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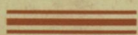
CONSCIENCE

of the

FOLK

REVIVAL

THE WRITINGS
OF ISRAEL
"IZZY" YOUNG



EDITED BY
SCOTT BARRETTA

FOLKLORE CENTER

SLIGHT
CAFE

THE
KETTLE
OF FISH
BAR

THE
JY-BERT
SHOP

THE CONSCIENCE
OF THE FOLK REVIVAL

THE
WRITINGS
OF
ISRAEL
"IZZY"
YOUNG

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A unique account of Young's business practices comes from Susan Netzorg Halas, who worked as a clerk at the store in the early 1960s when she was just eighteen.

For \$40 a week I worked 50+ hours. To begin with Izzy, my boss, had his own ideas about business procedure. When we got an order with a check, why he'd cash the check. Sometimes he'd send the books, you had a 50-50 chance, but if you sent the check you had a 100% chance he'd cash it. It was our most basic and consistent policy; we always cashed the checks. . . .

As part of my duties I was assigned the telephone. There was a long list of people for whom Izzy was NOT IN. He was most particularly NOT IN to the bank, the telephone company, the rent collector or the city marshal. If a check bounced it was a "horrible mistake" and the world was "persecuting" him. There was one week we did not bounce a single check; it was a real occasion for celebration. . . .

He envisioned his position as one of leader, friend, mentor and valiant fighter for Right and Justice. If you worked for him you knew that your employer was Friend of the Underdog, Seer of Future Things to Come, Prophet Without Honor in His Own Time. In short you were working for a Social Institution and it is a well known fact that Social Institutions do not have pay their bills like other people.

Izzy had many thoughts about money: "It's not fair," he would say, "Look at me. I'm a good man. I am healthy. I am full of life. I have been in business five years. I am still poor. My mother has never given up hoping that someday I'll change my mind and become an accountant. "You know, Israel," she'll say, "there's still time."³¹

MUSIC PROMOTER

If Young's skills as a merchant left something to be desired, he was considerably more rigorous and predictable in his capacity as a concert promoter. Just months after Young opened the Folklore Center, Albert Grossman, then proprietor of the Chicago folk club the Gate of Horn, contacted him to see if he could arrange a concert by Peggy Seeger. Her show in June 1957 at the Actor's Playhouse on Sheridan Square, attended by about seventy or eighty people, was the first of over a thousand concerts Young would present over the years.

Young soon began arranging shows on a regular basis. Most of the initial ones featured New York City-based musicians including John Cohen, Barry Kornfeld, Oscar Brand, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Reverend Gary Davis, Tom Paley, Dave Van Ronk, the New Lost City Ramblers, Paul Clayton, and Dick Weissman. Young also put on the first concert in New York City by Ramblin' Jack Elliott after his return from a long stay in Europe, and

presented the first American performance by a genuine British skiffle group, the Ivy Leaguers, which consisted of sailors temporarily docked in the city.³²

Young never signed a contract with any of the artists he presented, and paid performers half the gate, assuming production costs himself. He admits, though, that he discriminated in favor of traditional performers, offering them guarantees. In shows with multiple acts each was accorded equal time and equal billing, regardless of their reputation. During his time in New York City Young imagines he staged six to seven hundred concerts and poetry readings, most costing just two dollars.³³ His productions included the first or some of the earliest performances in New York City by budding artists including Joni Mitchell, the Fugs, Emmylou Harris, Patti Smith, and Tim Buckley.

Many shows took place at the Folklore Center, and larger crowds were accommodated through renting spaces at locations including the Washington Square Methodist Church, halls at New York University and the New School, and the Carnegie Chapter Hall. In early 1960 Young also branched out in the nightclub world, cofounding the short-lived Fifth Peg, a story that he tells in an article included here.

THE FRIENDS OF OLD TIME MUSIC

One of the most notable developments in the folk revival of the late 1950s and 1960s was the increased prominence of older, Southern-based performers, many of whom had recorded in the 1920s and 1930s only to recede from the public eye. A number of these artists were located or "rediscovered" by New York City-based musicians, folklorists and record collectors, including Alan Lomax, John Cohen, Ralph Rinzler, Mike Seeger, Samuel Charters, and Art Rosenbaum.

Particularly important to the process of rediscovery was the 1952 Folkways collection *Anthology of American Folk Music*, containing vintage seventy-eight recordings and compiled by the eccentric collector and ethnomusicologist Harry Smith. Artists featured on the *Anthology* who would enjoy second careers during the revival included bluesmen Mississippi John Hurt, Furry Lewis, Sleepy John Estes, Yank Rachell, and Gus Cannon, and "old time" artists Clarence Ashley, Buell Kazee, and Dock Boggs.

