



newport folk festival
july 22-25 1965



A LITTLE BEHIND THE BEAT

Changing Tastes: From Rock to Folk Rock to Nashville?

Bob Shelton, *Folk and country-music critic of The New York Times and contributing editor of Cavalier Magazine*



If there were a workshop on current trends in folk song at this Newport Festival, one trend-watcher would have this to offer:

Many of us missed the boat with rock 'n' roll. Even more of us are mistakenly ignoring contemporary country and Western music. Not wishing to hide behind the security cloak of "many of us," I'll admit to my own past squareness and present enthusiasm about "big beat" music.

Having finally seen the light about the quality elements in rock 'n' roll, I'll try to explain my conversion, and try to do a little converting of others. I don't suggest that every commentator on music go as far as I have in the last few months—switching to a Liverpool electric typewriter with twin 80-ohm reverbs, a falsetto over-dubber and lots of echo on all the choruses. (All the choruses...)

But I do suggest that you listen to a bit of Petula Clark with your Jean Ritchie, The Supremes with The Almanacs, and that someone investigate the similarities and contrasts of the high-tenor singing of Chuck Berry as well as Bill Monroe.

With the 20-20 clarity of vision that hindsight provides, this listener can now understand what blinded him to the music of the big beat. It was the hysterical

audience, the disk jockeys who never speak but always shout, the squadrons of publicists who engineered a mass hysteria. Beatlemania made it impossible to hear the music. The shrieks of the shriekettes obscured the quality and the vitality of the music. The mass hysteria of the Mersey beat left no mercy for the beat itself.

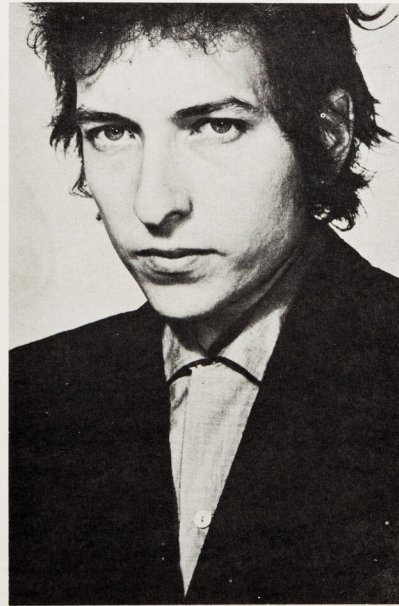
Now, going beneath the outrances of Beatlemania and the "British invasion," it becomes a time to seriously assay the blues, country and folk elements in the big beat. It also becomes a time to open a sympathetic ear to modern Nashville sounds.

To find artistic value in rhythm 'n' blues, rock 'n' roll or the big beat is not, as some still unconvinced adults have said, "capitulating to the tyranny of teenage taste." Although most of this is a commercial music, mass-produced for a buying public that craves novelty and excitement, there is a great amount of it that has artistic merit. The voicings of the Beatles (with some of those wild open fourths and fifths), the savvy of The Supremes, the naive charm of Herman's Hermits, the fluidity of the Welsh Tom Jones, the cleverness and dynamism of Chuck Berry, the relentless beat of Bo Diddley—all add up to some distinct contributions to popular music.

(Continued on page 57)



OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD by Bob Dylan



"Now get the hell up this pole!" Horseman sighs, vomits and looks out toward the slums... "Good God, there's a thousand angry plumbers all in chrome suits. They've smashed the gates." Photochick, she squints. Horseman looks down. His face is dirty. "Didja hear me? Stop squinting! Didja hear me?"

"The sun's hot. I'm getting down off this pole!" says Photochick. Meanwhile, back at the kazoo factory, Prez is walking back and forth dictating a letter. "Yes, I want the holes much bigger in these kazoos. I also want them cut sharper and to kind of pinch the tongue a little. I want a higher pitch, perhaps like a girl screaming. Also in the ads, I want to see a young hunchback. Perhaps with his nose broken. I want to see him sitting. Oh, I'd say, in front of a swamp with lots of mosquitoes. I want to see more of a poverty-type mood in the displays, also."

