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"Everybody Makes Up Folksongs": Pete Seeger's 1950s College Concerts and the Democratic Potential of Folk Music

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Abstract

During the 1950s, while blacklisted from the music industry and investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee, Pete Seeger performed at colleges and universities across the United States. Although these concerts were crucial to his political work during the decade—Seeger repeatedly called them "the most important job I ever did in my life"—they have been neglected in scholarship. This article positions Seeger's campus concerts as crucial sites for demonstrating the democratic potential of folk music. Seeger sought to teach his audiences that folk music was an everyday activity created by people around the world, as well as an inherently participatory genre that could model civic cooperation. The democratic and educational purposes of his concerts marked a change from the labor advocacy of his 1940s work, and reflected ideas that he was then promulgating in his Sing Out! *columns and Folkways Records. This essay examines his appearance at Cornell University on December 6, 1954 to illustrate three dimensions of Seeger's conception of democracy: audience participation, pluralistic repertoire, and rejection of the music industry. While illustrating Seeger's political actions, the Cornell concert also surfaces a tension between democratic participation and the class dynamics inherent in performing folk music for collegiate audiences.*

On March 29, 1961, at the Foley Square Courthouse in Manhattan, Judge Thomas F. Murphy found the folksinger Pete Seeger guilty on ten counts of contempt of Congress. His conviction brought to a close the United States government's decade-long investigation of Seeger's communist ties. The hunt had begun with FBI agent Harvey Matusow's infiltration of People's Songs, Seeger's organization devoted to publishing labor and folk music, in the late 1940s. Matusow testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee in February 1952 that People's Songs was a communist front. Seeger was quickly blacklisted from the music industry, and three years later subpoenaed to appear before the HUAC on August 18, 1955. Many called to testify invoked the Fifth Amendment, the right to refuse self-incrimination, to avoid answering the committee's questions and thus incriminating themselves or others. Seeger instead invoked the First Amendment, the right to free speech, to challenge the committee's right to ask questions about his or anyone's political activities.[1] The Fifth Amendment defense was constitutionally

[1] In his words, the Fifth Amendment says "you have no right to ask me this question," the First Amendment says "you have no right to ask anyone this question." Pete Seeger, "Summary of Government Charges, 1955–1957," in *The Pete Seeger Reader*, ed. Ronald D. Cohen and James Capaldi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 129. The full transcript of Seeger's appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee is reprinted in Alec Wilkinson, *The Protest Singer: An Intimate Portrait of Pete Seeger* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 126–52. The key line indicating his argument is, when asked if he is drawing on the Fifth Amendment, ". . .although I do not want to in any way discredit or depreciate or depredate the witnesses that have used the Fifth Amendment . . . I simply feel it is improper for this committee to ask such questions" (130).

protected, but the First Amendment, directly contesting the government's authority, was not. As a result, Seeger knew that he could be separately charged for each of the many questions he refused to answer. Over a protracted period of six years, Seeger would be indicted, tried, and convicted. The week following his conviction, he was sentenced to one year in prison for each count, with his sentences to be served concurrently. His sentence was perhaps more lenient than he expected, but Seeger finally learned that the threat of prison that had dogged him over the previous decade would soon become a reality. (Seeger's conviction would be dismissed due to technicalities regarding the HUAC's investigative powers, but not until May 1962.)

Seeger first publicly addressed his conviction in his "Johnny Appleseed Jr." column in the October–November 1961 issue of *Sing Out*, the folk music magazine.[2] Seeger published this column for each issue of the magazine since late 1954, but had never discussed his own very public trials and tribulations. Avoiding it in the wake of his conviction was not an option since he did not know how many more chances he would have to write before going to jail. His essay, titled "The Theory of Cultural Guerrilla Tactics," summarized what he had tried to accomplish during the 1950s, and how he hoped his work would continue on during his imprisonment. The decade had been precarious and challenging, but it was also the most prolific time of his life. He wrote regularly for *Sing Out!* and served on its editorial board. He recorded continually, pressing over twenty LPs for Folkways and Columbia, including his *American Favorite Ballads* series. He composed the music for songs including "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" and "The Bells of Rhymney," and helped bring Zilphia Horton's "We Shall Overcome" and Malvina Reynolds's "Little Boxes" to broader attention. He also travelled across the country playing at whatever venues would host him: churches, summer camps, Jewish organizations, and colleges.

All of this activity was part and parcel with his "cultural guerrilla tactics," as he called them. He knew that the accusations of communist allegiances prohibited him from landing steady employment. Instead, he maintained a community of support large enough to make ends meet but diversified enough to avoid total catastrophe in the event that the long-dreaded prison sentence came to pass. This community provided an audience for his concerts, recordings, and writings that enabled him to circulate his beliefs about folk music in spite of the blacklist and federal investigation. In the *Sing Out!* column, Seeger argued that the most important audience for him, the one he believed would most fervently reject McCarthyism and carry his work forward, was college students. He wrote, "I kept as home base this one sector of our society which refused most courageously to knuckle under to the witch hunters: the college students. . . . The young people who have learned songs from me are taking them to thousands of places where I myself could never expect to go. Though I cannot get on network TV, many of my friends do. Though I cannot get a job in a university, those whom I have helped get interested

[2] The Summer 1961 issue reprinted the transcript of his statement to the court during sentencing on April 4, 1961 on pages 10–11, but his Johnny Appleseed Jr. column discussed his authorial misattribution of a 1930s Detroit labor song.

in folk music are getting them. But even more important are the literally hundreds of thousands of amateur guitar pickers and banjo pickers—and each has an important job. Like fireflies they light up the night."[3]

Seeger saw his concerts at colleges around the country as crucial opportunities to spread his ideas about folk music, and he believed that his student audiences were his best hope for carrying on his messages to new places and future generations. Seeger would reiterate the importance of his college appearances for his 1950s political work throughout his life. He released an LP of a 1955 concert with a predominantly collegiate audience at the Museum of Modern Art, *With Voices Together We Sing*. A quarter-century later, Seeger recorded a concert at Sanders Theater at Harvard as another representation of the work he had done on campuses since the 1950s.[4] Interviewed by banjoist Rik Palieri in 1999 for his Vermont public television show *Songwriter's Notebook*, Seeger claimed, "I kept on going from one college to another college. Most important job in my life! I could've kicked the bucket in 1960, but I had done the most important job in my entire life. I had introduced the songs of Lead Belly and Woody Guthrie to a whole new generation of young people, and these were the people who carried it on!"[5] Similar quotes dot his writings and interviews from the 1960s to the 2000s.[6]

Seeger's enthusiasm for his college audiences, however, has not been matched by scholars. Most biographies mention Seeger's turn to campus concerts in the wake of the blacklist, but focus by and large on the HUAC investigation and trial. Part of the marginalization of his college activity stems from a paucity of primary source information. Only nine of his over one hundred college concerts from the 1950s and early 1960s are known to be extant (see Table 1).[7] Smithsonian Folkways released a 1960 concert at Bowdoin in 2012, and a partial transcript of a 1961 Teachers College concert was reprinted in a 2013 anthology of Seeger's writings, but most archival materials remain scattered in the Smithsonian Folkways Archives, the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, private holdings, and college newspaper archives. Along with the scarcity of primary sources, scholars of folk music have generally been critical of the prevalence of urban, middle-to-upper-class, and liberal folk musicians such as those found on college campuses in the revival. The earliest scholarly works on Seeger and the folk revival written in the 1960s and 1970s were generally predicated on Cultural Front politics positioning

[3] Pete Seeger, "The Theory of Cultural Guerrilla Tactics," *Sing Out!* 11, no. 4 (October–November 1961): 60.

[4] Pete Seeger, *With Voices Together We Sing*, Folkways FA 2452, 1955; Pete Seeger, *Singalong Sanders Theater 1980*, Smithsonian Folkways SFW40027, [1980] 1992.

[5] Pete Seeger, interview with Rik Palieri, Beacon, NY, 1999, Rik Palieri Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

[6] *Pete Seeger in His Own Words*, ed. Rob Rosenthal and Sam Rosenthal (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2012), 75 [from 1966: "I started singing for students in colleges and universities, the one section of the population which refused to knuckle under to McCarthyism. . ."]; Ken Perlman, "Interview: Pete Seeger (Part 2)," *Banjo Newsletter* 27, no. 12 (October 2000), 26; and Aviva Shen, "Where Have All the Protest Singers Gone," *Smithsonian*, April 2012, http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/pete-seeger-where-have-all-the-protest-songs-gone-159453359/.

[7] The figure does not include the 1965 Verve album *Pete Seeger on Campus*, which does not list the concert or concerts used on the recording.

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Table 1. Known extant recordings of Pete Seeger's college concerts, 1953–60.

November 18, 1953	Columbia University—"American Folk Music and Its World Origins Series" seminar (Smithsonian Folkways Archives, CD 333, 356, 357, 358); likely partial.
December 6, 1954	Cornell University (Mike Seeger Folder, AFC 1988/029, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress).
February 15, 1955	Reed College ("We Sing Songs of the People: Peter Seeger, His Banjo, His Foot," bootleg released by Modern Doghouse Records (MDH 301, 1955); banter missing, likely partial.
April 16, 1955	Oberlin College (AFC 1975/019, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress).
October 25, 1956	Northwestern University w/Bill Broonzy (Smithsonian Folkways Archives, CD 458, 465); likely partial.
November 9, 1956	Carleton College (Gene Bluestein Collection, SFC Audio Open Reel FT-20379/11514, Southern Folklife Collection, University of North Carolina); likely partial.
May 6, 1958	University of Iowa (Alan Hausmann Collection, AFC 2013/001, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress).
October 30, 1959	University of Iowa (Alan Hausmann Collection, AFC 2013/001, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress).
March 13, 1960	Bowdoin College (Smithsonian Folkways Records SFW40184, 2012)
December 10, 1960	Indian Neck Folk Festival, Yale University (Smithsonian Folkways Archives, CD 396, 397, 407); likely partial.

the value of folk music in its potentiality for articulating working-class solidarity.[8] From this perspective, the urban revival signaled the *embourgeoisment* and thus political denouement of folk music. Later scholarship, more invested in exploring the power dynamics implicit in the cultural formation of tradition, has construed urban revivalists as passionate yet privileged outsiders who wielded significant socioeconomic and epistemological power over folk music.[9]

Both paradigms have constructed a chasm between the socioeconomic privilege of collegiate audiences and the political value of folk music. Scholarly attention to the power wielded by urban revivalists has importantly challenged received myths of authenticity and purity central to popular writing about the revival. Yet it has led Seeger's biographers to overlook or diminish the fact that Seeger continuously and conscientiously targeted college students as integral audiences for his political messages. David Dunaway's landmark Seeger biography *How Can I Keep from Singing*, for example, opens with an anecdote of Seeger playing at an unnamed Massachusetts college that illustrates the supposed incongruity between the

[8] David Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing: Pete Seeger* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981); Richard Reuss, *American Folk Music and Left-Wing Politics, 1927–1957* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000); Ellen Stekert, "Cents and Nonsense in the Urban Folksong Movement: 1930–1966," in *Folklore and Society: Essays in Honor of Benjamin A. Botkin*, ed. Bruce Jackson (Hatboro: Folklore Associates, 1966), 153–66; R. Serge Denisoff, *Great Day Coming: Folk Music and the American Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971).

[9] David Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), esp. 156; Ray Allen, *Gone to the Country: The New Lost City Ramblers and the Folk Music Revival* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

"overeducated" audience and Seeger's political message. Allan Winkler's short biography *To Everything There is a Season* similarly characterizes his college audiences as "not always knowledgeable about folk music but eager to listen and learn."[10] If collegians were "overeducated" or "not always knowledgeable," why did Seeger consistently turn to them during the revival?

Seeger's campus concerts were opportunities to the folksinger to present folk music as a tool for democratic action. Seeger sought to teach his audiences that folk music was an everyday activity created by people around the world, as well as an inherently participatory genre that could model civic cooperation. The democratic and educational purposes of his concerts marked a change from the labor advocacy of his 1940s work, and reflected ideas that he was then promulgating in his *Sing Out!* columns and Folkways records. This essay draws on concerts between 1954 and 1960, but specifically focuses on the earliest college concert certain to have survived in full: an appearance at Cornell University on December 6, 1954.[11] The concert was taped and deposited by Pete's half-brother Mike at the American Folklife Center in 1987, but remained in the archives until a research visit I conducted in June 2016. I have transcribed Seeger's remarks throughout the concert, which are included as Appendix 1 at the end of this article. (Page numbers of the transcription are indicated by in-text citations.)

