

charm and telling of his amusing escapades. As one might expect with field materials, the recordings vary in quality, but generally I found this a very listenable record.

Here, as with his other productions, Davidson tends to throw the word "archaic" around with a bit too much abandon for my tastes. Ethnomusicologists may disagree with the terminology used to describe scales. Folklorists will regret the lack of comparative annotation for the songs and tunes. But these are really very minor points when balanced against the large amount of useful information presented.

There are now enough published records, both "field" and commercial, to justify a monograph on the folk music of the Galax region. In addition to the rich musical traditions which Davidson has documented (see list below), this locality has spawned one of the oldest fiddler's conventions in the South, and a number of important early country music recording artists -- including Ernest V. Stoneman and "The Hillbillies". A number of good contemporary field recordings have been published on l.p. by Alan Lomax, David Freeman and others. In recent years younger local musicians playing in the style of Wade Ward have taken advantage of the tape recorder/regional record pressing plant technology (a parallel to the local printing press as a source of broadside and chapbook materials) and have begun issuing their own records on the "Mountain" label. It may be that this is a region in which folksong revival has in fact revived folksong. In any case, with "Uncle Wade," we see that it has also revived folk music scholarship.

Records cited: Folkways 3811, Traditional Music of Grayson and Carroll Counties, Virginia; Folkways 3831, Ballads and Songs of the Blue Ridge Mountains: Persistence and Change; Folkways 3832, Bluegrass from the Blue Ridge: Country Band Music of Virginia.

Mississippi John Hurt 1928.

9 selections, vocal and instrumental, mono, liner notes by Richard K. Spottswood.

Biograph C10888 (BLP C4): Biograph Records, Box 109, Canaan, New York 12029. \$5.98.

Christ Was Born On Christmas Morn (1927-36).

16 selections, vocal, mono, liner notes by Richard K. Spottswood. Historical HLP 34: also available from Biograph Records. \$5.98.

Reviewed by Michael Taft

Although all of John Hurt's issued sides of 1928 can be found on previous albums, this new Biograph release serves an excellent purpose in bringing together Hurt's songs on one LP. Anyone who has done research on the recorded output of singers can appreciate the problems of searching out sometime obscure anthologies of reissues and the annoyance of juggling a large number of albums in order to listen to a small selection of songs. Certainly, this album answers the needs of the researcher. Not only does it reissue all of Hurt's early recordings (except for seven unissued sides which are lost forever), but the songs have been conveniently arranged in chronological order -- a practice not always followed by blues reissue companies.

Upon receiving the album, I feared that the sound quality of some of the cuts might be bad, since rare but inaudible 78s are often included on albums which attempt to be a definitive collection of a blues singer's repertoire. However, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the sound quality of the 78s used is uniformly clear. Although to my ear "Ain't No Tellin'" and "Avalon Blues" are slightly clearer on RBF 11, and the recordings of "Louis Collins" and "Got the Blues Can't Be Satisfied" are a bit better on Origin Jazz Library OJL 5, the sound quality of "Frankie," "Big Leg Blues," and "Spike Driver Blues" is equal to those sides found on Folkways FA 2951, Yazoo L 1009, and Folkways FA 2953 respectively, and "Candy Man Blues" is clearer on this album than on Melodeon MLP 7324. However, in no case is the difference very great and Biograph gets full marks for sound quality.

For those interested in the recorded blues, it is of course essential to understand the music of those artists who were not as commercially successful as, let us say, Charley Patton, Charlie McCoy, or Bo Chatmon. Hurt's idiosyncratic style, which set him apart from his contemporaries in Mississippi, may also have been responsible for his relatively short pre-war recording career. This album also makes easier a study of Hurt's style and repertoire in 1928 as opposed to that of his 1960s recordings. A comparison of "Avalon Blues" on this album with the same song on Hurt's 1963 Piedmont PLP 13757 LP shows differences in both wording and versification. The two verses concerning New York City found on the 1928 recording (recorded in New York) are lacking on the 1963 LP (recorded in Washington. D.C.).