SCREAM from the closet. "Who's in there?" says the prez. "Could you check on that, please, Miss Flunk." Miss Flunk opens the closet. Tattler, the errand boy falls out. His arm tied behind his back. His shoes gone. "What's the matter there boy! Speak up! I'll have you demolished!" says Prez. "Sorry sir. The dykes have broken down. They're beating everybody up and putting them in the closets." "Oh my Gawaud!" says the Prez. "When? When has all this happened? Where are they finding all the closets? There aren't enough closets! Oh my Gawaud! What'll my wife say? Miss Flunk! Miss Flunk! Cancel my appointments for today. Order me my lunch?"

Miss Flunk slowly puts down her pen. Shuffles up to the Prez. Punches him in the gut and heaves him into the encyclopedias. "What! What's happening here! What, dear Gawaud is happening here?" Prez, in a gust of anguish. "Get your hands behind your back, you fat fiend!" says Miss Flunk. "You're going into the closet."

BAP and the Prez lands in the closet. Tattler escapes out an air-vent. Miss Flunk take a bottle of ink and starts to polish her muscles. It begins to rain...

Meanwhile, back at the pole, Horseman is shouting, "Don't get down Photochick! I want you! I need you! I love you!" Photochick shouting back, "The sun's in my eyes! I can't do a thing with it! I fear my banjo is missing." The plumbers arrive. They take off their chrome suits. "What you guys want?" says Horseman.

(continued on page 59)

All right, then—next on the pole was Horseman and his friend Photochick. Photochick is wearing a Hoover button in her mouth and this keeps her lips together.

Horseman was first up the pole and he's shouting back, "Hurry up, Photochick. Get up here." But then his pants fall down. Photochick, blinded, reaches for her banjo and Horseman screams, "What you doing? Get rid of that thing. Hurry. God, the cops are coming!"

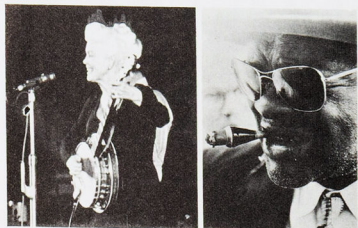
Photochick snarls, "Don't call me no God and she starts in a'singing "Coming through the rye, coming through the rye, oh yeah, baby-o, we-all just coming through the rye." Horseman gives her a kick in the mouth and her lips pry open and she stops her singing.



Charles River Valley Boys

COUSIN EMMY—Born in the area of Lamb, Kentucky and christened Joy May Creasy, Cousin Emmy received her nickname while working on her first radio job at WHAS, Louisville. Her fame spread to country and folk music fans alike through a fine album which she recorded for Decca back in the late forties. It was through these recorded performances that such favorite banjo tunes as "Bowling Green" and "Johnny Booker" were introduced into the urban repertoire. A fine harmonica player, fiddler, and song writer, Cousin Emmy now lives in the country outside of Los Angeles, California. This is her first appearance in the East in many years.

R. R.



Cousin Emmy

Rev. Gary Davis

THE REV. GARY DAVIS—One of the last practitioners of a great tradition in American folk music, a "holy blues" singer. Rev. Davis is a blind street singer in the tradition of Blind Willie Johnson and others who turned the curbstones and streetcorners of the South into open-air churches. The music is of a blues lineage, while the words retain their religious content. For many years, Rev. Gary Davis has lived in New York, teaching his distinctly powerful guitar style to scores of folk enthusiasts. Gary Davis first appeared at the 1959 Newport Folk Festival.

S. W.

DONOVAN—Born in Glasgow, Scotland 19 years ago. He was singing his own compositions in small folk clubs when he was discovered by the "Ready Steady Go" television show. His "Catch The Wind" climbed to the Top Ten in first British then American charts.