In the March, 1961 issue of *Sing Out!* Young, John Cohen and Ralph Rinzler issued a statement of "aims and purposes" of the newly formed Friends of Old Time Music (FOTM). The authors noted that the contemporary urban folk audience knew that the music they played or appreciated came from "somewhere else," but that they had relatively little "direct confrontation" with the "source."³⁴

Marilyn Child, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, and Cisco Huston have been chosen by ANTA to do a three-month stint for the State Department in India. Their itinerary will be listed in a future issue.

Paul Endicott has signed Alan Mills of Canada to do an American tour. Endicott already manages Pete Seeger, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger and Guy Carawan. He has ambitious plans for 1960—which will include a national tour for Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger.

The Newport Folk Festival isn't asleep either. They have already signed Harry Belafonte, Carl Sandburg, Theo Bikel, the Gateway Singers, Josh White, in addition to many who sang last year. The Festival will take place the week before the July fourth Jazz Festival and will last three or four days, as against two days last July.

Jac Holzman, President of Elektra Records, spent a week on the West Coast. He is excited by the new trio called the Limelighters. The members are Glenn Yarbrough, Alex Hassilev and Lou Gottlieb.

Mr. Sol Hurok deserves great credit for bringing so many foreign folk song and dance groups to America. He doesn't have any esoteric view of folk music—he considers it in the same way he considers any classical or pop performer he presents—by the standards of his own taste. The Bayanihan Philippine Song and Dance Ensemble and the Polish State Folk Ballet "Slask" are doing SRO business in NYC. Monitor Records, who have put out many records of European Folk Orchestras, recently issued two records by the above groups. Long live Hurok for his ideas of presenting folk music to the public as any other entertainment.

Paul Clayton gave up languishing in a log cabin outside Charlottesville, Virginia, to take the place of Bill Bonyun on the green in Old Sturbridge, Mass. Town father and visitor alike are happy with his work.

Harry Smith, immortal compiler of the Folkways three-volume *Anthology of American Folk Music*, has not been seen for years. He even threatened to join the Mau Mau at one time. Moe Asch at Folkways would like to get in touch with him. If you know where he is, please send what information you have to Mr. Asch at 117 W. 46th Street. Bob Shelton, record reviewer for the *New York Times*, has written a large-scale article on Asch for *High Fidelity* magazine.

Mary Ann Pollar, who produces folk music concerts in the San Francisco-Berkeley area, includes a full-page writeup (usually with a discography) of singers that she presents, whenever she makes a mailing. It is a special treat to be on her mailing list—you can reach her at 6389 Racine Street, Oakland, Calif.

Dr. Ray M. Lawless of Kansas City writes that his long-awaited reference book, *Folksingers and Folksongs in America: A Handbook of Biography, Bibliography*

and *Discography*, is scheduled for publication early in 1960 by Duell, Sloan & Pierce. I hope there is a possibility of weekly supplements.

Riverside has dropped about two-thirds of its folk line and will now concentrate on Jazz and Sport Car Sounds. Their attempt to make the folk singer less important than the material presented did not interest the public as much as was expected.

Dave Van Ronk, NYC blues singer, who spent several months in LA last summer, will be the featured singer in the next issue of *Le Petit Sphinx: The Coffeehouse Review*. The Magazine comes out fairly irregularly and is published at 2425 Laurel Pass, LA 46, Calif. Future issues will feature a folk column.

Millard Lampell, one of the original members of the Almanac Singers, is writing an article on the Woody Guthrie Foundation Fund for the next issue of *Sing Out!*. I don't profess to enjoy reading baseball-average-like articles on folk music listing master numbers etc. but I did enjoy the list John Cohen gave to *Gardylloo*; 87 songs, whose titles begin with the letter U, that Woody Guthrie and Tom Paley compiled some ten years ago. John claims that the other letters are as "fully developed." Twenty cents, sent to Lee Hoffman, at 54 E. 7th St., NYC, will get a copy to you.

George Lorrie (WNCN-FM, Mondays 9-11 pm) celebrates his second anniversary on the air, in NYC, on November 9th.

Eric Weissberg has taken Paul Prestopino's place in the local Bluegrass band in NYC called the Greenbriar Boys. If anyone over sixteen still goes to Washington Square on Sunday afternoons, it's usually to hear Eric Weissberg's banjo. Lomax describes the scene well in *Esquire*: "Infant malcontents splash their displeasure in the wading pool and gather beer cans cast off by the beatniks. Hippies stand by baffled, expecting jazz." Buy a copy of the October issue of *Esquire* and read it all.