The liner notes by Richard K. Spottswood are informative, although most of the material has been covered previously in articles and other liner notes. His assertion that "Blue Harvest Blues" is not from Hurt's repertoire may well be correct, but, considering the variety of music Hurt was capable of producing, such an out-of-character piece might be Hurt's nevertheless. Indeed, most blues singers, including Hurt, had repertoires which went beyond the blues to include ballads, dance tunes, popular White songs of the day, and religious music.

It is this religious music which is the subject of the Historical album. Here is an excellent anthology of, for the most part, religious music, sung by various race-record artists of the 20s and 30s. The close relationship between gospel singing and the blues is easily seen on this album, both in the "bluesy" style of many of the songs, and the familiar names of several blues singers included on the LP. The Cotton Top Mountain Sanctified Singers is led by none other than the old female impersonator and bawdy blues singer Frankie 'Half Pint' Jaxon. Willie McTell, who was as much at home with gospel songs as with the blues, is also included, and Roosevelt and Uaroy Graves of the Mississippi Jook Band sing two fine gospel numbers.

There are sixteen selections in all by eight different artists or groups of artists, and, with two exceptions -- McTell's "Ain't It Grand to Be a Christian" and "Lay Some Flowers On My Grave" -- all cuts are previously reissued. The sound quality is good throughout ("Lay Some Flowers On My Grave" is quite a bit clearer here than on Roots RL 324), and, on Blind Willie Jackson's "Take Your Stand," is clear enough to indicate, contrary to Godrich & Dixon, that Angeline is accompanying Willie. Again Spottswood supplies the liner notes, which give needed background information on the artists, but since he must share the back cover of the album with a complete list of Historical recordings, he is rather limited in the amount of space he can devote to any one singer.

It is hoped that the various blues reissue companies, which have to date put out few gospel albums, will produce more LPs like this one. No blues researcher can afford to ignore gospel music. This album is proof in itself that blues and religious music are two very interconnected parts of Afro-American culture, and that neither musical form can be ignored in the study of the phenomena of race-recordings. From a purely aesthetic point of view, the cuts featuring the Cotton Top Mountain Sanctified Singers, Arizona Dranes, and Roosevelt and Uaroy Graves are especially recommended.

Vietnam: Songs of Liberation

13 selections, vocal and instrumental, mono, pamphlet included.
P-1008. Paredon Records, P. O. Box 889, Brooklyn, New York 11202. \$4.00.

Vietnam Will Win

14 selections, vocal and instrumental, mono, pamphlet included.
P-1009. Also available from Paredon Records. \$4.00.

Reviewed by Dennis Coelho

Ideologies right and left have for the most part been singularly unsuccessful in attempting to bend folkloric materials to produce a desired reflection of "popular" political sentiment. In this country, for example, witness the "People's Songs" movement in the 30's and 40's, still visible today in issues of Sing Out! (For excellent histories of "People's Songs" and other politico-folkloric enterprises, see R. Serge Denisoff Great Day Coming and Richard Reuss Folk Music and the American Left [Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University].) Likewise witness Marty Robbins's "Ain't I Right". (Emphasis added. I am indebted to Jens Lund for bringing conservative activities in this area to my attention.) Or, for the average perplexed listener, there is Tom T. Hall's recent plague-on-both-your-houses "Watergate Blues".

Paredon Records, according to the pamphlet included with each record, "... bases itself on the needs of the people's movements all over the world to define themselves and to communicate with each other free of the cultural manipulation and economic control of the system's media. Paredon Records consist of music and speech, poetry and interviews, documentary or dialogue, which are part of the people's struggles. It will never issue dividends, or profits, but will use all money earned to produce other materials."

All well and good. But even within the above framework, the records at hand are often not what they seem. They present a problem for folklorists which is essentially the same in all instances; that is, finding tradition within "People's Choruses" and folkloric process within "People's Artists". Side 1 of Vietnam: Songs of Liberation consists of what are supposed to be traditional "folk" songs and melodies of Vietnam. However, the instrumentation is for the most part highly arranged, almost to the point of being symphonic. Side 2 consists of topical songs relating to the present struggle. The instrumentation is a tasteful combination of symphonic orchestration, solo piano or accordion, followed by unaccompanied male or female choruses.

Vietnam Will Win, on the other hand, makes no bows to tradition and starts with a rousing martial arrangement of "We Will Liberate the South," written