The Cornell concert provides an important and in-depth view of Seeger's political work during the 1950s. This decade in Seeger's life, and the folk revival more broadly, is perceived as an ebb tide characterized by the persecution and political conflict wrought by the blacklist and federal investigation.[12] The biographical focus on these events is understandable given their profound importance for Seeger's legacy, but it results in his other activities being exclusively framed through his struggles. As many scholars of Cold War music have noted, the conflict's sharp discursive fault lines can easily translate to overarching binaristic frames, whether between East and West, repression and resistance, or others. Such binaries mask both the porousness of supposedly hegemonic systems as well as the diverse musical activities of participants supposedly associated with one side.[13] Seeger's concerts had obvious resonances with his political travails,

[10] Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, 1; Allan Winkler, *To Everything There is a Season: Pete Seeger and the Power of Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 71. Two primary sources regarding college concerts have been reprinted. *The Pete Seeger Reader* reprints a review of his April 11, 1961 concert at the University of Michigan, Seeger's first public appearance following his conviction. David Marcus, "Seeger Cites Battle of Politics, Arts," *Michigan Daily*, April 15, 1961, 1–2, reprinted in Cohen and Capaldi, ed., *The Pete Seeger Reader*, 156–57. *Pete Seeger in His Own Words* also includes a partial transcript from Teacher's College concert. Rosenthal and Rosenthal, ed., *Pete Seeger in His Own Words*, 247–51.

[11] The 1953 Columbia concert cited in Table 1 was recorded by Folkways on four tape reels, presumably for potential recording, but Seeger partially recorded over them for later projects. As a result, its completeness cannot be ascertained. The Cornell concert was recorded on four tape reels and untouched afterward.

[12] For a recent corrective in folk music scholarship, see Ronald D. Cohen and Rachel Clare Donaldson, *Roots of the Revival: American and British Folk Music in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

[13] For recent articulations of this argument, see Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Nicholas Tochka, *Audible States:*

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which became more explicit as the investigation progressed.[14] Yet Seeger's praise of his college performances usually came when interviewers asked about the limitations the blacklist had on his work, suggesting that he thought of his concerts as opportunities occasioned by unfortunate circumstances rather than last resorts. His college concerts were not uniformly directed toward challenging McCarthyism, but about educating his college audience about the democratic potentials and intellectual dimensions of folk music in a way that encouraged them to take up folk singing as well.

Examining his politics through the concert setting can also shed a more nuanced light on Seeger's political expression. Many of his fans and biographers have idolized Seeger for his commitment to social justice among a number of fronts, but the introspective and self-critical Seeger was rarely so assured about articulating his own beliefs. He resisted calling himself a communist throughout his career, but doing so may not have solely been a strategy of cagily maintaining plausible deniability or resisting the term's Cold War symbolic metastasis. Rather, he felt the term, or any such label, shifted explication of his political positions away from the place in which they had their strongest expression: the concert setting. In an interview conducted for *How Can I Keep from Singing*, David Dunaway asked Seeger to articulate how communism shaped his political convictions. Seeger demurred from defining himself through the term, instead arguing that "my work is largely trying to figure out the right song to sing to the right people."[15] Seeger's response may seem to be a self-deprecatory copout or an invocation of music's ineffability to strategically deny potentially actionable political convictions, but it implores scholars to look first to his concerts to understand his politics. The main of Seeger's political work lay in the songs Seeger sang, how he organized his concerts, how he framed his songs, how he interacted with his audience, and what he desired his audience take away from the concert. For Seeger, college students were potential links in the chain of folk music's transmission, and his concerts were intimate, direct, and powerful opportunities to forge that chain. The 1954 Cornell concert illuminates how these politics were becoming developed and

Socialist Politics and Popular Music in Albania (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); and Lisa Jakelski, *Making New Music in Cold War Poland: The Warsaw Autumn Festival, 1956–68* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

[14] In the 1960 Bowdoin concert, for example, he sang two songs by Ernie Marrs, "Quiz Show" and "What A Friend We Have in Congress." The first song, ostensibly about the "Quiz Show" scandal of the 1950s, turns in the final verse to the House Un-American Activities Committee trials as a show where "the contestants get jail." The second song is about military spending, but knowing laughter is heard in the audience when Seeger sings the opening titular line. Pete Seeger, *The Complete Bowdoin College Concert, 1960*, Smithsonian Folkways Records SFW40814, 2012. Dunaway also mentions Seeger discussing his impending House Un-American Activities Committee meeting at a Camp Woodland concert in 1955 in *How Can I Keep from Singing*, 169–70.

[15] Pete Seeger, interview with David Dunaway, December 14, 1977, 24, in David Dunaway Collection of Interviews with Pete Seeger and Contemporaries, Folder 15, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Seeger is similarly quoted in Gene Marine, "Guerrilla Minstrel," in *The Pete Seeger Reader*, 28. Seeger explained more clearly his feelings about what Communism meant to him in "Letter to my Grandchildren," November 30, 1956, reprinted in Rosenthal and Rosenthal, ed., *Pete Seeger in His Own Words*, 99–102.

expressed, as well as the tension between Seeger's conception of democracy and the class dynamics inherent in performing folk music for collegiate audiences.

From Nightclubs to Colleges

The beginning of the 1950s was a surprisingly prosperous time for Seeger. 1949 had witnessed the closing of People's Songs for failure to pay the bills. In September of that year, Seeger was a victim of a riot in Peekskill, New York following a benefit concert for Paul Robeson. As Seeger and other attendees left, they were directed down a narrow road by police where Ku Klux Klan members threw stones at their cars.[16] His fortunes began to change when a stint that year at the Village Vanguard with fellow folksingers Ronnie Gilbert, Lee Hays, and Fred Hellerman, a quartet who called themselves The Weavers, led to a record contract with Decca. The B-side of their second release, a song written by their recently deceased friend Huddie Ledbetter called "Goodnight Irene," reached the top of the Billboard charts in August 1950 and remained in the top spot for thirteen weeks. The success of "Goodnight Irene" led to nightclub gigs all across the country paying thousands of dollars a week, and their records sold millions of copies over the next two years.

The Weavers' rise in public notoriety dovetailed with the intensification of federal investigations into the supposed communist infiltration into politics and entertainment. Seeger had enrolled in the Young Communist League as a Harvard undergraduate, and his participation in union rallies as part of the Almanac Singers along with the labor songs circulated in *People's Songs* had not gone unnoticed by the FBI. Seeger formally left the Communist Party around 1950 due to growing differences of opinion (not to mention a growing awareness of the horrors of Stalin's reign), but McCarthyism considered any affiliation with the Communist Party past or present, or attendance at any Party event, to be actionable.[17] In 1951, anti-Communist publications accused Seeger and the Weavers of harboring Communist sympathies. The most damning was *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television*, published by the right-wing organization *Counterattack*, which listed Seeger along with specific concert dates that he performed for supposedly Communist organizations.[18] Their appearance at the Ohio State Fair in August of that year was cancelled at the last minute due to political pressure. The Weavers went under FBI surveillance, and similar cancellations became more frequent as aspersions of communist associations circulated in the press. By the time of Matusow's testimony to the House Un-American Activities Committee in February 1952 (testimony he later recanted due to charges of perjury), the group could scarcely find work anywhere.

[16] For one of Seeger's many discussions on Peekskill, see Pete Seeger, *The Incompleat Folksinger*, ed. Jo Metcalf Schwartz (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 464–66.

[17] Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, 148.

[18] *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television* (New York: American Business Consultants, 1950), 130–31. For another contemporary accusation of Seeger's Communist ties, published in the conservative *New York Daily Telegram*, see Frederick Woltman, "Melody Weaves On, Along Party Lines," in Cohen and Capaldi, ed., *Pete Seeger Reader*, 109–10.

Seeger often quoted Lee Hays's joke that the Weavers took a sabbatical that turned into a Mondayical and a Tuesdayical.[19] This folksy pun elides the very real pragmatic pressure that the blacklist exerted on Seeger. He was the breadwinner for a family with a new house and two young children—Seeger conformed to expected mid-century familial roles—who suddenly found himself without a job in an environment where his suspected political beliefs prohibited him from getting one. He scrounged up work within various organizations in the New York leftist community. He taught at the Downtown Community School in New York, an experimental school associated with Camp Woodland. He took a more active role in People's Artists, the successor organization to People's Songs that issued *Sing Out!* magazine, joining the staff and contributing articles and songs.[20] He started to record more frequently with Folkways Records, who paid him a monthly stipend in lieu of royalties. These activities allowed Seeger to maintain some semblance of an income, but the river of cash he made with the Weavers had definitely slowed into a trickle. Since he knew that his past political activities could land him in jail at any time, he wanted to make as much money as possible to support his family.

As a result, Seeger performed at whatever venues would be willing to support (or at least overlook) his political views. He found sympathy in Unitarian churches, summer camps, high schools, Jewish organizations, and especially colleges. He had performed at colleges on occasion during the late 1940s and early 1950s, but Pete Kameron, the Weavers' manager, preferred to book the quartet in nightclubs because they were more profitable venues.[21] With nightclubs no longer an option, the college campus took a more central role in his touring career as the blacklist progressed. Colleges were logical venues since folk music had been popular among students since the 1940s. The extent of campus folk singing had led Seeger to frequently joke, as he did at the beginning of the 1954 Cornell concert, "I've been around this country singing in an awful lot of schools and colleges. You can't throw a stick without hitting a guitar picker in some places. And sometimes you can't throw it hard enough" (23).[22] Many schools had leftist student organizations supportive of Seeger's political convictions that could sponsor events through an

[19] Seeger, *The Incompleat Folksinger*, 23. Also quoted in Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, 156; and Seeger, interview with Palieri.

[20] These organizations were hardly safe havens from red-baiting. Betty Sanders and Irwin Silber, the chairwoman and executive secretary of People's Artists, had been subpoenaed by the HUAC in 1952. The subpoenas were cancelled, but the organization was almost certainly under watch. "People's Artists Leaders Subpenaed [*sic*]," *Sing Out!* 2, no. 8 (February 1952): 2; cancellation mentioned in *Sing Out!* 2, no. 10 (April 1952), 2. Silber would ultimately appear before the committee in 1958. Reuss, *American Folk Music*, 252. The head of Camp Woodland and the Downtown Community School, Norman Studer, would also be subpoenaed in 1955. Subpoena referenced in Norman Studer, "Folk Festival of the Catskills," *New York Folklore Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1960): 10.

[21] Pete Seeger, interview with David Dunaway, January 12, 1977, 70, in David Dunaway Collection of Interviews with Pete Seeger and Contemporaries, Folder 10, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[22] This version is heard in Pete Seeger, Concert at Oberlin College, February 16, 1955, AFC 1975/019, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Further discussion on the 1950s campus folk revival is found in David Blake, "*Bildung* Culture: Elite Popular Music and the American University, 1960–2010" (Ph.D. diss., Stony Brook University, 2014), 44–47.

academic commitment to free speech and student activity board funding. Colleges thus had a built-in enthusiastic and sympathetic audience, and they could pay a lot more than a Folkways record or a *Sing Out!* column.

Seeger thus began booking concerts at schools across the country through Howard Leventhal, who had taken over the Weavers' booking duties shortly before their "sabbatical," and his wife Toshi, who acted as agent while also caring for their children. Given the limited concert venues available to him, not to mention the looming threat of imprisonment, Seeger accepted almost any opportunity offered over the next decade, sending him to colleges across the country. Liberal northeastern private schools were his home base—he played at Swarthmore, MIT, and Brown in 1953, and led a six-part lecture-performance series on "American Folk Music and its World Origins" at Columbia from October 1953 to January 1954.[23] Seeger's 1954 Cornell concert is representative of his early college performances. The hill above Cayuga's waters had been a frequent stop for Seeger, hosting two of his earliest college concerts in the late 1940s and five shows between 1953 and 1960.[24] Cornell was only a few hours northwest of Seeger's Beacon home up Route 17, and he had familial connections to the university through his older brother Charles Jr., who had been a faculty member in the astronomy department in the late 1940s. His 1954 concert was sponsored by Students for Peace, a student organization formed in 1951 to protest the Korean War, McCarthyism, and nuclear proliferation. He would also meet with an American Folk Literature course taught by Harold Thompson, who would contribute program notes to Seeger's *With Voices Together We Sing* album the following year.