Jackson, Tennessee has made a museum of the little white cottage that Casey Jones lived in before he made his last ride in 1900. His wife lied recently, protesting to the very end that she did not have "Another Papa on the Salt Lake Line."

VOLUME 2, NO. 1 (JANUARY 1960)

PETE SEEGER must have had a great impact on England while touring the country earlier this year, for the first time. Jeff Atterton, lately of England, endowed me with some articles, from unidentified papers, on Pete's concerts. One paper writes: "To add to his difficulty of standing up to the reputation which has preceded him across the Atlantic, he has the task (unenviable at

at the Newport Folk Festival. . . . The Philadelphia Folk Festival will be held at the Wilson estate in Paoli, Pa., on August 28–30. . . . Harry Smith is preparing some 20 LPs for Folkways based on a recent four-month collecting trip among the Indians in Oklahoma. He collected some 1,200 tunes and songs.

John and Penny Cohen leave for Peru on July 4 to collect folk music and take photographs for two months. . . . Dave Sear expects to tour Africa this summer. . . . Bob and Evelyn Beers are preparing a book of traditional songs from their family repertoire for Folklore Associates. . . . Harold Leventhal now manages Judy Collins. . . . Frank Wakefield will remain with the Greenbriar Boys until after the Newport Folk Festival. . . . Steve Arkin will play banjo for Bill Monroe's Bluegrass band during the summer. . . . Eric Weissberg, Steve Mandell, and Bruce Farwell are undergoing basic training in Fort Dix, New Jersey.

"We Shall Overcome" is now the theme song of the British Committee for Non-Violent Action. . . . Carole Ann Lovin is the editor of a new mimeographed magazine called *Folk Folio*. It will feature an "opinionated folk exchange" of notes and opinions from folksingers and avid fans. Write to 636 Dogwood Avenue, Franklin Square, New York 11010, for the summer issue. . . . Steve Burnham has opened the Nexus Coffee House in El Paso and invites folksingers passing through to do a set or two to supplement local folk talent. Bunks are available for "hard travelers."

Joan Baez's new recording for Vanguard will contain Villa Lobos's classic "Bachianas Brasileiras #5." If they make a 45 rpm of the piece, it will be a hit single. . . . Carolyn Hester made the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*, which contained a large, rambling picture essay on American folk music. . . . The current issue of *Cavalier* magazine has a long article on the history of the folk music revival by Jack Goddard. . . . John Cohen and Pete Siegel have almost finished the tapes for a Folkways recording of excerpts of country music presented by the Friends of Old Time Music.

Logan English sang at a World's Fair concert recently. . . . The Friends of Old Time Music's first program devoted to the various national musics of NYC was a huge success and more concerts are being planned for the future. Peter Bartok recorded the first concert. . . . The Club 47 in Cambridge, Mass., now offers instruction in folk instruments. . . . Collet's Record Shop in England is run the way the Folklore Centers in America ought to be run, according to everything I've heard from American folksingers passing through. American folksingers are welcome to drop in at any time. . . . The Ian Campbell Folk Group was invited to sing at the Newport Folk Festival. . . . With so many commercial producers dropping folk music, it's nice to see Newport add a day (consisting mostly of traditional music) to this year's Festival.

VOLUME 14, NO. 5, NOVEMBER 1964, PP. 73, 75, 77

Peter, Paul and Mary entertained at a dinner party in the White House given by President Johnson for U Thant, Director General of the United Nations. . . . Harold Leventhal has arranged a tour of the United States for the McPeake Family of Belfast, starting at the end of March. . . . The Woody Guthrie Trust Fund made it possible for Woody's two oldest daughters, living in California, to visit him for the first time since he's been at Brooklyn State Hospital. . . . Theo Bikel became the first American folksinger to be billed as the headline attraction at the El Patio in Mexico City. Freddie Hellerman was his accompanist. Theo is very active in politics, and may run for the State Legislature of New York.

Judy Collins gave a series of concerts in Mississippi for COFO (a central organization representing all the rights groups in Mississippi) with great success. Judy Collins, Barbara Dane and the East Gate Singers gave a series of concerts. . . . Judy writes that the kids are starved for instruments, and that you should send your extra guitars, etc., to COFO, 1017 Lynch Street, Jackson, Mississippi. . . . Leon Bibb has been singing to packed houses and great applause while on his tour of the Soviet Union. . . . Henry Bradley and David Smyrl have been giving programs combining Negro folk music and Negro poetry. . . . Bill Lyons and Richard Cutler have opened LOC INC at 114 Austin Street in Cambridge, Mass. They sell old and rare instruments, and are specializing in "good service."

