You and In Between*, on her independent label, Propinquity Records.

PETE SEEGER was born to a musical family in 1919, and learned to play banjo, guitar, and other instruments at an early age. His folk music career began when he assisted Alan Lomax for a year at the Library of Congress

Christine Lavin

Christine Lavin

Thom Wolke



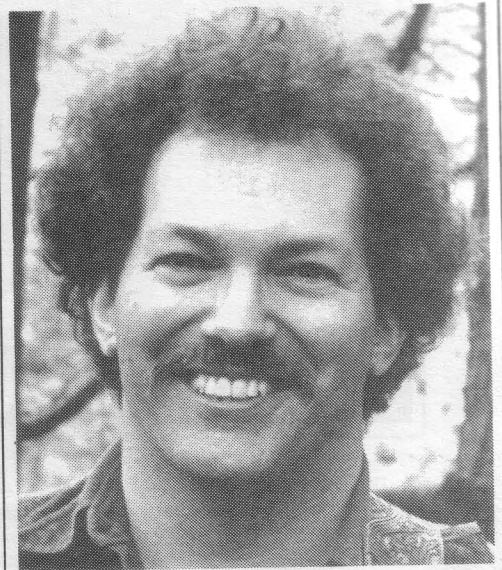
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Michael Jerling

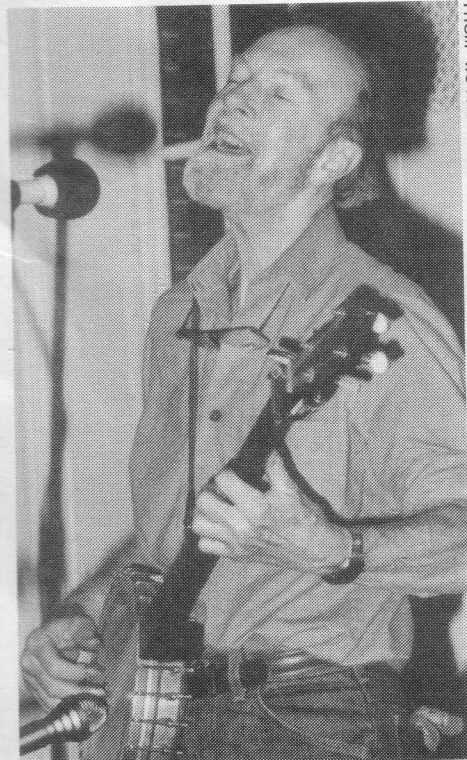


Christine Lavin

Carla Sciaky



Lorre Wyatt



Thom Wolke

Pete Seeger

Archive of Folk Song. He was a member of the singing groups the Almanac Singers and the Weavers. He helped form People's Songs, Inc., the forerunner of *Sing Out!* magazine. Today, Seeger continues to sing for the anti-nuclear movement, for world peace, and for jobs for all peoples. His songs express his understanding and hope for a better world.

THE ST. REGIS STRING BAND formed in northern New York State in the early seventies and has been traveling throughout that state and the East Coast since then. Their music is drawn from the Southern Mountain tradition, and from the New England and French



St. Regis String Band: (L to R) Ron Gordon, Mark Schmidt, and Dave Danks

Canadian styles. DAVE DANKS, founder, plays guitar, mandolin, dobro, and bass. RON GORDON plays guitar, banjo, mandolin, mandola, and mando-cello in the band. MARK SCHMIDT plays fiddle and occasionally guitar in the band.

HAPPY AND ARTIE TRAUM started playing together as a duet in the mid-sixties, having played solo for several years before that. They first major appearances as a duet were at the 1968 and 1969 Newport Folk Festivals. Over the next eight years they toured together and recorded three albums. After 1975, Happy and Artie worked solo and did several albums separately, although they did come together to do several albums with the Woodstock Mountains Revue. They have been playing together for the last few years. Both have

written books and articles on playing guitar; both are involved in Homespun Tapes, which offers instruction in playing various instruments and musical styles on cassettes; and both live in Woodstock, New York.

LORRE WYATT has had a long and loving involvement with folk music. He has collected songs and stories everywhere from the southern Appalachians to the Soviet Union, hosted a weekly radio program, worked aboard the environmental sloop Clearwater, and written film scores. When not traveling and performing, Lorre teaches music privately at his home in Greenfield, Massachusetts. His first solo album, *Roots and Branches*, was recently released on Folk Legacy Records.

SIDE ONE CREDITS SIDE TWO

1. Mole in the Ground (Trad., arr. Cooney)
Michael Cooney/Vocal & Fretless Banjo
 2. Texas Gals (Traditional--Instrumental)
St. Regis String Band:
Dave Danks/Mandolin
Ron Gordon/Guitar
Mark Schmidt/Fiddle
Ed Lowman/Fiddle
 3. Blue Heartland (Michael Jerling)
Michael Jerling/Vocal & Guitar
 4. Sheetrock the Baby's Room (Tom Mitchell)
Tom Mitchell/Vocal & Guitar
Artie Traum/Guitar
Tony Markellis/Bass
Winnie Winston/Pedal Steel
 5. Lakes of Pontchartrain (Trad., arr. Sciaky)
Carla Sciaky/Vocal & Guitar
 6. Sweet Reunion (Paul Mercer & Joan Kosby)
Joan Kosby/Vocal & Guitar
Paul Mercer/Vocal & Guitar
1. The Hungry Dogs of New Mexico (Artie Traum)
Happy Traum/Vocal & Guitar
Artie Traum/Vocal & Guitar
 2. West Rutland Marble Bawn (James Kearny)
Margaret MacArthur/Vocal
 3. Moonbow (Jem Moore--Instrumental)
Jem Moore/Hammered Dulcimer
 4. Byker Hill (Trad., arr. Wallace/Wood)
Crossover:
Heather Wood/Vocal
Andy Wallace/Vocal
 5. Somos El Barco/We Are the Boat (Lorre Wyatt)
Pete Seeger/Vocal & 12-String Guitar
 6. Closing Remarks by Lena Spencer

Recorded at the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Caffe Lena, May 19, 1985
Canfield Casino, Saratoga Springs, New York.

This record is a compilation of both the afternoon and evening concerts, which were of
about four hours each.

Recorded by Richard Meyer and Jay Rosen

Show producer: Al McKenney