Within a couple of years, he was performing at private and public schools across the country. The extent of his concertizing during these years is not known due to archival lacunae, but Irwin Silber praised him in *Sing Out!* in 1955 for appearing in all forty-eight states.[25] Recognizing their growing importance to his career, Seeger

[23] Seeger played at Swarthmore on April 17, headlining Swarthmore's annual folk festival, MIT on April 29 and October 20, and Brown on October 19. "Swarthmore College Folk Festival, List of Performers, 1945–60," ca. 1960, Swarthmore College Folder, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; "Folk Singer Will Be Presented by L.S.C. This Wed.," *The Tech*, April 24, 1953, 1; "Pete Seeger Gives Folksong Program Tuesday in 10-250," *The Tech*, October 16, 1953, 1; Ruth Tripp, "Pete Seeger, Ballad Singer, Heard at Meeting Planned by Brown U Enthusiasts," *Providence Journal*, October 20, 1953, Moses and Frances Asch Collection, Folder 35, Smithsonian Folkways Archives, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.; "American Folk Music and its World Origins Seminar Pamphlet, Columbia University," ca. 1953–54, Pete Seeger Folder, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[24] In addition to the December 1954 concert, he performed at Cornell on May 20, 1946; September 25, 1948; November 12, 1953; May 14, 1957; March 1, 1958; and February 15, 1960. "The University Calendar," *Cornell Bulletin*, May 17, 1946, 4; "Pete Seeger to Perform Here Tonite," *Cornell Daily Sun*, September 25, 1948, 1; "Pete Seeger to Perform Here," *Cornell Daily Sun*, November 11, 1953, 8; Pete Seeger concert advertisement, *Cornell Daily Sun*, May 14, 1957, 6; Ellen E. McDonald, "Music Review—Pete Seeger," *Cornell Daily Sun*, March 3, 1958, 8; "Pete Seeger to Give Concert," *Cornell Daily Sun*, February 15, 1960, 8.

[25] Irwin Silber, "Pete Seeger—Voice of Our Democratic Heritage," *Sing Out!* 4, no. 6 (May 1954): 3–7. Archival material survives for most of his tours after 1957 when he began working with Paul Endicott and Folkways Records, but earlier material, if extant, only survives in family archives that are not publicly available.

Lecture &
Concert Engagements

Columbia University
(McMillan Theatre)
Chicago University
Massachusetts Institute
of Technology
Swarthmore College
University of Illinois
Oklahoma A & M
Reed College (Oregon)
Town Hall, N. Y.
Barbizon Plaza
(Children's Concerts)
and others

Recordings

American Folk Songs for Children
A Pete Seeger Concert
Darling Corey
The Lonesome Train
(Lincoln Cantata)
The 5-String Banjo Instructor
Songs of the Lincoln Battalion
With the Weavers
Goodnight Irene
Tzena, Tzena
So Long, It's been Good To
Know You
On Top of Old Smoky
Wimoweh
We Wish You A Merry Christmas
The Hammer Song
Train To The Zoo
and others

Movies

To Hear Your Banjo Play
Schrader Telescriptions
(With the Weavers)

PETER SEEGER

By ALAN LOMAX

(from the introduction to the LP, "DARLING COREY", Ethnic Folkways Recordings 1945).

"...What happened across three hundred years to Anglo-Scots melodies stimulated by contact with African music in the new land of America—has happened to Yankee Pete Seeger across fifteen years of contact with southern banjo-playing and American folk music. Son of a musicologist father and a longhair violinist mother (1919, N. Y. City), Peter naturally shunned any formal musical instruction in prep school and at Harvard. He reluctantly admits that he learned some harmony playing the tenor banjo in his school jazz band and by very casual questions addressed his parents. Then one summer at the North Carolina festival in Asheville he heard ballads with the banjo...

"Peter spent some months with me in the Archive of American Folk Song in Washington...In 1940 he took what he had learned from the records and books and set out to explore America on his own. He and the Oklahoma balladeer, Woody Guthrie, started together and went as far as Texas. Pete doubled back and hitched along down through the Shenandoah Valley, playing for eats, learning songs and people, and ending up in a camp of evicted sharecroppers in Missouri. 'The music in the little church they had made was just beautiful', says Pete...

"World War II, and Pete spent almost four years in the Army...By now there was no better singer or song leader in the country, none more honest, none more capable of setting a crowd on fire, than Pete Seeger, who had puzzled and practiced his way to perfection by listening to what the people had learned to do in their folk music...

"By now Pete has sung all over the networks, played in 'Dark Of The Moon', made the best of all our folk music movie shorts ("~~To Hear My Banjo Play~~") set Town Hall, Carnegie Hall, Madison Square Garden and all sorts of other auditoria on fire on occasions too numerous to mention, appeared on shows like 'This Is War', We The People', 'Cavalcade Of America', 'Theatre Guild', National Barn Dance', and started a new national crush for the five string banjo—about which he has written a most original musicological book, deceptively called "How To Play The Five-String Banjo", actually a brilliant analysis (and the first one) of our most significant instrumental style...The reason he is now our best all-around folk performer is obvious from this quotation from his book...

"'The people I learned banjo from were mostly old farmers, miners, or working people who had played the instrument during their courting days and later kept it hanging on the wall to pass away the time of an evening. Often they knew only a few tunes apiece, and maybe only one method of strumming, which they had picked up from their father, or a neighbor. Yet what they knew, they knew well, and the simple pipeline rhythm of their banjo had more art in it than many a

Figure 1. Pete Seeger promotional flyer, ca. 1955. Pete Seeger Folder, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington. D.C.

actively marketed himself to colleges during this time period. A press release from the mid-1950s (Figure 1) listed "Lecture and Concert Engagements," which included appearances at schools as varied as Columbia, Chicago, MIT, Illinois, Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State), Reed, and Swarthmore.

Another brochure from 1957 (Figure 2) printed reviews from concerts at the University of Wisconsin and the University of Illinois. From 1958 to 1961, the peak of his political struggles, he went on yearly lengthy tours supported by Folkways Records that took him across the United States and Canada. As his concert schedule filled up, so did his concert venues. To take one example, he performed yearly at Oberlin in the mid-1950s, and his attendance grew from about two hundred in 1954 to nearly one thousand four years later.[26]

College concerts provided a semblance of financial security, and they enabled Seeger to act as a sort of Johnny Appleseed, sowing the seeds of folk music through relentlessly traveling across the country. Yet colleges were not always easy places for Seeger to perform. Seeger was himself a Harvard dropout who regarded his alma

[26] Joe Hickerson, letter to Robert Haslun, October 2, 1996, Oberlin College Folder, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

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Figure 2. Pete Seeger promotional brochure, ca. 1957. Pete Seeger Folder, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington. D.C.

mater as an insular and overly intellectual ivory tower.[27] He regularly critiqued the work of academic folklorists; at Cornell, he likened the publication of folk songs as birds shot down in mid-flight, authenticating a single version without taking into

[27] Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, 50–53; Winkler, *To Everything There Is a Season*, 9–10.

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account its transformations and circulation (24).[28] Whatever lingering reservations Seeger may have had about academia, colleges were not always approving of his presence. Liberal private schools usually welcomed Seeger, but state universities were often loath to allow a blacklisted musician to perform in taxpayer-funded venues. In 1958, for example, two University of Iowa students extended an invitation for Seeger to perform at their school. Iowa's student activity board refused to allocate any funds to Seeger and barred him from performing on campus. The students instead pooled their own money with that of two anonymous history professors, and they booked Seeger in an off-campus hall so decrepit that no one was allowed onto the concert hall's balcony for fear it would collapse.[29] As Seeger's concerts grew in size and publicity during the 1950s, right-wing organizations would often protest his campus visits. He was denounced in newspapers as "an outstanding music propaganda instrumentality of the Communist apparatus in the United States," as per a statement circulated in the *University of Cincinnati News Record* prior to a 1959 concert, and picketers stood outside his concert halls with signs calling him "Khrushchev's songbird" and other such sobriquets.[30] Even at Cornell, a student wrote a letter to the *Daily Sun* after Seeger's 1954 show arguing that his concerts were political propaganda lacking in artistic value.[31] Despite the fraught nature of Seeger's collegiate appearances, they were invaluable sites for Seeger to communicate the democratic potential of folk music.

[28] Despite his critique of academia, Seeger considered a turn to research. He traveled to Trinidad in the early 1950s and conducted fieldwork on steel drum music, marking one of the first studies of the instrument. He published an article on the instrument in the *Journal of American Folklore* (Peter Seeger, "The Steel Drum: A New Folk Instrument," *Journal of American Folklore* 71, no. 279 [1958]: 52–57), released a video in 1957, *Music from Oil Drums*, and supervised a 1961 Folkways release, *The Steel Drums of Kim Loy Wong*. For more information about his steel drum activities, see Andrew R. Martin, "A Voice of Steel through the Iron Curtain: Pete Seeger's Contributions to the Development of Steel Band in the United States," *American Music* 29, no. 3 (2011): 353–80. His Communist associations, not to mention his lack of a bachelor's degree, would have made him *persona non grata* for a faculty position. His characterization of academic folklore is also a little disingenuous because most mid-century scholars of folklore and folk music considered publications to represent local textual variations of song families rather than fixed texts.

[29] Newspaper clippings related to the Iowa concert, held on May 1, 1958, along with a recording are deposited in the Alan Hausmann Collection, AFC 2013/001, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. The concert was such a success that the students made enough money to bring Seeger back on October 30, 1959. As a reviewer of the 1959 concert wrote, "The administration did not want Seeger here two years ago and they did not want him here last week. It is obvious that the students want him." Robert Mezey, "Pete Seeger at SUI: The Banjo and the Status Quo," *Iowa Defender* 1, no. 1 (November 6, 1959): 1.

[30] A. B. Paster, "Harvard Folk Singer at Emery Auditorium Nov. 21," *University of Cincinnati News Record*, November 19, 1959, Moses and Frances Asch Collection, Folder 9, Smithsonian Folkways Archives, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.; Wilkinson, *The Protest Singer*, 4–5. Seeger noted that pickets only drove up ticket sales in "Thou Shalt Not Sing," in *It Did Happen Here: Recollections of Political Repression in America*, ed. Bud Schultz and Ruth Schultz (Berkeley: University of California, 1989), 18–19.

[31] Mary C. Rossiter, "Letter to the Editor—Pete Seeger Politician, Not an Artist," *Cornell Daily Sun*, December 13, 1954, 4.

Performing Democracy: The 1954 Cornell Concert

The 1954 Cornell concert followed the usual format of his concerts. His organizational practices were purposefully improvisatory, as he described in the liner notes to his 1980 Harvard concert: "No two concerts are alike, though no two are very different. . . . I may have jotted down some song titles, but purposely I rarely plan a whole program. The improvised ones seem to flow better. Often I walk out on the stage with only the first song planned. While I'm singing, I'm thinking what might be a good song to follow. I can choose it out of 100 songs I do often, or 300 songs that I do rarely. Sometimes I get a request for one of several hundred that I have forgotten."[32] During the early 1950s, the first half of the concert was based on a general theme, and the second half on requests, though Seeger wouldn't know the exact content until he got on stage. He liked to cover as many songs as possible in his roughly two hours on stage, rarely playing more than a few verses of any song and often mocking ballads for their voluminous length.[33] He performed most of these songs regularly during a particular time period. Many of the songs at the 1954 Cornell concert, for example, were staples of his 1950s concerts such as "Foolish Frog," "Wimoweh," and "Cumberland Bear Mountain Chase," and were printed in either *Sing Out!* or *People's Songs*. (Table 2 lists the songs published in those magazines along with issue dates.) Some were infrequent, and two selections from Cornell, a South African choral piece and a song whose lyrics came in a letter from a British friend, lack any other known performances or recordings by Seeger.[34] His songs were threaded together by lengthy framing discussions that contextualized their histories, politics, and possible meanings. These remarks constructed a narrative to show how his selections, even if chosen on the spot, fit into overarching concert themes.

Along with his contextual remarks, Seeger exhorted his audience to sing along with him. "If we really love this revival of folk music," he proclaimed in a 1956 column, "we will do all in our power to get audiences singing with us wherever we go."[35] Seeger viewed singing as necessary so that audiences could learn and spread folksong. He also believed that getting an audience to sing together modeled participatory democracy, a theory that preoccupied Seeger throughout the 1950s. He argued in his columns that concerts should bring people together to sing in order to help people become better musicians, and also to work together in grassroots, community-oriented democratic action. As he wrote in the Spring 1955 issue of

[32] Pete Seeger, liner notes to *Singalong Saunders Theatre 1980*, Folkways SFW40027, 1992 [1980], 22.

[33] "Greensleeves" was often the butt of these jokes. For example, at a concert at Iowa in 1959, he joked that he was going to sing "fifteen, sixteen!" verses of the song. He made it through six, and after the second verse he quipped, "the guy's in love with the song, not the girl." Pete Seeger, Concert at the University of Iowa, October 30, 1959, Alan Hausmann Collection, AFC 2013/001, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

[34] The choral song is not on his 1955 Folkways LP *Bantu Choral Folk Songs* (credited to the "Song Swappers"), unlike popular concert fare like "Bayeza" and "Abiyoyo." It is also not found in Rev. H. C. N. Williams and Joseph N. Maselwa, *Choral Folksongs from the Bantu* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1960), a book originally published in South Africa in 1947 that Seeger acquired around 1952.

[35] Pete Seeger, "Why Audience Participation," *Sing Out!* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1956): 32.

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Table 2. List of songs from 1954 Cornell concert published in *People's Songs* (PS) and *Sing Out!* (SO).