Clarence Cooper has left New York Hospital after successful open-heart surgery. He is looking forward to singing again very soon. . . . Bonnie Dobson has resumed her career as a soloist. . . . Mitch Greenhill and Louise Rice were married on August 1 at the Community Church in Boston. . . . Victoria Spivey is credited on the new RCA-Victor Vintage Leadbelly album, *Midnight Special*, as being the author of "T. B. Blues," and not Leadbelly. Her copyright is still in effect. . . . Dave Van Ronk, Pat Sky, and Tom Paxton are behind a new union of folksingers in Greenwich Village to demand regular wages from the many coffeehouses that have been exploiting young folksingers for many years. The situation exists because so many young folksingers come to NYC looking for the big break; they soon discover that there are fewer legitimate clubs for folk music in NYC than in almost any other large city in the country. The next stop is literally working for nothing in miserable coffeehouses in the hopes of being heard by someone that will take them out of it.

Steve Addiss and Bill Crofut have set up a foundation, AfroMed, for education in preventive medicine in Africa. . . . The Sixth Folk Music Festival of the English Folk Song and Dance Society will be held at Cecil Sharp House in

(accompanied by Happy Traum) are giving a concert tour of poetry and folk songs called "Voyages."

I always appreciate correspondence from all over the United States and the world. Send all your folk music news to the Israel Young Archives, the Folklore Center, 321 Sixth Avenue, NYC.

VOLUME 15, NO. 4, SEPTEMBER 1965, PP. 59, 60

Queen Elizabeth has turned the Beatles into Esquires by including them on her recent Honors List, thereby making them members of the Order of the British Empire. A salute to the Queen for publicly recognizing and encouraging the work of such great talent early in their career. Douglas Kennedy, past director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, may be the only other folknik to achieve such honor. . . . Our own Bob Dylan continues his takeover of the British pop market with three of his LPs in the Top Ten and two more not far behind. Discreet full-page ads in trade papers tell you he is bigger in London than Big Ben. . . . John Stewart of the Kingston Trio has been chosen to act as curator and compiler of all music pertaining to the late President Kennedy. Stewart says that there are over four hundred songs, mostly in the folk idiom. The collection will become part of the Kennedy Library at Harvard University.

The *Sounding Board*, the mimeographed quarterly of the New Haven Folk Music Society, is available for the asking from Estelle Friedman, 419 Norton Parkway. . . . Send 20 cents for *folkin' around*, 373 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. It contains a fantastic amount of information on a national basis. The listing of where the artists are is worth a dollar itself.

Folkways Records has made arrangements with M-G-M Records to create a new label, Verve-Folkways, to increase distribution of Folkways LPs. Over one hundred albums are already being considered. M-G-M will have first refusal rights. The Folkways educational catalog will be distributed exclusively by *Scholastic* magazine. . . . In keeping with President Johnson's Great Society, and in case the New Christy Minstrels are forgotten, Randy Sparks has formed a new folk group with a new sound called the New Society.

Pete Seeger will again tour Russia in October. He's perfected a system to flash translations onto a screen at the same time he is singing in English.

Joan Baez has followed her convictions and appears at many protest rallies around the country. Recently, she sang to 18,000 people at Madison Square Garden that were protesting our Vietnam policy. She told the people to listen to their hearts and not their President or God. I sort of fell in love with her again, even though I am just above draft age, when she told the young men

to say "no" to the draft and the young women to say "yes" to the young men who said "no" to the draft. Rumor hath it that Joan is starting a school to teach non-violence. . . . Janie Kazutow is going to Columbia this fall to get an MA in folklore. . . . Alan Lomax was seen in Washington Square Park listening to whatever it was that was going on.

Peter La Farge has signed with M-G-M as a Country-Western singer. . . . Sandy Ives is writing a book on Joe Scott, an old-time traditional song-writer from Maine. . . . The Folklore Center catalog is really out. Write for a copy to 321 Sixth Avenue, NYC. . . . It looks like Bob Dylan, the Beatles, Harry Smith, the Fugs, et al. will appear in Barbara Rubin's new movie. I'm playing Peter Pan.

The Highwaymen disbanded quite a while ago. The Vikings Three followed suit soon after. Now, through the extended magic of managerial alchemy, the original members of the VT are now the Highwaymen. . . . The Kingston Trio has just published an *Introduction to Bluegrass* (for banjo) by Paul Champion. . . . Paul Hunt, who delightfully used to lead square dances in Long Island (while playing the accordion), died in May. . . . Mississippi John Hurt may quit the North because of all the litigation re: who owns his rights, etc.