Recent visitors to Britain, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Jack Elliott have all been impressed with the easy lyricism of his singing and his songs, and Joan Baez has recorded several of his compositions for her next album. Donovan has recorded recently with his friend Derroll Adams, the legendary expatriate.

J. B.



Donovan

Bob Dylan

BOB DYLAN—The highly popular, controversial song-writer and singer from Hibbing, Minn. The composer of "Blowin' in the Wind," "A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall" and scores of other widely recorded contemporary folk songs. His appearances at the Newport Folk Festival of 1963 were a turning-point in his career. Dylan recently made a great success in Britain, at many concerts and on two B.B.C. television specials.

S. W.

MIMI AND DICK FARINÀ—Singing-writing duo, who perform with the unusual instrumentation of guitar and dulcimer. Mimi is a sister of Joan Baez. Her husband is also a writer, whose work has appeared in Mademoiselle, Atlantic Monthly, Hootenanny and other national publications. Random House plans to publish his first novel.

S. W.



Mimi & Dick Farinà



Ronnie Gilbert

RONNIE GILBERT—Member of Newport Board and original member of the Weavers. When they disbanded, she resumed solo singing career.

A. D.

FANNY LOU HAMER—A member of the executive committee of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, who is currently a contestant for Congress from Mississippi. Mrs. Hamer sings freedom songs, spirituals and church songs of the rural Negro tradition.

Born in Sunflower County, Mr. Hamer worked as a plantation timekeeper 26 years. She is married and has two adopted daughters. She was expelled from the plantation after trying to register to vote in the early 1960's.

S. W.

ROSCOE HOLCOMB—From Daisy, Kentucky, is 52 years old, plays banjo, guitar and some mouth-harp. He has worked in the mines, lumber mills and as a construction worker in and around Hazard, Kentucky, most of his life. His singing is heavily influenced by the old Baptist unaccompanied style as well as by the traditional ballad style. Yet, he also claims Blind Lemon Jefferson as an influence. Roscoe points out the idea that "dwelling" on a note is the way he prefers to sing.

"No matter what type of song he sings, it has the same intense and 'high lonesome' sound. His guitar and banjo-playing are equally personal, employing the thumb and index finger only, in such a manner that the thumb picks both the melody and serves as a drone along with the index finger. Both instrumental styles are basically the same, and in his guitar-playing, he often 'retunes' the instrument so that it is in an open chord like the banjo.

The heavy toll of accidents from work (broken back, injured eye) and bad health as well as the economic depression in Eastern Kentucky, with its armies of unemployed, has left Roscoe without work, except for subsistence farming. All of this has contributed to the hard and anguished sound of his music.

J. C.



Roscoe Holcomb

LIGHTNING HOPKINS—Widely known blues singer and guitarist from Texas who made a strong impression in 1960 on the urban folk audience. Has recorded widely, most recently telling his life story to Sam Charters on two Prestige LP's. He was regarded by many as "the last of the great country blues singers," reflecting the deep East Texas traditions out of which he came.

S. W.



Lightning Hopkins

EUGENE (SON) HOUSE—A major Mississippi Delta blues singer who was rediscovered on Father's Day, 1964, by Phil Spiro, Nick Perls and Dick Waterman. Had recorded for Paramount in the 1930's and for the Library of Congress in 1942. He is regarded by blues students as of the stature of the late Robert Johnson and Charlie Patton. Son House was born 63 years ago in Lyons, Mississippi. He has been recorded on Folkways and is scheduled to record for Columbia Records. He tells his story, "I Can Make My Own Songs," in Sing Out! of July, 1965.