"Hudson River Steamboat"	SO 5, no. 3 (Summer 1955)
"Men of the West"	*mentioned in PS 1, no. 10* (Nov. 1946)
"Lincoln and Liberty"	SO 2, no. 8 (February 1952)
"A Hayseed Like Me"	*mentioned in PS 1: 11* (Dec. 1946)
"Acres of Clams"	PS 1, no. 9 (October 1946)
"Go Tell Aunt Rhody"	PS 2, no. 11 (Dec 1947) (As "Go Tell")
"Cumberland Bear Mountain Chase"	SO 2, no. 9 (March 1952)
"The E-Ri-E"	*mentioned in SO 2, no. 2* (August 1951)
"Erie Canal"	SO 2, no. 2 (August 1951)
"Oleanna"	SO 5, no. 2 (Spring 1955)
"Chanuke, Chanuke"	SO 3, no. 4 (December 1952)
"Ragupati Ragava Rajah Ram"	SO 6, no. 2 (Spring 1956)
"Tell Me What Month Was My Jesus Born In"	SO 9, no. 3 (Winter 1959–1960)
"East Virginia"	SO 4, no. 2 (January 1954)
"Oonomathotholo"	SO 4, no. 3 (February 1954)
"The Foolish Frog"	SO 5, no. 4 (Fall 1955)
"Sing Tangent, Co-Tangent"	PS 3, no. 5 (June 1948)
"Teacher's Blues"	PS 2, no. 3 (April 1947)
"The Wild West is Where I Want to Be"	SO 4, no. 1 (December 1953)
"Midnight Special"	PS 2, no. 8 (September 1947)
"Let My Little Light Shine"	SO 5, no. 2 (Spring 1955)
"Greensleeves"	PS 3, no. 4 (May 1948)

Sing Out!, "When two people get together their ideas multiply geometrically. Ten ideas plus ten ideas equal not twenty, but one hundred. In traveling this continent, I have observed that the greatest music has been in those communities not where a few talented individuals compete for the limelight, but where young people have pooled their repertoire, talent, ideas and energies, and formed folk-singing groups."[36] Other writings explored the ideal concert setting for manifesting democracy, arguing in two columns that semi-circular rows set around a stage promoted dialogue between audience members rather than a unitary focus on the leader.[37]

Seeger's link between folk music and democracy was rooted in a broader political shift among leftist folk revivalists. Historian Rachel Donaldson has argued that revivalists believed folk music to represent a concept of democracy devoted both to constitutional ideals and a pluralistic conception of American culture.[38] Seeger's People's Artists had championed labor rights with an overt influence of Russian communism, but *Sing Out!* largely positioned folk song as an index of American democracy. For example, Irwin Silber celebrated Pete Seeger as the "Voice of our Democratic Heritage" in the cover story for the magazine's Summer 1954 issue. The shift from labor to democracy was occasioned both by the decreased interest in folk music by major union organizations in the 1950s,

[36] Pete Seeger, "Viva la Companie," *Sing Out!* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1955): 30. Alec Wilkinson cited Seeger's "belief in a chorus as a democratic body" in *The Protest Singer*, 15.

[37] See Pete Seeger, "How Hootenanny Came to Be," *Sing Out!* 5, no. 4 (Autumn 1955): 33: "The best hoot, in my opinion, would have an audience of several hundred, jammed tight into a small hall, and seater semicircularwise, so that they often face each other democratically." He repeated this sentiment in "A Few Random Notes," *Sing Out!* 6, no. 4 (Winter 1957): 34.

[38] Rachel C. Donaldson, *"I Hear America Singing": Folk Music and National Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014).

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as well as resistance to the blacklist. Organizations under FBI suspicion such as People's Artists obviously needed to avoid terminology that could result in HUAC subpoenas, but the turn to democracy also sought to reclaim Americanness from the undemocratic and fascist-leaning censorship of McCarthyism. Paul Robeson's famous outburst to the House Un-American Activities Committee in his 1956 appearance, "you are the nonpatriots, and you are the un-Americans, and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves," epitomizes this inversion.[39] Folk music, as a community-oriented, participatory, everyday activity with roots in historical American life, could symbolize the ideals of American democracy.

Seeger explicitly connected audience participation with democratic politics in some of his concerts. In a performance at Oberlin in 1955, while lining out the spiritual "I'm On My Way," he noted, "some of you are sitting with your mouth tight closed. You can't do that—it's not democratic!"[40] The following year, leading "Down by the Riverside" at Northwestern, he interjected, "if you're not singing, you're probably not going down to the election booth!"[41] At Cornell, democracy was modeled through singing rather than directly asserted as inherent to the politics of singing. Despite his theories of optimally democratic seating formations, Seeger had little control over how his rooms were set up. Since his concerts put him in the spotlight, he tried to shift the focus to the audience by structuring them as singalongs rather than lecture–recitals.[42] He followed a usual pattern to get his audiences singing. He would ask his audience to come in on the chorus in one of the first songs of the show. At Cornell, Seeger asked the audience to join him on the sixth song, "Acres of Clams" or "Old Settler's Song." The final line of each verse repeats as a refrain, allowing the audience to easily catch on. He gently but firmly prodded the audience to get over their own inhibitions and sing out: ". . .you come in on the last line. Clear out your throat, don't let your neighbor look at you peculiarly if you sing too loud, just kick 'em in the ribs and get 'em singing too" (25). He would then program familiar songs to further grease the wheels. Revival standards such as "Go Tell Aunt Rhody," "Oleanna," and "Erie Canal" followed "Acres of Clams" to keep the singing spirit going.

Seeger then turned to songs that required multiple singing parts, such as the call and response structure of spirituals ("Sing-A-Lamb") and work songs ("All I Want is Union"), and the polyphony of South African choral songs such as "Wimoweh" and "Oonomathotholo." To encourage audience singing—or, more precisely, to prevent his audience from having a reason not to sing—he divided the audience by seating area rather than actual vocal range. This tactic is evident in his introduction to "Oonomathotholo": "Any basses in the house? Oh, we need some basses.

[39] *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews 1918–1974*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Bruner/Mazel, 1977), 433.

[40] Seeger, Concert at Oberlin College.

[41] Pete Seeger and Big Bill Broonzy, Concert at Northwestern University, October 25, 1956, Smithsonian Folkways Archives, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.

[42] Seeger, liner notes to *Singalong Saunders Theatre 1980*, 4: "[my college concerts] are not concerts so much as singalongs."

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Arbitrarily I'm going to have to make everybody on this side a bass. Many of you thought you were an alto or a soprano or a tenor, but you are now a bass. And this is what you have to sing [sings bass line]. . . . Now everybody in the back, tell you what. [Goes into audience] Everybody from about here . . . on back is an alto. . . . Everybody over here is a soprano" (32–33). By the final song, the famous "Wimoweh," his audience was singing loud.[43]

Seeger sought to promote democracy by getting his audiences to sing, but the songs he sang were equally crucial for his democratic impulses. The overarching theme of Seeger's Cornell concert was that everyone around the world was a folksinger. The first half began with songs from New York State in order to move from local to global folk music. Seeger opened with a version of "Marrow Bones" that he learned from a mechanic near Schenectady, followed by "Hudson Valley Steamboat." The next song was to be "Acres of Apples," a song by Les Rice, an apple farmer who lived near Seeger's Beacon, New York home, that used the melody of "Old Rosin the Beau."[44] To introduce the song, he performed four other songs using the melody, starting with the song's source, "The Man of the West," and three sets of lyrics from the nineteenth century. This illustrated how people set their own lyrics to melodies for their own specific purposes. As he said after the block of songs, "I wanted to show you . . . that folk songs are not only sung by everybody but they're made up by everybody, just by people like you and me" (26). The historical tangent preceding "Acres of Apples" led him to discuss the unusual origins of some folksongs. He claimed that "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" originated in Rousseau's *Le devin du village*, and "Cumberland Bear Mountain Chase" came from the Czech folksong "Holka modrooká."[45] After demonstrating melodic similarities between "Baa Baa Black Sheep," "Twinkle, Twinkle," and "Haktivah," the Israeli national anthem, he began performing songs from a variety of cultures. Beginning with "Oleanna," a song from Norwegian immigrants, he played selections from Italians, Israelis, African-Americans, Indians, black South Africans, and white southerners.

The trajectory from upstate New York to the world, with a little detour through classical music, was hardly incidental. Seeger believed that folksong concerts should incorporate as many peoples and repertoires as possible, writing that the ideal hootenanny should include "music from square to swing, cool to hot, long hair

[43] For a more technical description of how Seeger got his audiences to sing together, see Pete Seeger, liner notes to *With Voices Together We Sing*, Folkways FA 2452, 1955, 1–2.

[44] For background information about the song, see Seeger, *The Incompleat Folksinger*, 102–4.

[45] "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" is quite distinct from the pastoral melody from *Le devin du village* claimed as its source, but both Burl Ives and Alan Lomax claimed that Rousseau composed the folksong in separate songbooks, which was likely the basis for Seeger's claim. See Burl Ives, *Favorite Folk Ballads of Burl Ives* (New York: Leeds Music, 1949), 6–7; Alan Lomax, *The Penguin Book of American Folk Songs* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1964), 58. Murl J. Sickbert, Jr. traces the transformation of Rousseau's melody to the familiar folksong in "Go Tell Aunt Rhody She's Rousseau's Dream," in *Vistas of American Music: Essays and Compositions in Honor of William K. Kearns*, ed. Susan Porter and John Graziano (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1999), 125–50. The melody of "Cumberland Mountain Bear Chase" is very similar to "Holka Modrooká" save for the first note (a pronounced ^8 in "Cumberland" instead of ^5), but I have not found evidence of any actual relationship.

to short. . . . Bach to bop; Barbara Allen to the Union Maid."[46] This belief that all music is folk music relates to his father Charles's contemporaneous challenge of the reportorial distinctions dividing the nascent discipline of ethnomusicology from musicology. It also reflects Big Bill Broonzy's quip that all songs must be folk songs since "I never heard horses sing it."[47] The emphasis was not so much on Rousseau and Mozart as folksinger, though, as on folksongs from around the world, especially those of non-Caucasian origin. Seeger would of course take a major role in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, but People's Artists, and the left more broadly, had begun shifting from labor equality toward racial equality in the 1950s.[48] Seeger believed that singing music from a variety of peoples and languages achieved both musical and political benefits. He claimed that knowledge of different styles could improve the singing quality of local folk-singing groups.[49] Seeger also sang songs from a variety of Americans—Adirondack mechanics, Hudson Valley farmers, white and black southerners, Irish and Norwegian immigrants, and nineteenth-century Nebraskans and Kansans at Cornell—to promote the idea that understanding the history and style of these different groups could raise awareness of the many cultural streams that make up American music. It could counter what Seeger called the "melting pot theory which we all get taught in school [that] gets kind of distorted into the idea that everybody's supposed to melt into being an Anglo Saxon" (26).[50]

Singing songs from peoples around the world demonstrated how people everywhere wrote songs about political struggles for equality. "Wimoweh," probably the most famous song Seeger played at the Cornell concert, was introduced with a lengthy preamble about how the song signified the legend of Chaka the Lion in a way that the apartheid government would not understand.[51] Seeger discussed how the lyrics of "Ragupati Ragava Rajah Ram" claimed that Allah and Ram were essentially the same, challenging the religious wars between Muslims and Hindus in India and West and East Pakistan. He also noted that it was a favorite of Gandhi's, linking the song to his famous non-violent efforts.[52] He combined the messages of "Midnight Special" and "Let My Little Light Shine" (known today as "This Little Light of Mine"), arguing that the light bringing freedom to prisoners in the former song didn't come from a mythical train, but rather "the only midnight special there's going to be is you and me" (36). Even the solo English

[46] Seeger, "How Hootenanny Came to Be," 33.

[47] For an example of Charles Seeger's writings on the matter, see Charles Seeger, "The Musicological Juncture: Music as Value," in *Studies in Musicology, 1935–75* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 51–63. Seeger cited Broonzy's quote in "That's Nice, but Is It a Folksong," *Sing Out!* 10, no. 1 (April–May 1960): 40.

[48] Reuss, *American Folk Music*, 246.

[49] Seeger, liner notes to *Folksongs from Four Continents, Sung by the Song Swappers*, Folkways FW6911, 1955, 1–2.

[50] Seeger, liner notes to *Folksongs from Four Continents*, 1-2; Seeger, liner notes to *The Pete Seeger Sampler*, Folkways FA2043, 1954. He repeated the "melting pot" quip at his 1955 Oberlin Concert.

[51] Some of Seeger's writings about South African music and politics during the 1950s and early 1960s are reprinted in *The Incompleat Folksinger*, 128–44.

[52] The title of "Ragupati Ragava Rajah Ram" is transliterated in this essay following its publication in *Sing Out!* magazine.

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ballad that he played, the revival standard "Jackaroe," was a "propaganda" song for the right to choose who to marry rather than the arranged marriages common in the United States before the twentieth century.