The Retort in Detroit has closed and the Chess Mate has arisen to take its place. . . . Gene and Francesca look great after an Israeli tour. One night, they performed for hundreds of world scientists at the Weitzman Institute and got the assemblage to raise the roof. . . . John Phillips has moved to the Virgin Islands. . . . Sonny Boy Williamson, blues harmonica player on the Chess label and a popular disc jockey [host of the live radio show "King Biscuit Time"—Ed.] in Arkansas, died in May. . . . Barry Richmond, 16 W. 16th Street, NYC, is seeking strange, bizarre folk material that might be used as such or incorporated into works presented by his Grand Guignol Theatre.

The Fat Black Pussy Cat in East Lansing, Michigan, has started to bring in a little rock-and-roll. . . . The Glad Dog Jug Band has disintegrated and Bill Armistead, its leader, has formed a new group to do stuff like the Byrds and the Beatles. Their first booking will be at Mother Blues in Chicago. . . . John Brown's new Chicago folk place, the Centaur, is still running. . . . The New Village Singers from Purdue and St. Joseph's College in Indiana have just signed with Columbia Records. Their name will soon change as they are going into rock-and-roll. . . . The Modern Folk Quartet have become the Fat City Four, probably for as long as rock-and-roll is around.

The Serendipity Singers are the first folk group to be selected by the State Department to tour Russia (for ten weeks next summer) as part of a cultural trade in which we will be sent the Bolshoi Ballet.

with it. She has a duty now to reinterpret all her old songs or to leave them for a while and concentrate on new songs, until she can go back to the old songs with her new freedom.

I finally heard P. J. Sloan's "Eve of Destruction" and I fail to see how it represents the flower of the "protest" of the "folk-rock" movement, as described by all the music trade magazines. When he compares "the hate in Red China" to the situation in "Selma, Alabama" it's like quoting a speech by President Johnson who's come out for integration and who's also come out against Red China. If anything our President is liable to call him up and give him a medal for patriotism. That's why it's hard for me to understand why Randy Sparks felt the song was "fodder for the communists." He's countering the supposed "protest" song with "Song of Hope"—a new single by the Back Porch Majority.

Some of the new Bob Dylan songs are beginning to rhyme just like the old-fashioned moon-June-spoon stuff we were all against just a few years ago. "Positively 4th St." is a quite satisfactory Tin Pan Alley product to which he adds a mystified gripe against his old pals in Greenwich Village. I fail to see what he's so worked up about. He left us behind years ago. We're just getting the message, and, however reluctantly we say it, we say "goodbye" too, and he turns around and gets bitter. Or else he's sore that we didn't work up enough sweat to earn him a million dollars in his first year in good old Greenwich Village.

John Sebastian, of the Lovin' Spoonful, has recorded and copyrighted "On the Road Again"! He learned it originally from Steve Katz when they were both members of the Even Dozen Jug Band. The Jug Band never claimed credit. John does, even though the original composer, Will Shade, is still alive. A court action is now taking place. The bad copyright laws continue to take their toll. So far not one person has become a hero from copyrighting traditional music. There are only victims and purveyors. By that definition Kenny Goldstein is a folk hero because, with all the chances he's had, he's never copyrighted a song in his name.

Phil Ochs broke the six-year-old house record for attendance at the Second Fret in Philly. He's becoming quite a commentator on the folk-scene. Last year he defended Dylan. This year he proclaimed them to be equals, and you can just imagine who'll be on top a year from now. . . . Happy and Artie Traum just get better and better. I can't describe the style but it's like they're not just nice people any more. They're great people now and it shows in the strength of their music. . . . Joan Baez's school of non-violence can be reached via Ira Sandperl, Box 206, Menlo Park, Calif. . . . The N.Y. Folk Festival may become a non-profit organization with a Board of Directors.

"Izzy, the G," will MC a four-day blues project at the Cafe Au Go Go in Greenwich Village during the Thanksgiving Vacation. Son House, Bukka White, Skip James, Big Joe Williams, Barbara Dane, the Blues Project, the 7th Sons are among the first performers to be signed up. The whole project is co-produced by Verve-Folkways Records. . . . The evening of Puerto Rican poetry and traditional music that was presented to the public in Central Park on August 23rd, was so successful that Harold Leventhal is repeating the evening at Carnegie Hall on Jan. 28th. Among featured performers are Ramito, Eddie Cruz and Rosita Valentin.

