

FOLK

LYRIC

records



ANGOLA PRISON SPIRITUALS. A survey of the major styles in which folk Negroes sing religious songs. Among the more unusual numbers in this album are a spiritual accompanied by guitar and bottle neck, a traditional song into which the singer skilfully works the crash of a Capitol jet air-liner in the spring of 1959, and a folk-sermon--the type of preaching in which the minister shouts his lines in a precise accelerating rhythm while the members of his congregation urge him on with rhythmic bursts of sound, all working toward a climactic explosion into song.
LFS A-6

PEGGY SEEGER SINGS AND PLAYS AMERICAN FOLKSONGS FOR BANJO. A rich selection of ballads, lyrics, play-party songs, and dances. In the enclosed booklet Peggy Seeger discusses in detail the technique of each accompaniment.
FL 114

THE ART OF THE BAGPIPE: JOHN BURGESS. An album of great solo bagpiping, produced in association with the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh. Pipe Major Burgess has won over 200 gold and silver medals, in fact every major trophy in Scotland. Extensive notes and background.
FL 112

FINNEGAN'S WAKE AND OTHER IRISH FOLKSONGS: DOMINIC BEHAN. Songs from Joyce's last masterpiece and other memorable numbers.
FL 113

POSSUM UP A SIMMON TREE: NEW ORLEANS WASHBOARD, GUITAR, AND HARMONICA. A lively selection of blues, spirituals, and folk expressions of the sounds of trains and the moods they create. The playing of the washboard, here highly complex in its syncopation, has its roots in primitive African percussion instruments.
FL 107

THOSE PRISON BLUES: ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS. Exciting examples of complex primitive blues.
FL 109

A SAMPLER OF LOUISIANA FOLKSONGS. Field recordings of native singers in the five principal Louisiana traditions--old French, Cajun, Negro, Negro French, and Anglo-Saxon. The record contains a ring shout, a primitive spiritual; in French and English, ancient ballads and lyrics as well as country blues.
LFS A-1

REV. PEARLY BROWN: GEORGIA STREET SINGER. Spirituals sung on the streets of Macon by a blind wanderer. Reverend Pearly Brown is in the direct tradition of Blind Willie Johnson, whom he heard as a child and copied. His voice has a similar fervor and his guitar speaks in similar plaintive antiphonal responses.
FL 108

FOLKSONGS OF THE LOUISIANA ACADIANS, recorded in Grand Mamou, a typical hamlet in the colorful bayous of the French country. The origins of the songs range all the way from the folk entertainment of sixteenth century France to the contemporary *fais-dodos* (all night dances) in which the music is a pot-pourri of French, Negro, and country-and-western influences.
LFS A-4

LOUISIANA FOLKSONG JAMBALAYA. Authentic recently collected songs in the five principal Louisiana traditions, performed by Harry Oster with guitar accompaniment.
LFS A-2

COUNTRY NEGRO JAM SESSIONS: BUTCH CAGE, WILLIE B. THOMAS AND OTHERS. The high points of jam sessions in the back country of five different sections of Louisiana, a rich assortment of dance and song, performed with joy and excitement.
FL 111

"Material that many a folklorist would give his magnetized recorder heads to own."
TIME MAGAZINE

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ: BILLIE AND DE DE PIERCE. Billie sings in the tradition of Bessie Smith, plays barrelhouse piano. De De sings Creole songs, plays the trumpet in an early style.
FL 110



ANGOLA PRISONERS' BLUES. The performing of three gifted old-time country blues singers, Hogman Maxey, Guitar Welch, and Robert Pete Williams, recorded in the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. They express powerfully the poignant sadness of the caged and womanless man.
LFS A-3

PRISON WORKSONGS recorded at Angola. Group and solo worksongs which accompany steel driving, wood chopping, cane cutting, road repairing, shoveling, scrubbing clothes, operating a sewing machine, and running a stamping press. A record of Afro-American material of a type frequently discussed by jazz critics and folk music historians, sung by amateur and professional folk singers, but seldom recorded.
LFS A-5

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ASTRAL RECORDS SCARBOROUGH ONTARIO



TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

Folk Hunter

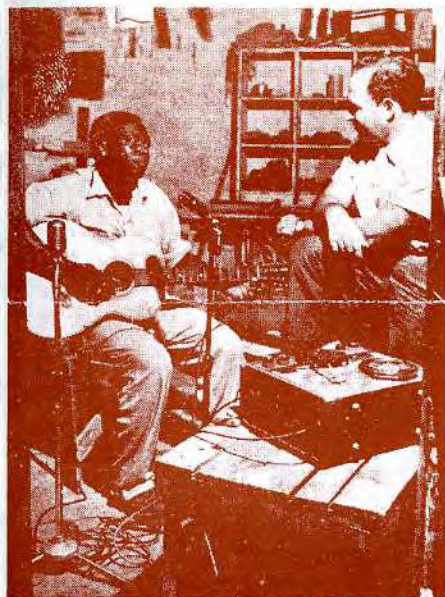
The prison is tucked in a barren bend of the Mississippi, looking toward fields of Louisiana sugar cane. Inside Angola's cyclone fences are the lifers—men serving sentences for rape and murder. Periodically a short man in rumpled suit and bow tie moves into the prison toolroom, lugging a tape recorder, a six-string guitar, a twelve-string guitar and a fiddle. Around him gather the prisoners—"Guitar" Welch, "Hogman" Maxey, Robert Pete Williams—to shout out their songs.

*Wonder why they electrocute a man,
baby,
Lord, at the one o'clock hour at night,
The current much stronger; people turn
out all the light.*

Angola prison is a favorite hunting ground of Folklorist Harry Oster. A scholarly teacher of English at Louisiana State University, Oster roams the streets and backlands of his adopted state to record its rich musical patois—French, Cajun, Negro French, Anglo-Saxon. In four years he has spaded up material that many a folklorist would give his magnetized recorder heads to own.

A Little Priming. Massachusetts-born and Harvard-educated, 36-year-old Folklorist Oster picked up a doctor's degree in English and Folk Literature at Cornell, dabbled in radio, eventually gravitated to L.S.U. because he was fascinated by the diversity of folk music in Louisiana. He follows the folk trail in a battered 1953 Mercury, tracking down leads with the persistence of a questing lepidopterist. Recently he heard of a mulatto woman named Madame Sam who lived in Algiers, across the river from New Orleans, and supposedly sang a particularly unadulterated brand of old French. Sam, it turned out, was not up to her billing, but she sent Oster chasing downriver to Port Sulphur, where another ancient mulatto named Alma Bartholomew produced, on request, 60 different pre-17th century French songs.

The leads are not always so fruitful. Following one tip, Oster drove to St. Martinsville, where a fabulously gifted and ancient crone was supposed to live. Oster found not one, but two old women waiting for him on the front porch of a



Wilfred d'Aquin
SINGER WILLIAMS & FOLKLORIST OSTER
Recording musical patois.

house that had a statue of the Virgin in the front yard and an oil well in the back. Neither of the old girls could sing a note. On the other hand, Oster has found that many a performer can be coaxed to song with a little priming. In French and Cajun settlements, he tries to build his listeners' confidence by singing a few songs himself or posing some leading question about money and drink, life or death. He gets surprising answers:

*Oh, when I die
Bury me with my head under the tap
So that if a drop of that very good wine
falls
I can get some good out of it.*

Another Alumnus. Angola Prison remains Oster's favorite folk source, and Robert Pete Williams, 42, his favorite singer. A lifer for shooting and killing a man, Williams has, in Oster's view, the "tremendous drive and anguish" that characterized the fabled Lead Belly, another Angola alumnus. Williams recently improvised his own prisoner's blues:

*Sometime I feel like, baby, committin'
suicide . . .
I got the nerve if I just had anythin' to
do it with.
I'm goin' down slow, somethin' wrong
with me.
I've got to make a change while that
I'm still young.
If I don't I won't ever get old.*

FOLK-LYRIC in Review

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"After the older generation passes, there may be no one to carry on the tradition. This would be a great loss to folk music, for these songs are full of pathos and a sort of glowing inner beauty." DOWNBEAT

"Should have a wider audience."
AMERICAN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY

"An important addition to the handful of "Cajun" material previously available. . . Excellent background notes."

AMERICAN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY

"'Prisoner's Talking Blues' . . . is one of the most disturbingly autobiographical statements in recorded folk music."

Robert Shelton, NEW YORK TIMES

"Williams . . . reveals a devotion to the style and an originality of expression that are rare. His voice. . . carries words well, and generates dramatic tensions."

Frederic Ramsey, Jr., SATURDAY REVIEW

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"The jazz fan will be struck by the similarity of this music and that produced by the back-to-the-land modernists. It's no accident. These are the roots of Negro music—not just jazz. . . An invaluable addition to any serious folk or jazz collection." DOWNBEAT

"It reveals a vigorous singing style and excellent accompaniment on a 12-string guitar."

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

COMING SOON!

ROBERT BURNS: THE MERRY MUSES OF CALEDONIA, SUNG BY EWAN MACCOLL. Bawdy songs collected or written by Robert Burns, presented in a scholarly unexpurgated album. Included with the record is a book with the complete texts and extensive notes.

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"Ewan MacColl is more than a great singer. To spend an evening listening to him is to become conscious of tremendous genius." LIVERPOOL ECHO

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