After broadening out from upstate New York to the world in the first half, Seeger then returned squarely to the college campus in the second. Seeger's statement in the concert that folksongs are "made up by everybody, just by people like you and me" did not employ those pronouns as a rhetorical device, but stemmed from his advocacy of student folksong. In 1957, one of his columns solicited examples of college folk singing from his readers: "College campuses have a wonderful tradition of irreverent and satirical song-making. The modern student is no exception. We've come across a few items in recent months which show that Joe and Josie College are still singing about what happens behind the walls of ivy. Incidentally, we'd like to receive more examples of what students are singing these days—so send it along."[53] He turned to college musicians frequently in his concerts. At Bowdoin in 1960, for example, Seeger discussed learning the song "Hieland Laddie" through Joe Hickerson, an Oberlin student (and future longtime director of the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center) who had curated his mid-1950s concerts there. Seeger claimed that Hickerson's version improved on the original, arguing that students could themselves learn songs and, through historical awareness, respectfully remake them as part of the folk process.[54] At Cornell, he sang "Sing Tangent, Co-Tangent," an 1870s song from Amherst College set to "Villikins and his Dinah" (the melody later used for "Sweet Betsy from Pike"), and "Swarthmore Girls," a lyric set to "Jesus Loves Me" later included in a medley on his 1958 album *Rainbow Quest*.[55] He then played "Teacher's Blues" by Marshall Stearns, a former Cornell English professor, joking that "students are hard on professors, so let's give them one."

The student folksongs he played at Cornell were light romps satirizing boring mathematics lectures and after-curfew amorous trysts, respectively, but they drove home the point that everyone, especially his audience, could make their own music.[56] Being a folksinger was both about performance and composition; as he would write in 1955, "every people's singer should consider himself or herself a songwriter on the side."[57] This idea was crucial for his optimistic view of his college audience. The moniker "Johnny Appleseed Jr." that he used for his *Sing Out!* columns has often been applied to Seeger, who himself traveled relentlessly spreading

[53] "The Folk Process," *Sing Out!* 6, no. 4 (Winter 1957): 24. Seeger is not given authorship credit, but the topic and style are certainly his. The following issue noted that many collegians submitted satirized renditions of "Oleanna," and students at Northwestern and Chicago sent in "The Ballad of Sherman Wu," a song about a student of Chinese descent disbarred from pledging to a fraternity. "The Folk Process," *Sing Out!* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1957), 21. Other student folksongs at UCLA were included in the Folk Process column in Fall 1959. "The Folk Process," *Sing Out!* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1959), 21.

[54] Seeger, *The Complete Bowdoin Concert*, 1960.

[55] "Sing Tangent Co-Tangent" was first published in *Carmina Collegensia: A Complete Collection of the Songs of the American Colleges*, ed. Henry Randall Waite (Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1876), 46.

[56] "Teacher's Blues," a song relating low wages for professors to their resistance to unionizing, remains all too pertinent in the age of the adjunct professor.

[57] Pete Seeger, "Johnny Appleseed Jr.," *Sing Out!* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1955): 28.

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folk music throughout the 1950s. Yet in his very first column under the name in the Fall 1954 issue of *Sing Out!*, published a few months before the Cornell concert, he made clear that the term was not about him so much as his concert audiences:

> This column is dedicated to Johnny Appleseed Jr.,—the thousands of boys and girls who today are using their guitars and their songs to plant the seeds of a better tomorrow in the homes across our land. They are lovers of folksongs, and the best of our heritage of the past, and they are creating a new folklore, a basis for a people's culture of tomorrow. For if the radio, the press, and all the large channels of mass communication are closed to their songs of freedom, friendship and peace, they must go from house to house, from school and camp to church and clambake. This column aims to print news of and for these modern Johnny Appleseeds. I have met them in every state of the union, playing their guitars and building a new folklore out of the best of the old.[58]

In this quote, Seeger believed that his young audiences such as those at Cornell and colleges across the country could come together and, through singing and making up their own folksongs, fashion a new "people's culture." The quotation also indicates that the main enemy to a folk-singing democracy, aside from the McCarthyists, was the music industry. Seeger shared the mid-century anxieties over technologies of mechanical reproduction held by cultural critics and folklorists. Many of Seeger's Johnny Appleseed Jr. columns posited that radios and records discouraged people from creating their own music, and that the music industry promoted individual financial gain rather than organized action. "Because we have books is no reason to forget how to tell a good story," he wrote in a 1956 column, "Because we have cameras is no reason to forget the fun of wielding pencil and brush. And because we have the phonograph is no reason to forget how to make music."[59] Three of his 1955 Johnny Appleseed Jr. columns proposed organizational forms—traveling festivals, pick-up choruses, even civic songwriting guilds—as an alternative to mass media circulation.[60]

The Cornell concert comprised a wide variety of music, but recent popular music was nowhere to be heard. This absence was far from an anomaly. During a Northwestern University concert in 1956, he introduced songs by the blues singer and harmonica player Sonny Terry by exclaiming that "these will last longer than the Hound Dog!" His banter between "Old Dan Tucker" and "Summertime" in the 1960 Bowdoin concert connected the two by mentioning they were written by "hit parade" songwriters, and he joked that the potential of a contemporary popular song becoming a folk song would only "happen by some accident."[61] He believed that pop songs were inferior to folk songs because their compositional impetus came from profit motives rather than a need to express the emotions of everyday life. Radio and television likewise paled in comparison with live performance for Seeger because the latter brought people together through active

[58] Pete Seeger, "Johnny Appleseed Jr.," *Sing Out!* 4, no. 7 (Fall 1954): 30.

[59] Seeger, "Why Audience Participation," 32.

[60] Pete Seeger, "Johnny Appleseed Jr.," *Sing Out!* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1954): 32–34; Seeger, "Vive le Compagnie," 30–31; Seeger, "Johnny Appleseed Jr. (Summer 1955)," 28.

[61] Seeger and Broonzy, Concert at Northwestern University; Seeger, *The Complete Bowdoin College Concert*. He admits and explains his "anti-Tin Pan Alley attitude" in "A Few Random Notes," 34–35.

participation. At the conclusion of the Cornell concert, Seeger thanked the audience by saying, "it's a great privilege to be able to sing real people's songs before real people such as yourselves. The average musician, if he has a job at all, he's up in some radio station singing songs he doesn't believe to people who don't listen, or else he's competing with a whiskey for attention down in some dive." (38). For Seeger, concerts on campuses like Cornell meaningfully brought people together to sing politically significant songs.

Conclusion: Pete's Children

Seeger's college concerts were fun singalongs that also sought to teach his audience about American folk song, encourage them to make their own music, and demonstrate democracy through singing together songs by and about working people around the world. He had faith that his collegiate audiences would continue to reject McCarthyist censorship and take up folk music's democratic potential. His attendees—or at least his concert reviewers for campus newspapers—grasped his themes of democracy, history, and the universality of personal and political concerns. The Cornell concert's review in the student newspaper opened with a quote from Seeger's appearance in an American Folk Literature course the next day, "[folk music] can teach us because underlying all the diversity of idiom one finds the deep basic unity of humanity and experience, common to all working people."[62] The reviewer touched on some of the concert's main themes: the inclusion of selections from multiple countries, Seeger's rejection of boundaries between musical categories, and the overarching theme that "everybody makes up folksongs."

Similar ideas were found in student reviews of Seeger's shows. Reviewing his May 7, 1958 show at Iowa for the *Daily Iowan*, concert impresario Alan Hausman wrote that "hidden in the historical introductions and the witty remarks, as well as in the songs themselves, is a subtle commentary on American life. . . . [Seeger gave] us an evening of wonderful entertainment and intellectual stimulation."[63] Another review of his October 10, 1957 Illinois concert in the *Daily Illini* extolled, "not only was Seeger's program wonderful entertainment, but it also was educational."[64] Another review from the following year at Wisconsin claimed that "Seeger did not restrain himself to songs of one type, or from one country, or about one subject, but . . . took the audience . . . on as wide and varied a tour of love songs, work songs, fun American union songs . . . as could be crammed into two hours."[65]

Seeger's impact on college students went past campus newspaper reviewers, of course. Though only a handful of folk musicians played on campus before

[62] Ellie Schaffer, "Pete Seeger Comments on Significance of Folk Songs," *Cornell Daily Sun*, December 9, 1954, 8.

[63] Alan M. Hausman, "The Pete Seeger Concert—Beautiful and Bitter—A Split-Tenor Commentary," *Daily Iowan*, May 8, 1958, 6.

[64] Edward Wolf, "Seeger Captivates Diverse Audience with Banjo, Guitar," *Daily Illini*, October 11, 1957, 2.

[65] Gregory T. Brickman, "Seeger, Terry Has Audience Foot-Stomping, Clapping," *Daily Cardinal*, October 21, 1958, 1.

Seeger, colleges became hubs for folk music tours by the late 1950s. Student folksong clubs with hundreds of members popped up on campuses across the country. Thousands of students picked up guitars and learned Seeger's repertoire. Seeger was not entirely responsible for the campus folk revival, but legions of folksingers credited his appearances with pursuing the genre. They ranged from popular artists such as the Kingston Trio, a trio of Stanford students who heard him play in Palo Alto, and Peter Yarrow, who attended Cornell in the late 1950s, to academic folklorists such as Joe Hickerson, who attended and later organized his annual concerts at Oberlin from 1955 to 1958. This manifold influence led Seeger to be considered the so-called "dean of the American folk revival."[66]

His enthusiasm for college audiences, however, raised a thorny political issue. College students such as those at Cornell were generally from wealthier backgrounds than the supposedly lower-class and rural roots of folk music. Seeger's push for participation was democratic in nature, but directed to an audience with little direct experience with the working-class politics that informed his repertoire. Seeger wanted to encourage people to sing folksong, but could the audiences that he was limited to—essentially, affluent and highly educated leftists—understand or respect the social contexts ascribed to folk music? In 1964, at the height of the folk revival, critic Jon Pankake, the co-creator of the virulent *Little Sandy Review*, wrote in *Sing Out!* that "all of us who participate in the revival are . . . Pete's children, for better and for worse."[67] Pankake acknowledged that Seeger influenced some artists to learn idiomatic techniques and to promote folksong's historical and political value, but claimed that the majority simply extended Seeger's giddy optimism and folksy humor without the faintest fidelity to tradition. "It is Pete's example that has been followed by his starry-eyed disciples rather than his advice," Pankake mused.[68]

For Seeger, a member of a highly affluent and educated family and himself the product of a prep school and Ivy League education, class and educational privilege did not necessarily preclude a respectful approach to folk music. Yet Seeger was not unaware of Pankake's critique that college student participation could easily lead to appropriation. In a curious interview that he conducted with himself in the short-lived early-1960s magazine *New Horizons*, Seeger addressed his hopes and concerns over his college audiences:

> Question: Do you feel that a student in college, who has never worked in any industry, who sings about sharecroppers, miners, sailors, cowboys, is only manifesting some form of escapism?
>
> My answer: I feel that they should understand what they are singing and not just be enchanted with the melody or the particular lyrics. College students read about many people and many types of experiences which they will not experience in their lives, or have not yet

[66] See "Pete Seeger: American Folk Icon," *Smithsonian Folkways Records*, n.d., http://www.folkways.si.edu/pete-seeger-american-folk-icon/music/article/smithsonian: "Pete Seeger (1919–2014) was the dean of 20th century folk singers."

[67] Jon Pankake, "Pete's Children: The American Folk Revival, Pro and Con," *Sing Out!* 29 (March–April 1964), 26.

[68] Pankake, "Pete's Children," 26.

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> experienced in their short lives. Thus, singing about these people, and at the same time being aware of what the song meant to the people who wrote it, adds to the student's knowledge of other human beings. . . . But you're quite right; too often they only sing the words without taking the time to really understand the song, to dig beneath the surface.[69]

The democratic impulses of Seeger's college performances produced a tension between romantic enthusiasm and historical fidelity, or popularization and purism as it was usually termed in revival discourses. This dynamic results from his belief in folksong as a democratic enterprise—that everybody makes up folksong—and the limits that only allowed him to spread his message to upper-class and wealthy students. Seeger's ideal was that the political resistance demonstrated by collegiate audiences through inviting him to campus would portend future democratic action. The downside is that their largely elevated class position would allow the working-class bedrock of folksong's democratic potential to be crowded out. Seeger hoped that teaching his audiences the repertoire, the history, and the politics of folk music would encourage the former. In this way, Seeger's concerts dovetail not just with democratic ideals, but with those of liberal arts education, the belief that critical reflection on cultural products can lead to self-cultivation and social uplift.[70] Reckoning with Seeger's concerts, thus, requires a shift in the lens utilized to theorize the politics and ethics of the revival from simple class-based appropriation to the possibilities and limitations of democracy and American higher education more broadly.[71]

Seeger's college concerts were far from unimpeachable—a reading of the concert transcript will immediately evince rather regressive gender politics and well-meaning but dated pluralism—but they affirmed the potential intersection of political and educational work on the college campus in the face of right-wing political repression. College students resisted McCarthyism by providing a space where Seeger could be heard and students could listen. His point has resonance for today's political situation. American universities are embattled institutions where issues of accessibility, privilege, freedom of speech, inequality, discrimination, and many more are raising important questions about the political ethics and possibilities of higher education. As Seeger found out, though, campuses may yet become one of the last sanctuaries for those who perform and teach about music in a way that, however imperfectly, can voice new and potentially dangerous political ideas. He knew not what would happen to him during the Red Scare of the 1950s, but he sent out his fireflies into the world anyway in the hope that their lights would shine forth. Seeger's concerts thus can offer an affirmative model for the political potential of the cultural work done on today's college campuses.