The "folk-rock" movement is pretty much a dither cooked up in a vacuum by a bunch of hip city kids. It can't last long because it does not have its feet on the ground. It is a product mostly of the recording studio and the musicians who skipped from "folk" to "blues" to "folk-rock" as the times dictated. It's also gotten a lot of support from the non-trade press—mostly in *Cavalier*, *Confidential Flash* and the *New York Times*. The quickness of the movement caught *SING OUT!* completely off guard as it all seemed to happen between issues. . . . Jesse Colin Young and Jose Feliciano are now billed as "folk-rock" artists. . . .

Send 25 cents to Box 571, Peter Stuyvesant Station, NYC, for your copy of the *East Village Other*, which contains a lot of strange material and an important article on Bob Dylan by Harry Schwartz. . . . The Fugs, led by Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupferberg, are on a Fugathon tour, coast to coast, singing the delights of sex and peace. They are so far ahead, or behind, that Grove Press will distribute the record when it comes out on Folkways. . . . Harry Smith has gotten private and business grants to work with the Seminole Indians in Florida. Andy Warhol has made a film of string games from the whole world as done by Harry. . . . Sonny, of Sonny and Cher, is not a teenager. . . . Mrs. Huntington Hartford has formed a folk-rock group for the occasion. . . .

Dionne Warwick, Joe and Edie, the Animals and the Gentries gave a salute to Bob Dylan on the *Hullabaloo* show late in October. . . . Phil Ochs's "There But for Fortune" has made the *Shindig!* show. . . . Ethel Raim and Josh Dunson were wed in September by Don West, the poet-preacher. . . . The Folk Movement last year has brought many results this year. Mallory was born to Gil and Lorrie Turner in June. Jody was born to Julius and Joanie Lester a week before Sonya was born to John and Penny Cohen in July. Bob Yellin photographed the birth of his son, Eric, to his wife Emily.

Bob Carey, of the old Tarriers, is now selling songs of the Folk Trails Organization to folk talent around the country. He will also work on a project to encourage young talent. . . . Miriam Makeba, and her husband, Hugh Maskela, have joined with Sam Fox Music Co. to publish and promote the works of African composers. . . . Mac Wiseman, old pro of the country music

VOLUME 18, NO. 4,
OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1968, PP. 40, 71

David Peel's group, the Lower East Side, has been the best music going in Washington Square for two summers now. They successfully avoided performing in the talent traps along Greenwich Village's MacDougal and 3rd Streets and learned the art of communication by singing in the streets instead. They worked without the help of a microphone for 8, 10, 12 hours a day and they took on all corners from greenhorn tourists hearing songs about pot, LSD, LBJ as they never imagined possible, to soldiers who wildly demurred from songs proving war is wrong. By avoiding the coffee houses they were able to keep to their original purpose, to sing bluntly of current local and national events while using a basic rhythm that would keep the audience's interest. Most of all, they let the audience participate in their music and action and made them feel just as important as the singers—thus creating equality. There's something about the open space sometimes in Washington Square Park that makes performer and audience feel themselves as part of the same thing that you rarely get when you pay admission and you also have to buy a cup of impossible coffee for a dollar or more. The group attends every local happening, big or small, paid or not, and perform with the confidence that they are expressing the people's feelings around them. Last year they went along with the craze and called themselves "Yellow Banana," but this year they are mature and call themselves the "Lower East Side." Elektra is recording them in the Park during the regular Sunday afternoon open-air hootenannies. Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser, who is so sharp on American singers, flipped over them and has invited Peel to Germany to sing at the Essener Song Tage in September.

Folkways will soon issue the finest work of Harry Smith when they release his recordings of the Peyote Ceremony of the Kiowa Indians of Oklahoma. This is the beginning of a new kind of documentation where the public for the first time will be presented with a sufficient mass of American Indian song so that they can hear this music on the same level as they are already accustomed to when they listen, say, to African and Balinese music. In a sense this means that everyone can now be his own musicologist. A man will no longer have to be literate to understand music and to learn the sublime secrets of the universe. A sufficient mass of material is presented so that any listener, including future listeners, can form his own ideas and understanding. This is something whole generations of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have not been able to do. God bless Harry Smith and Moe Asch, too, for making it possible. This event will be more mindblowing than anything the Beatles ever did and probably won't get as much attention.

