

One side of this record is a series of original poems (which he calls "tellings") and songs about the relationship between mankind and the seal people, which seem to be very loosely based on Hebridean tradition. These and two of his songs on the second side, "Dillon Bay" and "The Brandy Tree," are the most effective parts of the record. Like many folk revival performers he is not at his best with foreign-language songs--I feel he would have done better to avoid Yaqui Indian and Mongolian numbers. Bok fans will be very pleased by this record, but I feel that his first Verve-Folkways album or his two earlier records on Folk-Legacy would be a better introduction to his music. On most of the tracks he is joined by Ann Mayo Muir, who is an exceptionally fine harmony singer.

The reason for the high quality of these records is probably the attitude of the singers and the producers towards their music. Sandy Paton's ideal situation for performance has always been a group of friends sitting around making music and he has been incredibly successful in getting this across on his folk revival recordings. The three splendid albums by The Golden Ring (Folk-Legacy) are the epitome of this approach, but it is evident on these more recent releases. The singers and musicians have often known each other for years and they are used to playing together both informally and at festivals. One of the "Folk Legacettes" commented to me recently, "You never know who is likely to show up at one of the Patons' recording sessions." This sense of spontaneity and community is what makes these performances so attractive.

Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning. Fred McDowell, and others. 10 selections, instrumental and vocal, stereo. Arhoolie 1068. Arhoolie Records, Box 9195, Berkeley, Ca., 94709, 1973. \$5.98.

Reviewed by Lawrence McCullough

This album was assembled from the large stock of recordings McDowell made for Arhoolie from 1964 to 1969 and presents a well-balanced and interesting portrait of McDowell's artistry as revealed in a variety of performance contexts. Three selections are from Arhoolie producer Chris Strachwitz's first meeting with the bluesman in 1964 at his home in Como, Miss., two are from a performance at the 1965 Berkeley Folk Festival, two others were recorded at McDowell's home in the company of his wife and several friends, and the rest are taken from studio sessions.

Although the emphasis of this in memoriam album is on sacred

numbers, McDowell's secular repertoire is well represented by performances of "Good Morning Little School Girl", "Levee Camp Blues", "I Heard Somebody Calling", and "Little Girl, Little Girl". The sacred selections are rendered with the characteristic intensity and depth of emotion that made McDowell such a compelling and memorable artist. His version of "Amazing Grace", in particular, is one which won't be heard on your local AM radio station.

Six of the album's ten cuts are solos by McDowell. On "Levee Camp Blues" he is joined by harmonica player Johnny Woods, and on "Dig My Grave With A Silver Spade" Mike Russo (guitar) and John Kahn (bass) provide a solid and unobtrusive backup. His wife and other members of the Hunter's Chapel Singers assist him on two spirituals, adding increased fervor to the performance.

There is enough documentation to satisfy all but the most insatiable scholar, as the who, what, where, and when of the recordings are given in full. The notes consist of personal reminiscences by Chris Strachwitz on McDowell's career as a re-discovered country bluesman and provide yet another perspective of Fred McDowell and his music.

All things considered, Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning is an excellent album by which to remember (or become acquainted with) the late Mississippi Fred McDowell.

Country Negro Jam Session. Butch Cage, Willie B. Thomas, Robert Pete Williams and Others.

14 selections, vocal and instrumental, stereo.

Arhoolie 2018, Arhoolie Records, Box 9195, Berkeley, California 94709, 1973. \$5.98.

Reviewed by Patty Hall

Country Negro Jam Session, as the liner notes indicate, represents the high point of jam sessions held in several country sections of Louisiana. These sessions took place in homes, at the Angola State Penitentiary, and at the State Mental Hospital in Jackson, La.

The recordings, done on portable equipment by Dr. Harry Oster, are of excellent quality. Many of the cuts include conversations and comments which serve as important preludes and postscripts to the music itself. Butch Cage's fiddle style is turn-of-the-century fiddling, and Willie Thomas's guitar, kazoo and vocals combine with the fiddling to create excellent and varied numbers,