[69] "Seeger," *New Horizons* 2, no. 7 (April–May 1962): 11.

[70] I relate the ethics of campus folk music to liberal arts education in "University Geographies and Folk Music Landscapes: Students and Local Folksingers at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, 1961–64," *Journal of Musicology* 33, no. 1 (2016): 92–116, esp. 114–15.

[71] I discuss this relationship in greater depth in "Performing Democracy Through Folksong: Pete Seeger in the 1950s," YouTube video, 16:39, posted by the Society for American Music, April 5, 2018.

Appendix 1. Transcript of Pete Seeger Concert at Cornell University, December 6, 1954.

The following appendix is the completed transcripts of Pete Seeger's concert at Cornell University on December 6, 1954. The concert was taped on four reel to reels and remained in family holdings until 1987, when Mike Seeger deposited a number of family recordings to the Archive of Folk Culture at the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress. I had the privilege of listening to it in December 2014 on an exploratory research visit, and then transcribing it as a Geraldine and Ernest Parsons Fund awardee in June 2016. Many thanks to Todd Harvey and the rest of the staff at the American Folklife Center for making me aware of the show, digitizing it, and for allowing me to publish the transcript in full with lyrics redacted. Since the concert is discussed extensively in the article, in-text remarks are limited to a few explanatory footnotes.

A few short notes at the outset. First, listeners familiar with Seeger's college concerts, whether those who have heard him live or who have listened to the 1960 Bowdoin concert recording released by Smithsonian Folkways, may recognize some of his phrases and comments. Seeger had certain stock phrasings, jokes, and introductions that he used in many of his concerts during this era, and some are present here. Second, I have tried to transcribe Seeger's "studied informality," as a reviewer of a 1957 University of Illinois concert put it, as faithfully as possible with minimal edits to make some sentences more reader-friendly. Seeger tended to begin sentences with the filler word "course" in this concert, which I have deleted or changed to "of course" depending on context. Last, Seeger's gender politics as evident in the transcript are regretfully a product of the times. His care to respect people of other races does not extend toward women in this concert, or in many of his concerts and writings from the 1950s. (A Johnny Appleseed Jr. column from 1959 railed against "the emasculation of folk music," for example.) He included prefatory notes in most of the anthologies of his writings recognizing the outdatedness of some of his attitudes while retaining the original text. I will acknowledge that his positions evolved over the years, while retaining the at times crude stage remarks.

[Fade in] Friends, I hope, I don't want to differ with your chairman, but actually this program tonight is about whatever we want to make it. We got a longer menu here than we have time to get through between now and next Tuesday. A week from tomorrow. But we'll sing through as many of the songs as we have time to.

About fifteen years ago, I bicycled into this town, and people I sang to then didn't even know what a folk song was and I didn't hardly myself.[72] Now you can't throw a stick without hitting a guitar player someplace. Sometimes you can't hit it hard enough. Fact is, though, that people have woken up here that there's a wonderful treasure house of wonderful music, and it doesn't have to be music you just listen to either, it can be music you make yourself. People have gotten hold of guitars and banjos like this. And what I thought I'd do tonight is sing through a whole

[72] Referring to 1939 period where he bicycled across New York State painting houses and trading paintings for meals and a place to stay. He pronounced the "y" in bicycle with a long "i" sound rather than the usual short "i."

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batch of different kinds of songs. Well, we really ought to start right here in home territory, that is, in New York State, and sing some of the songs that came out of this particular state, and then we'll start roaming farther afield. [Tunes banjo] Let me get this geared up first.

Of course you know in the old days they used to have these ballads with about fifty and sixty verses to them. Guess people had more time in those days, perhaps. But it is a fact our grandparents would sit around after the day's work was done and they told some stories, sang some songs, that was all the entertainment they had. No movies, no TV, no radio and so on. Up near Schenectady last summer I met a young mechanic who works in Ballston doing automotive work. We got singing together and he said, "Oh, do you like these old songs," and I said, "My family used to sing them all the time when I was a kid. Bust loose with this one."

1. "Marrow Bones"

This particular ballad's known in every state of the union, but I never even heard it this exact way 'til I met this fellow from up in the Adirondacks. Oh, he had the ballad of Black Jack, Black Jack Gypsy, Gypsy Davy, he had the one about the farmer who, the devil took the farmer's wife down to hell and she raised too much fuss, he had to bring her back, all these old ones.[73] Probably came over from England, Ireland, or Scotland, something like that.

And not only songs like that but songs which if you actually knew what the story was behind them, you'd have a picture of what the whole history of the state was. There have been songs about the farmers who had a regular rebellion in the Hudson Valley, the "rent wars" they used to call it, a hundred years ago. Songs about the lumberjacks, the mines, all the different occupations. For example, down the Hudson Valley you might have been able to hear this one.

2. "Hudson River Steamboat"

Not only old songs like that, you could have heard songs back in the Depression made up by the milk farmers, dairy farmers who were striking back in 1939.

Just a few years ago, there was a neighbor of mine down near Newburgh, New York, made up a ballad. Tell you, before I sing you his ballad, I'll sing you, well, how he happened to come learn the tune. Do you ever stop to think that, you open a book of folk songs, you see a song there and you think it's, *fait accomplished* and all that, it's . . . that's the song. You don't realize it, but that's just one version of the song. The song's like a bird in, been brought down in mid-flight and glued into that book. But before it got in the book, there were hundreds of different ways to sing it, thousands of different ways to sing it. And here's the story of just one American ballad.

About a hundred and fifty years ago, a lot of Irish people came over here following the unsuccessful rebellion of 1798. A famous song, Irish patriotic song, which was about that rebellion . . .

[73] Referring to "The Farmer's Curst Wife."

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3. "The Men of the West" (1 verse/refrain)

Well the song came over here. Around 1830, some fellow made up a pop song using the same tune. They did it in those days too. It was a rather corny set of words, "My name is old Rosin the Beau," B-e-a-u. You can't keep a good tune down, though. And what happened was that literally hundreds of parodies were made up to the tune of what everyone called "Rosin the Beau." Every election campaign in those days had songs, and oh, Tippecanoe and Tyler Too and all the rest of them had words put up to this melody. In fact, around 1860 you probably right up here in Ithaca, you could have heard this song:

4. "Lincoln and Liberty" (1 verse/refrain pair)

Around 1880s, you could have heard out in, anybody here from Nebraska or Kansas? We had out there what we call the Farmer's Alliance, the Grange Movement started up then, the Greenback Party. And, we used to sing it this way:

5. "A Hayseed Like Me" (1 verse)

It [the verses] would now tell how they were gonna vote themselves Greenback.

Almost my favorite set of words came from the state of Washington. In fact, it was once the state song up there in Washington. Then I think the capital burned down and they moved the capital to another city, and the second generation said the song wasn't respectable enough, they got a new song.[74] Nobody had ever heard of the new song. But the original one keeps on going. Matter of fact, you can sing it with me, the last line repeats in every chorus.

6. "Acres of Clams" or "Old Settler's Song"

[After first refrain]: That's the idea, you come in on the last line. Clear out your throat, don't let your neighbor look at you peculiarly if you sing too loud, just kick 'em in the ribs and get 'em singing too.

Finally, we get around to the song I was originally telling you about, the one made up in New York State. Neighbor of mine across the river from me, he's an apple farmer. Was, I say. He plowed up most of his apple trees, chopped them down and plowed up the roots, and this is why. We went over to help him pick his apples about four summers ago. Picked several tons of them as I remember, sure seemed like that. Well he'd spent $300 for the spring and only got $200 for the apples. Like a lot of small farmers, he gets squeezed between the big companies that sell him all his fertilizer and insecticide and so on, and the big companies that buy his produce. So, between the two of them he gets kinda caught.

[74] This claim was printed in *People's Songs*, for which Seeger was National Secretary, but no other source corroborates it. The state song of Washington is "Washington, My Home," though incidentally Woody Guthrie's "Roll on Columbia" was adopted as State Folk Song in 1989.

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7. "Acres of Apples"

[After second verse]: Then he says, he goes on, well those trees, "what did I get for these apples, a penny a pound for them all"

We really haven't come to the end of this song yet. I was singing in a hootenanny up in Boston a few years ago, and we found out that a famous quatrain just fitted this melody:

8. Oh, here's to the city of Boston
   The land of the bean and the cod
   Where the Lowells speak only to Cabots
   And the Cabots speak only to God!

You were fine and patient to listen through so many verses of that one melody. But I did it because I wanted to show you, you know, that folk songs are not only sung by everybody but they're made up by everybody, just by people like you and me. You hear an old tune, and first thing you know you think of a way to change it around, you change one word, put in the name of somebody you know, change a little more. By the time you're finished, you may have made up a completely new song. Goes on from one person to another and gets changed still further along the line. By the time other people sing it, it would be hard to say who actually wrote it, who did what and with which and to whom, as the old song used to say.[75]

Lot of good Irish melodies in this country. And sometimes the old way they were sung is the most beautiful of all. Lot of people know this tune of "Johnny Comes Marching Home," but before it was a Civil War marching song it was a drinking song called "Johnny Fill Up the Bowl." And before that it was sung in Ireland by the people who every year saw the English come and draft their best young manhood, and take them away to fight the wars of England in all corners of the globe.

9. "Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye"

Of course, a lot of people love these old ballads from Ireland and England, but American folk music is a lot more than the music that came from those countries. Actually, it's a funny thing, the same thing seems to happen in folk music that happens in so much of the rest of American life. This melting pot theory which we all get taught in school gets kind of distorted into the idea that everybody's supposed to melt into being an Anglo-Saxon. Millions of people got to be a regular Yankee Doodle Dandy or a Hollywood pinup girl, you got to forget the tarentata[76] and the schottische and the thousand one other dances and, all the different things which people brought over from different parts of the world.

And yet the fact is there's a lot more in American folk music than most people realize. That, well you can trace one song to one European country, another

[75] He means "to do which and with what and to whom."

[76] It sounds as if Seeger is stumbling over the pronunciation of "tarantella," but it is difficult to hear.

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down to some country in Africa, another to some place in Asia. Let me give you a "for instance." Around 200 years ago, the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who was also a songwriter, wrote an opera. It was a very popular opera, and one of the best-known songs in it had a little tune in it that went [hums "Go Tell Aunt Rhody," audience picks up]. You oughta recognize it, don't you? I knew it when I was about this high.

10. "Go Tell Aunt Rhody"

[After first verse, first line]: Sing it with me, [after second line]: Once more [starts lining out words]

[After third verse, first line]: Sing it out now, [after second line]: Get some harmony

I think old Jean-Jacques Rousseau would have liked to have heard that. Sounds very pretty. I'll clap for you!

Well, to give you another example. In Los Angeles about four months ago, I was singing a song which I had learned off a phonograph record by a fellow named Uncle Dave Macon, used to sing on the Grand Ole Opry down in Nashville, Tennessee. Wonderful banjo picker. And I learned this song, it was about a bear chase. And, always thought it was a pure deep hillbilly song, it was a lot of fun. Well I was singing this song in Los Angeles and a woman came up to me. She says, "Well, I know that, it's a Czechoslovakian folk song! "Holka modrooká, nesedávej u potoka, hola modrooká, nesedávej tam."[77] She had the whole verses out in Czech. Something about a girl wandering by a brook, says don't look down in the brook, somebody's gonna sneak up in the back or something. Well having mentioned the song, I'll sing you the way it got down to Tennessee. Don't ask me how it got to Tennessee, but it got there somehow.

11. "Cumberland Bear Mountain Chase"

I had a special request, we're gonna halt the whole show. You have to help me to sing a song, it's a request for someone who has to, it's way past his bedtime already. You know, when my brother was teaching up here, he always wanted to take a trip on one of these oil barges up the lake and into the Erie Canal and down the Hudson.[78] He never got around to doing it, but, we might sing a song about the Erie Canal anyway.

12. "The E-Ri-E"

Well, in case that wasn't the Erie Canal song he asked for, we'll sing the other one.