Jerry Schoenbaum, who was responsible for the first Blues Bag at the Cafe Au Go Go and who was going to bring folkmusic to the masses by joining the forces of Verve and Folkways, is now in charge of the Talent Development Department of Atlantic Records. In between he ran Verve-Forecast Records and presented artists such as the Blues Project and Richie Havens to the public. . . . Roy Acuff received the B'nai Brith Humanitarian Award on June 16. . . . The new word for folkmusic is "hip rock" or "progressive rock". . . . Gene Yellin is the best of the East Coast's new batch of singers that are interested in bluegrass. He sings with a lot of groups, has helped out Frank Wakefield at Gerde's when his band left suddenly last summer, and will probably align himself with the Star Spangled String Band on a fun if not a permanent basis.

It was fun to see Taj Mahal featured as a Fresh Face at the Newport Folkfest this year. I'm sure this qualifies him for the "Satchel Paige of Folk Music Award of the Year." . . . Not so much fun was to see Buell Kazee cut off after two songs (six minutes) on the Friday night show because the program had started four minutes late and the Directors wanted the show to "gallop along." Later, Ed Young and his marvelous fife and drum band was allotted three minutes to make their "impact," and Libba Cotten had to look to the wings to see if she could do more than two songs (No) and so on. Joan Baez (35 minutes) and Arlo Guthrie (35 minutes) never had to look to the wings as they confidently went on to do their segments. It's not fair. If traditional music is good enough to be put on the stage it is good enough to be allowed to make a point. It's not enough to say that the kids really interested in the music could hear them in workshops. That's saying the 15,000 people in the evening aren't interested in folkmusic and at best can only be tricked into hearing "folk" music by allowing traditional performers to act as warm up crews for the big guns later on in the program. . . . While manning the *SING OUT!* booth with Josh Dunson some girl came on stage with the Charles River Valley Boys and neither of us could identify her. Later we found out that it was Joan Baez. Funny thing but I really think it's time for Joan Baez to go on her own and not imitate others.

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ENGLISH SCOOP FROM AFAR:

Probably the most exciting and popular artists in the British folkclub circuit are Martin Carthy and Dave Swarbrick. It is rumored that the Newport Folk

A Tribute to Harry Smith

Source: Written for the boxed set Harry Smith Project:
Anthology of American Folk Music Revisited
(Shout Factory, 2006)

Harry Smith (1923–1991)—an ethnomusicologist, fine artist, experimental filmmaker, occultist, and archivist of a wide array of cultural expressions—played a major, albeit discreet, role in the folk revival through his production of the 1952 Folkways issue *Anthology of American Folk Music*. Containing three two-disc albums divided into the simple categories of “Ballads,” “Social Music,” and “Songs,” the *Anthology* collected vernacular music issued on commercial 78 rpm discs in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Key musicians in the folk revival studied these songs religiously and incorporated them into their repertoires, and the set also prompted the “rediscovery” and/or career revivals of artists whose vintage recordings appeared on the *Anthology*. These included Clarence Ashley, Buell Kazee, Mississippi John Hurt, Furry Lewis, Dock Boggs, Sleepy John Estes, Yank Rachell, Gus Cannon, and Mother Maybelle Carter.

Smith’s work gained much broader acclaim in the wake of Smithsonian-Folkways’ reissue of the *Anthology* in 1993, and Greil Marcus’s 1997 book *Invisible Republic: Bob Dylan’s Basement Tapes* (New York: Henry Holt and Co.), which focused on what Marcus interpreted as Smith’s depiction of the “old, weird America.” An earlier version of Young’s essay was intended for inclusion in the reissue of the *Anthology*, but did not appear there. The Harry Smith Project CD and DVD boxed set was drawn from three concerts produced by Hal Wilner in 1999 and 2001 that featured songs from the *Anthology*; it also includes a documentary about Smith.

Before Harry Smith there was Alan Lomax. We kids who began to like folk music in the mid-’40s (at around 16 to 18 years old) listened to the collections he made of early commercial recordings titled *Listen To Our Story* and *Mountain Frolic*—two albums of 78s that we played when we weren’t listening to the real thing, real enough for us. Leadbelly, Richard Dyer-Bennet, Woody Guthrie, Tony Kraber, Rev. Gary Davis, as well as other quasi-legendary singers, we

could listen to and talk with at Friday night parties at the American Square Dance Group, which cost 25 cents per visit, or \$3 a year, including three hours of wild square and round dancing. We bought all the 78s of the artists we might and the recordings were like extensions of their appearances onstage or at our parties. I separated the artists I knew from the artists I heard on the Lomax collections, as those recordings were from a time I could not imagine, being so young. I would be hard-pressed to name any of those artists today. Believe it or not, most of my friends and I never thought to ask Josh or Pete or Brownie or Woody or Leadbelly about where they were born, for example, or where and how they learned the songs that took our young brains by storm (replacing the Saturday night *Hit Parade* that was our main source of music) and why they all ended up in New York City. Everything was simply taken for granted.