S. W.



Son House



Mississippi John Hurt

MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT—The latest "ethnic star" to be embraced by the city folk audience. This former field hand from the Delta country was rediscovered two years ago by Tom Hoskins, who traced his whereabouts through the line in an early recording that said "Avalon's my home town." Since then, John Hurt has appeared at many festivals and concerts. Although from the same general region of Robert Johnson and Son House, his singing and guitar-playing have

CONCERT PROGRAMS

THURSDAY, JULY 22, 1965 8:00 P.M.—EVENING CONCERT

Joan Baez	Donovan
Margaret Barry & Michael Gorman	Son House
Blue Ridge Mountain Dancers	Lilly Bros. & Tex Logan
Maybelle Carter	New Lost City Ramblers
Cajun Band	Eck Robertson
Rev. Gary Davis	Josh White

FRIDAY, JULY 23, 1965 8:00 P.M.—EVENING CONCERT

Cape Breton Singers	Larry Older
Roscoe Holcomb	Peter, Paul & Mary
Mississippi John Hurt	Texas Work Song Group
Sam & Kirk McGee & Arthur Smith	Pete Seeger
Moving Star Hall Singers	Ed Young & Southern Fife
Arthur Nicolle	& Drum Corps
	Annie Walters

SATURDAY, JULY 24, 1965 8:00 P.M.—EVENING CONCERT

Horton Barker	Norman Kennedy
Margaret Barry & Michael Gorman	Kweskin Jug Band
Theodore Bikel	A. L. Lloyd
Oscar Brand	Bill Monroe & Blue Grass Boys
Lightning Hopkins	New England Contra-Dancers
Ian & Sylvia	Odetta

SUNDAY, JULY 25, 1965 8:00 P.M.—EVENING CONCERT

Bob Dylan	Ishangi Dance Troupe
Fiddler Beers Family	Mance Lipscomb
Len Chandler	Moving Star Hall Singers
Cousin Emmy	Peter, Paul & Mary
Ronnie Gilbert	Jean Ritchie
Fannie Lou Hamer	Eric Von Schmidt

SUNDAY, JULY 25, 1965—10:00 A.M. CONCERT OF RELIGIOUS MUSIC

Cape Breton Singers	Moving Star Hall Singers
Chambers Brothers	& Son House
Maybelle Carter	New Lost City Ramblers
Rev. Gary Davis	Jean Ritchie
Roscoe Holcomb	Beth Van Over
Rev. Francis Hubbard	

SUNDAY, JULY 25, 1965—2:20 P.M.—AFTERNOON CONCERT

Hosts: Jerry White & Peter Yarrow

Byron & Lue Berline	Kathy & Carol
Blue Ridge Mountain Dancers	John Koerner
Paul Butterfield Band	Gordon Lightfoot
Hamilton Camp	Bernice Reagon
Chambers Brothers	Pat Sky
Charles River Valley Boys	Mark Spoelstra
Mimi & Dick Farina	

DAYTIME SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, JULY 23

	11:00-12:00	12:00-1:00	1:00-2:00	2:00-3:00	3:00-4:00	4:00-5:00
Area 1	String Band			Group Singing Style (until 5:30)		
Area 2	Broadside Past & Present		Banjo: Oldtime to Bluegrass		Banjo Accompaniment Part I	
Bluesville	Blues Guitar		Blues: Origins & Offshoots (until 5:30)			
Ballad Tree	Ballad Swapping					
Stage	Negro Group Singing & Rhythmic Patterns			Psaltery		

SATURDAY, JULY 24

	11:00-12:00	12:00-1:00	1:00-2:00	2:00-3:00	3:00-4:00	4:00-5:00
Area 1	International Songs				Squares & Reels (Contras)	
Area 2	Contemporary Songs			Fiddle & Mandolin		British Songs and Singing Styles
Area 3	Folk Wind Instruments		Country Guitar			
Bluesville	The South			The City		Harmonica
Ballad Tree			Ballad Swapping			
Stage	Children's Concert			Banjo Accompaniment Part II		Dulcimer
						Autoharp

SUNDAY, JULY 25

Main Park Concert of Religious Music
Area 1 Panel Discussion: "The Scholar and the Performer"
Main Park Concert

10:00 A.M.
12:45 P.M.
2:30 P.M.

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Enough said!

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