[77] The lyrics are unsurprisingly butchered somewhat, but recognizable.

[78] He is referring to his oldest brother Charles III (1913–2002), who taught in the astronomy department at Cornell in the late 1940s.

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13. "Erie Canal" (Sam the Mule)

Was that the right one?

Of course the songs get all changed around no matter what country they came from, by the time we hear them they've been changed around. The very fact that I'm playing a banjo with many of these songs, which were often sung unaccompanied in the old days, shows one combination. The banjo's an African instrument and yet it caught on all through the country. It's brought over by Negro slaves hundreds of years ago. And the guitar itself, which most people think comes from Spain, before it was in Spain it was an Asiatic instrument, it's from Persia. The *tar*, they called it there. So there's always combinations of these things.

A good example of how songs get changed around so they're almost unrecognizable is this. You know the little song [sings first line of "Baa Baa Black Sheep"]. Well, that song is known in every country of Europe with different words to it, in every language. Mozart wrote a minuet once, and he put the song into the minuet, the tune into it. Then of course he started his variations, he started playing it in minor [singing melody in minor]. And the next variation, I don't know whether Mozart made it up or somebody else made it up, but it eventually ended up in a totally unexpected place [sings *Haktivah*]. That's now the Israeli National Anthem.[79]

I bet if we knew all the songs that our parents and grandparents and great-grandparents had sung when they came over here, it'd really be a revelation to tell you all the things that they had to go through when they first landed on these shores. For example, down in Pennsylvania there was a little town started called Oleanna. It was named after the great Norwegian violinist Ole Bull. Around a hundred years ago he toured this country. He was kind of a Paganinian sort. As a matter of fact, he played for many more people than Paganini did, working people all through the United States and Europe. And he wanted to found a Norwegian colony, but some swindlers sold him a bunch of rocks and trees down in Pennsylvania. The people who came over there darned near starved to death before they pulled up stakes and went out to Wisconsin and places like that where there was better farming land.[80] But somebody made up a song which is still sung by Norwegian Americans. I can't sing you the original Norwegian verses, but I'll kind of paraphrase them the best I can in English. Classic story about how they were promised gold in the streets and everything.

14. "Oleanna"

[After first time through first refrain]: Matter of fact you can sing that with me, even if you never heard it before.

[Before second verse]: Oh, it goes on to tell all the wonderful things.

[After third refrain]: It went on in this vein for about forty verses. It says the sun shines all night long, you can see in the dark like a cat. Says the moon is always full. I

[79] "Baa Baa Black Sheep" uses the same melody as Mozart's *Ah! vous dirai-je, maman* variations, but *Haktivah* is derived from the melody Smetana used in *Vltava* from *Die Moldau*.

[80] The colony was called New Norway, and Oleana was one village within it.

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can tell you because I'm observing it now with a bottle for a telescope. Says they pay you two dollars a day for carousing, and if you carouse very well they pay you four dollars a day! This song was obviously made up by a man. Says you can sit around all day in velvet suits with silver buttons and let the old women do the work and fill up your pipes, and if they don't work hard enough they give themselves a beating! Says if they don't like their life, they can go into town and somebody else pays for it. Says if you never have to pay for your illegitimate children, if you did I wouldn't be here spinning all these verses!

You can still hear some of these songs. If you go down to New York you can hear songs like the song of the Jewish seamstress who comes over with all kinds of notions about the money lying around in the streets of New York, and her disillusionment.[81] It's kind of a pity, though, so many of us in kind of breaking away from the family, a lot of young people say, oh, this is all these corny old things, I don't want to have anything to do with it. There's a friend of mine, an Italian boy, I said, "Tommy, don't you know any Italian folk songs?" He says, "oh no, I don't know any of them. Don't think we have any." He went home, I said, "ask your mother." He went and says, "Ma, do us Italians have any folk songs," and she nearly threw the kitchen sink! And she went in to the closet and brought forth an old phonograph record, and on it was one of the loveliest Christmas carols I've ever learned in my life. And since Christmas is coming along now, I thought I might sing it to you. Seems that in Naples, every Christmas, the bagpipers come into town. And they stroll from doorway to doorway, playing certain traditional tunes, and stop the bagpipe, then they'll sing a verse, then they'll play again. And the name of the song is actually "Gli Zampognari," the bagpipers.

15. "Gli Zampognari"

Anybody recognize the melody? George Friedrich Handel used it in the "Messiah," one of his themes.[82]

Lot of good Christmas songs. This Christmas, in fact every Christmas down in New York a bunch of us have gone 'round singing in Washington Square Park and all kinds of places. In fact, once when I had a job in a nightclub we dragged about twenty people down there and we all sang Christmas carols. However, not only Christmas songs, after all, Chanukah time too, and there's some wonderful Chanukah songs. Did you ever know. . .

16. "Chanuke, Chanuke" [one verse/chorus, sung in Hebrew]

Actually, historically there's more connection between Chanukah and Christmas than most people realize. Everywhere in the whole northern hemisphere, mankind has always had festivals this time of year. It's when the sun is furthest away from Earth, so gotta have some kind of magic to bring the sun back. They burn candles

[81] Reference unknown.

[82] Pronounced like "mezziah." Seeger's claim here is doubtful—the melody resembles the pastoral Fifa preceding "There Were Shepherds," but the similarity is likely coincidental.

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in one place, torches in another, Christmas trees, doesn't matter, different places, there has to be some kind of light going on. And probably started 20, 30, 40, 50,000 years ago for all we know.

In India, they have a festival of lights.[83] I don't know any song connected with that particular festival but a song which we were going to sing this Christmas kind of ties in the idea. It's a song from India. You know, most people they hear Indian music, they say, "oh I don't dig that, all that yowling, that snake-charmer stuff." Well you know, the funny thing is, you listen to Indian music a little bit and you'll suddenly realize it's one of the great musics of the whole world. Man, they have melodies there that put ours to shame with their subtlety, and rhythms there that are so complicated that a Julliard graduate can't untangle them. And this particular song sounds like a slow square dance tune. However, I was surprised after I heard it to find out it was a devotional song, it was a religious song, and was a favorite of Mahatma Gandhi's. It seems the words—that's why it ties in with Christmas—the words mean, "who is Allah," that is the Moslem god, and "who is Ram," that is the Hindu god. They're just two names for the same person, so, in other words, what are we fighting about?

17. "Ragupati Ragava Rajah Ram"

Of course, some of the world's best Christmas carols can be found right here in the United States, made up by people in all kinds of little churches and different places. Did you ever hear this one?

18. "Tell Me What Month Was My Jesus Born In"

That's a gospel quartet song. We really should have the Golden Gate Quartet here singing that particular number. Would get it really going.

Here's another one you can sing with me. I don't know exactly how many different sets of words I've heard to this melody. I've heard it sung as a work song, I've heard it as a gospel song, I've heard it sung as a square dance tune. My guess is that the melody came over here from West Africa. It's what musicians call "antiphony," that is, one voice answering another voice. I sing a line, and you come in, it's about that little lamb Jesus. You come in saying "Sing-A-Lamb" and I sing another line and you sing "Sing-A-Lamb." [Demonstrates a line.] Will you come in on that part? It doesn't sound good if I sing it all by myself. Clear out your throat. "Sing-A-Lamb" is the first line, then "Sing-A-Lamb." Any high tenors can sing higher, or basses can sing lower, but kinda move up the first time then down the second time.

19. "Sing-A-Lamb"

[After first verse/refrain pair]: Say, I don't hear any harmony here. Any high tenors around? [demonstrates line] Basses? [demonstrates line].

[83] Referring to Diwali.

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Lot of wonderful Christmas carols. I know, I think I'll plug a family publication, *American Folk Songs for Christmas*, by my stepmother Ruth Crawford Seeger.[84] It's got just dozens of these songs, and if you've never heard them before, and they're wonderful to sing. Try them out on your guitar and with your friends, it should be a lot of fun.

Actually, the traditions from Africa are among the strongest in all American folk music. Not only this banjo came, but the way it's played, this idea of just setting up a little rhythmic pattern and then repeating it. A complicated little rhythmic pattern which doesn't seem to go anyplace but within that narrow framework gets considerable complexity. Of course, when it came into the hands of people who were singing English ballads, they made a combination, and it's a typical American combination. They took these old English ballads which were sung very freely with no regular rhythm, and they stuck this banjo underneath it with a very regular rhythm, and it would come out something like this.

[Tunes banjo] I've got to muffle this banjo a bit, it's drowning me out. Some people use handkerchiefs stuck in a banjo but it's a little small and a sweater's too big. You'll find a diaper is just perfect!

20. "East Virginia"

Take what I've always figured was the greatest song form invented in the twentieth century, namely, the blues. Well that's a combination of African music traditions—in rhythm, and in pattern, and melody—with harmonic traditions from Europe. And of course there's many different kinds of blues. You can have slow blues and fast blues, and mean ones and sad ones and glad ones. This particular one I'm repeating because I understand there's a girl here that, uh, the song kind of got attached to her somehow.

21. "T for Texas"

It's funny, some places where I sing, you even mention the word Africa and traditions from Africa and people get entirely the wrong idea. What does the average person know about Africa? Tarzan movies, comic strips, they think jungle drums or something like that. They never stop to think that there was civilizations down there, tremendous civilizations. When people up in Europe were still using stone hatchets, they were forging iron down there in the middle of the Congo. And they had a university in Timbuktu about a thousand years ago. Now these civilizations were broken up by years of the slave trade and wars of conquest. Today you go to Africa and you can find remnants of these tremendous cultures. Weaving, arts, philosophy, poetry, literature, and of course music.[85] And there's many different kinds of music. You go to West Africa, you find a lot of drumming. You go over to Northern Rhodesia, you find big orchestras of xylophones.[86] You go to South Africa and you

[84] Published the previous year, 1953, the same year Ruth Crawford Seeger died of cancer.
[85] This discussion of Africa is published in liner notes to *Bantu Folk Songs*, 2.
[86] Northern Rhodesia gained independence from the UK in 1964 and is now Zambia.

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find them all playing this little thing called thumb-piano. [Emulates thumb piano.] Wonderful instrument, you should hear it. In South Africa, also, they love to sing in harmony. They just don't think a song is a song unless you got some harmony. And I thought I'd teach you one or two of these. Sing it with me.

You know in Africa, their idea of rhythm is way ahead of ours. They're always putting one rhythm against another, whereas in Europe they had, in the orchestras they had what they called polyphony, there's many notes all going at the same time. In Africa they had polyrhythm, that is, many rhythms going on at once, and the simplest one, of course, is two beats against three. [Beats out rhythm.] Now you add a couple of three-against-fours in there, and fives and sixes and sevens and so on, and you really complicate things up. But it's not hard. Any little kid in Africa could probably sing a song like this. It's a wedding song, actually, and the melody's in one rhythm and you have to sing an accompaniment in another rhythm. The melody goes like this:

22. Unidentified South African choral folksong[87]

[After second verse]: Now that's the melody, but you have to sing like this [sings accompaniment]. Think you can do it? Give it a try.

Not as hard as you thought, was it? Seems that when a couple gets married, there's a twenty-four hour celebration, and they have appropriate songs for every part of the ceremony.

Now here is a song which you really have to sing. Any basses in the house? Oh we need some basses. Arbitrarily, I'm going to have to make everybody on this side a bass. Many of you thought you were an alto or a soprano or a tenor, but you are now a bass. And this is what you have to sing: [Oonomathotholo bass line]. That's all you have to do. "Bayeza, kusasa, bayeza." This is sung as kind of a choral accompaniment to a rather complicated dance and the group of people stands around while there are some dances in the center, and they sing this over and over again. [starts melody] All right, everyone on this side [tenor line].

Well I don't hear you! No, I think 200 people can make more noise than that! Take a breath first. Hey, did you ever hear the story about Madame Schumann-Heink?[88] Ever wonder why it is that all these opera singers are so big around? There's a reason for it, they've got to sing out. Well, Madame Schumann-Heink was trying to sing a concert, a friend of mine saw her in Cleveland, Ohio some years ago. And as I said she's kind of broad in the beam, and she couldn't get past all the violin stands on the stage. The conductor said, "psst, Madame Schumann-Heink, sideways!" She says, "Mein Gott, I have no sideways!"

Now you basses, you kind of sing with that [bass line]. Try it again. [again] Once more! [again] Now everybody in the back, tell you what. [Goes into audience]

[87] As mentioned in footnote 34 of the main article, this song is not on the two main collections of South African choral songs associated with Seeger, the 1955 Folkways LP *Bantu Choral Folk Songs*; and Rev. H. C. N. Williams and Joseph N. Maselwa, *Choral Folksongs from the Bantu* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1960).

[88] Referring to the opera singer Ernestine Schumann-Heink (1861–1936).