I know that Smith’s *Anthology of American Folk Music* came out in 1952, but I am not sure I got a hold of it right away. *Sing Out!*, the folk music magazine of the time, reviewed only “political” recordings and overlooked the *Anthology*, for at least the first few years. I’d never heard of Harry Smith, even as I was becoming a fledgling Village character—you know, I came to see the sights and I became one of the sights, but I never sighted Harry Smith. I assumed, as others did, that Harry Smith was a pseudonym for Alan Lomax or at least a substantial folklorist we might not know by name, but who would have almost an equal standing to Lomax. Nothing less!

I listened to the albums regularly, and I loved the notices, written in as simple a style as one can forge out of language, like a tabloid, of songs I knew or came to know. I wasn’t a discographical freak, but sometimes I wondered if the original producers (what with the carefully labeled information listing names, dates and artists) were ever paid royalties by Folkways. I never dreamed that I would be presenting many of the artists on these (for me) unknown labels, in my own series of concerts. The *Anthology* permeated my work sphere, but reviewing my own blissful life in folk music, I see now that I took it for granted, just as I did other great areas of life.

I met the real Harry Smith at a party in my apartment where he vomited on the ample bosom of a famed folk singer—to everyone’s horror or delight. Harry could insult anyone he met and did. He once made fun of my father’s Polish background and I immediately threw him out of the store, which my father always thankfully remembered. From time to time, Harry left films, recordings and manuscripts in my store, and I reproach myself to this day for returning them at his demand—to be dropped in a sewer, or its equivalent, five minutes later.

I can date my first meeting with Harry as no earlier than 1960, for late in 1959 I wrote in my Folklore Center Newsletter of the time: “Harry Smith, immortal compiler of the Folkways *Anthology of American Folk Music*, has not

been seen for years. He even threatened to join the Mau Mau at one time. Moe Asch at Folkways would like to get in touch with him . . ."

When we became friends we never talked about folk music; just jazz, film, string games, Ukrainian Easter eggs, Seminole wedding costumes, an upcoming trip to record Kiowa Indians, etc. I bought some string games he pasted on cardboard, which are now considered unique, for ridiculous sums of money. I even bought a double triptych from him, for an even more ridiculous sum as a metaphysical repayment for all the one- and two-dollar bills I gave him, so that he could take a taxi to Allen Ginsberg's, where he would get \$5 so that he could take a cab to Peggy Guggenheim's to get \$2,000 to visit the Seminoles in Florida. Moe Asch and Apple Records never forgave me for purchasing *that* piece of art.

Folk Music and Copyright, Lomax and Leadbelly

Source: Previously unpublished; a version of this paper was presented by Young at the 1997 Annual Meeting of the Society of Ethnomusicology, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Young wrote this article between the mid- and late 1990s, amending it many times as he encountered more information on the topics of folklorist Alan Lomax, copyright, and musician Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter in his library and, notably, in his own writings since the 1950s. (Although Ledbetter is still commonly known as "Leadbelly," he spelled his name "Lead Belly," and in recent years that spelling has been employed more often, such as on Smithsonian-Folkways reissues of his music.) The main theme concerns the use of copyright by folklorists John Avery Lomax and his son Alan Lomax, who first encountered Ledbetter at the Angola Penitentiary in Louisiana in July of 1933. Ledbetter was released from prison in August of 1934 (due to having served "good time" and not to the efforts of the Lomaxes, as is widely thought), and the following month began working as John Lomax's driver.

The Lomaxes had recorded Ledbetter on several occasions at Angola, and continued to record him after his release. The issue of copyright and rights more generally appears to have initially arisen in tandem with the pending publication of John Lomax's book *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Lead Belly* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), as well as in relation to Ledbetter making commercial recordings for the ARC label in early 1935. Many of Ledbetter's recordings were subsequently published as authored by himself and the Lomaxes, including "Good Night, Irene," which was a big hit for the Weavers in 1950. (An account of the Lomaxes' relationship with Ledbetter, including copyright, can be found at the website for Lomax's non-profit organization Association for Cultural Equity: http://www.culturalequity.org/currents/ce_currents_leadbelly_faqs.php.)

Young's essay addresses many topics, but a central concern is that there be more transparency regarding the process by which these copyrighted songs were "authored." Historically, folk song collectors commonly created a "definitive" printed version of a folk song by piecing together parts from different versions of the song that they encountered,