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Everybody from about here. . .on back is an alto. [alto line] try it again! [again] I can't hear you! Fine. Everybody over here is a soprano. [soprano line]. I can't hear you. [repeat] Once more! [repeat]

23. "Oonomathotholo" or "Bayeza"

Down in Pennsylvania last summer there was a Pennsylvania Dutch folk festival a friend of mine went to. Hot day, and all these Pennsylvania Dutch farmers and wives were sitting around in the hot sun. Around the middle of the program, the master of ceremonies stood up, said, "Friends, it's time for a soap party!" Everybody wondered, at least my friends wondered, what it was. Well everybody stood up and soaped themselves off! So I thought that maybe we'd have about a three-minute soap party right now, and we'll go along with the program in about three minutes. All right with you?

Intermission

[Tape reel begins] . . . possibly four more, but I'll sing as many as possible. And the first is a request from some young people who have been mighty patient all evening sitting around here. It is a song that I sang last year, and the old ones here will be patient for a while.

24. "The Foolish Frog"

Lots of different kinds of music you can make on a banjo. I think someday maybe classical composers might even condescend to write for it. Of course classical composers are always writing suites of this and suites of that, and in between the different movements of the suite you've got to have absolute silence, its very holy. Ever been to Tanglewood? It's a wonderful experience, but it's real kind of holy. I figured I'd write a suite. You have to have a name for it, the Nutcracker suite, everything has a name. I couldn't think of a name 'til I suddenly realized, it's called a goofing-off suite! Well there's a reason for it, you know! If you want to learn how to play the guitar or any instrument, you have to know how to goof off. I mean, you're not going to learn how to play this every Thursday afternoon at 5:30, I'll practice for half an hour, you just never learn that way. I know I learned, and I guess everybody else ever learned how to play an instrument did, when they were supposed to be doing homework or something else. I was teaching a woman to play guitar near my home, she was a housewife, and she just wasn't making any progress. I said, "forget the dishes, forget the beds and everything, and then you'll learn how to play guitar." Sure enough, next week she'd really made progress, of course her husband didn't appreciate it. Brought him around, got teaching him guitar too. A sign of a favored position: I can be laying up in bed and everybody in the house is working, "Papa's practicing." So this is my Goofing-Off Suite. Three movements.

25. "Goofing-Off Suite"

I'm sorry, we just don't have time for all the songs you asked about. Someone wanted a ballad. Well, by George I will sing a ballad. Put a nickel in a jukebox, you never hear

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the words anyway, and even if you did have the words you wouldn't have time left for a real ballad. You got to have forty or fifty verses to get in the swing of the thing. Now, this is a ballad, this was probably kind of a pop song two hundred years ago.

26. "Jackaroe"

Of course that song is pure propaganda. That was! Think of the days, it wasn't so long ago, when no young couple just married sweethearts, you married who the old man picked out. Matter of fact even right now, this friend of mine, was a Mennonite from Oklahoma. Back in the '30s, when he was a young man, a friend of his, his father came up his son, "you're 21, about time you got married, don't you think?" Son says, "Yep, guess so." Father says, "Any person in particular you've got in mind?" Son says, "Well, oh, so-and-so, I've seen her at church." The only time he'd ever seen her, the girl, was at church. "She looks like a good worker." Well, put on his Sunday clothes, get in the buggy—Mennonites don't believe in driving cars—he drove out to the neighbor's house. His father and his mother got out of the buggy, went inside to consult with the girl's father and mother. He stayed in the buggy, the girl, no one ever even asked her, she was upstairs, and the father and mother are bargaining how much the dowry, inheritance and so on are supposed to be. They come out, they say, "Son, it's all fixed up, the wedding will be on such-and-such a date." Sounds kinda funny to us, but actually that's the way a great many of our grandparents and great-grandparents got married. And so a song such as I sang was really pure propaganda. It was a story where you could see it being sung by some young people that, looking out of the corner of their eye, see what the old man was thinking of it.

Songs get made up all the time about actual events. And every controversy there ever was in the world was put down in song probably. Every war that was ever fought in this country, I already mentioned elections. Actually, some of the best songs I know are in that category. I'll be giving a program down at Columbia University come January, nothing but American history in song.

And you'll find the songs in the strangest places. Friend of mine, a professor of music down in Spelman College, Atlanta, went to visit down on the Savannah River and met some longshoremen. They were singing a song which was a tune they sang as a work song while they were working down on the docks. I've heard it's used as a hymn tune also. The words they were singing to it went something like this. "All I Want is Union," then the whole gang would go "whoa, Lord" "all I want is Union," then the refrain went "whoa, Lord." Now it's a real slow, long song, and different people were leading off on different verses. Supposing I lead off on a couple, and you just take that "Whoa, Lord." You think you can do it? Try it. [sings] Then he goes, "all I want is union," "oh, Lord." Try that one. [sings]

27. "All I Want is Union"

[After first verse]: Now if that's too high for some of you altos and basses, there's another part you can sing: [line] Wanna try it? [does it together] Think we can

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do both parts together? Basses, stick your heads together, altos, and you sing [low part], and I'll sing you the high part.

[After second verse]: Sounds pretty good. Any high tenors here? Real high tenors? [high part] Now can you sing it that high? Want to try it? High tenor, even alto can do it. But it has to be done high. Try it high voices! My gosh, now we got it. That's all you have to learn because it repeats itself. If you're a musician, you're singing in G and that's an E note that you start on and you go up to a high G. Let's try it all together. Now this harmony should roll out, and our parts should kind of overlap. If you invent any new parts, do it.

If you can imagine what it's like, a gang of men just singing this out. You hear it from a distance, rough voices and all, it just sounds prettier than any glee club or chorus if they rehearsed every day of the year. Any of you ever get a chance to hear some of the records put out by this old Folkways Record company, listen to one I think it's called "Millions of Musicians", has some work songs on it. Friend of mine named Tony Schwartz of New York collects all kind of folk song recordings and some of these songs are actually recorded on that.[89]

Well, you can have songs about every subject under the sun. Why I've heard songs even made up by students.

28. "Sing Tangent, Co-Tangent"

Anybody ever been down to Swarthmore? They have a song down there:

29. "Swarthmore Girls"

[After first refrain]: A little brook that runs through Swarthmore, called "Crumwood"

Really, student songs are kind of hard on teachers. Here's a teacher song. Matter of fact, this song was made up here at Cornell a few years back. There's an English professor, he's now at Cornell no longer, he's down at Hunter, teaches Chaucerian English.[90] Well on the side he was a hot jazz fan, and about eight years ago here they had a party, a dance for the teachers, the local teacher's union. And the quartet from the jazz club, they called themselves the Slipshod Four, they played the music, and this English professor made up some blues verses. Now I can't really sing them right, you need to have a trombone, a bass fiddle, and all sorts of things going here, it's a kind of stomp.

30. "Teacher's Blues"

I'm running way over time here. [NO!] I won't even start to sing you any of the songs made up about that fellow in Florida, you already know him. Will you come up and sing that song? Oh he knows it.[91]

[89] Referring to Schwartz's album *Millions of Musicians* (Folkways Records FP 5560, 1954).
[90] Referring to Marshall Stearns.
[91] Unknown reference.

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31. "The Wild West is Where I Want to Be"

That song was made up by a young [unintelligible] named Tom Lehrer. Made a whole bunch of them yet, parodies on this and that and a lot of other things. Can't sing them all here! Okay, the "Lolly-Too-Dum" folk wants me to sing "Lolly-Too-Dum."

32. "Lolly-Too-Dum"

Tell you what, a song I don't think any of you have heard here, at least not this set of words. Friend of mine from England sent me a letter recently with a set of words in it they made up. You know a lot of us read in the papers all the trouble we're having with the English government, they just don't do like we want them to do, they don't follow the lead and everything. You know the funny thing is, most Americans don't realize the trouble that English people have with their government. They got troubles too. So here's how his song went.

33. Unidentified song with refrain "Conscripts, boys, what are you gonna do"

Watch the words of that chorus.

Don't have time for all these songs! Of course many a folk song which we think of today as simply a good tune, a lot of fun to sing, was originally a very, very topical song, a very controversial song. Take the songs like the spirituals. "Go Down Moses" and "Jericho." Those weren't just a melody and words! They weren't singing about Moses and Egypt, they were talking about Harriet Tubman and Alabama. Actually, when you come down to it, some of the greatest art in the world has been made by people, whether it's musical art or graphic art, by people who couldn't say exactly what they wanted to, so they had to say it poetically. Had to use allegory and simile to say what they wanted to say. And this song, which a lot of you know I think, I used to think it was just another song about a railroad train. But I learned it referred to an old legend about that midnight train that goes past a prison, if the light should ever shine through the bars on a man, he'd go free. So it came to me that this song is not just another song about a railroad train, this song for all the people in prison waiting for that midnight special to come along.

34. "Midnight Special"

[After first time through the refrain]: Let's really sing it and rock out now!

Last spring, I heard a song which is kind of a sequel to this song. I mean that, it's a song which is a logical next one to sing after singing "Midnight Special." Ever wonder, where is this midnight special going to come from? Some magic place or something? If you stop to think of it, the only midnight special there's going to be is you and me. Millions of midnight specials (I'll do this fast), and an old gospel song which says just that.

35. "Let My Little Light Shine"

[After first refrain]: Come try to sing it with me. [sings the first line] try! I don't hear that harmony! I don't hear you! Everybody! Everyone!

Encore

You know, there are an awful lot of good songs we just haven't had the time to sing [Play them all!], so I'll play you a tune on the flute. Some of you have seen this thing, kind of a chair leg, you know, it's called a recorder. However, they cost about 15, 20 bucks. Absurd. You don't have to pay that much. If you know somebody who's got a bamboo fishing rod who's not looking, saw off the bottom eighteen inches. Put some holes in it, you don't have to do anything more than that, you can make a whistle with your lips. Any piece of pipe will do this. This particular model is called a *chalil*, it was made for me by a wonderful musician from Israel.[92] Whistle with your mouth against one edge, actually this is the [trails off]. . .

36. "How Beautiful are the Nights of Israel"

That song is from Israel, called "How Beautiful are the Nights of Israel." Let's see if you can guess where this is from.

37. Untitled Sioux Indian Melody

Anybody know it? [No] That's right, Sioux Indian. [Claps] If you'd have been around here about five hundred years ago, probably heard that being played right here where you're sitting now, trees all around. All the American Indians played flutes! East and west, all of them played flutes. Maybe I'll fool you with this one.

38. Japanese Fisherman's Song

Japanese fisherman's song. I'll end on a more familiar tune. Kinda hum along with this.

39. "Greensleeves"

You sing pretty. Did you ever stop to wonder why the lady's sleeves are green? I'll tell you sometime.

40. Fast Scotch-Irish melody

Well, tell you what, there's one song that's been requested we'll sing before we go. And before I sing it, I'd like to say, I want to thank you for singing with me so well tonight. Believe me, it's a great privilege to be able to sing real people's songs

[92] He mentions his chalil builder's name, but it is unintelligible.

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before real people such as yourselves. The average musician, if he has a job at all, he's up in some radio station singing songs he doesn't believe to people who don't listen, or else he's competing with a whiskey for attention down in some dive. And I really want to thank you. I also want to thank Students for Peace for making it possible for me to come.

If there's any message that could be got from all the songs that I sang tonight, I hope it would be the one that all peoples in the world, no matter who they are, no matter what language they speak, no matter what government they have, could sure enough, if they really want to (and I'm sure someday they will) they could sit down and swap songs just the way we have tonight. Think of all the different countries our grandparents came from, and all the wars that our grandparents fought in. It's disgusting.

So this song is kind of dedicated to our grandchildren and great-grandchildren to whom the Cold War will just be another chapter in the history textbook they have to study. It's a song again from South Africa. Has only one word in it, says "the lion" in the original language. Says "the lion is sleeping, the lion, the lion." And again it's an example of how a folk song can say a great deal in a few words. Seems there's an old legend of the Zulu people, says their last king, who was known as Chaka the Lion. The legend says, Chaka the Lion didn't die, he simply went to sleep, and will someday wake up to lead his people to freedom. And if you realize what's happening in South Africa today, you realize that when this song was played on the radio stations, it was a tremendously popular song down there, that, oh Premier Malan and all his friends, they didn't realize what this song was all about. They were singing, just "the lion is sleeping, the lion is sleeping, pretty soon he's gonna wake up."

Now all you basses, you ready? We really need basses on this! [bass line] Try it again, low voices. [repeat] Say this is good, we've got a good bass section. Now back there I didn't hear too many basses, so back there somewhere there's some higher voices that would like to try this part, you do [alto]. Try it [alto]. Very complicated but I think you can do it. [fast version] Over and over. Don't lose heart, just keep on singing it. As I said before, don't lose your place because again I'm singing something different. Here we go. Basses first, then we add the higher part, and if any of you want to add any more higher parts you can. [high part] And so on. Here we go, basses.

41. "Wimoweh"

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