

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

by Huynh Minh Sieng but worthy of either John Phillip Sousa or A. Alexandrov.

One of the more interesting aspects of the two albums was the way in which Russian patterns in both martial music and unaccompanied choirs have left an obvious imprint on the Vietnamese music presented here. Technically, the recordings on both records are excellent, as should be, since the notes provided with the records indicate that all selections were taken from sessions recorded in studios and previously released in Hanoi.

Obviously, there is no way of knowing from the data provided with the record, or from the records themselves, what impact or spread these particular selections have in Vietnam. Nor, for that matter, can we even know if they are representative. The musical arrangements would suggest otherwise. Granted, field recording in Vietnamese traditional music is not the purpose of Paredon Records, but the problem of representativeness remains.

Each album is accompanied by a pamphlet which contains English translations of all the songs, together with relevant comments by either Irwin Silber or Barbara Dane. As political documents the records are valuable, and as human statements they are of great worth. But as measures of a folkloric process there is at least some doubt.

Black and White Piano Ragtime: 1921-1939. Eubie Blake, James P. Johnson, Fletcher Henderson, Alonzo Yancey, Blind Leroy Garnett, Jimmie Blythe, Jesse Crump, Zez Confrey, Vera Guilaroff, Rube Bloom, Jimmy Andrews, Jean Paques, Willie Eckstein, Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton.

14 selections, instrumental, mono, liner notes by David A. Jasen.

Biograph BLP-12047. Biograph Records, Inc., Box 109, Canaan, New York 12029. 1972. \$5.98.

Reviewed by W. K. McNeil

The material on this album is not traditional, at least in the sense that term is generally understood by folklorists. Ragtime is, as Rudi Blesh says, a music "that came from the people and then got lost" (They All Played Ragtime, p. 5). In other words, it is a type of popular and art music derived from folk sources. Although originally confined to saloons and sporting houses, ragtime received greater exposure in the late 1890's with the success of works by Benjamin R. Harney, William H. Krell, Scott Joplin, and others. Through the first two decades of the twentieth century the new syncopated style was an important influence on popular and folk music and Scott Joplin (1868-1917), the acknowledged master of the form, even tried his hand at composing a ragtime opera. Interestingly the development of the commercial recording industry coincided with the ragtime era and therefore complete documentation of the development of an art form is available. So it would seem, but the facts are otherwise.

Although ragtime is essentially a piano music, early piano ragtime recordings are rare. Generally this is explained away with some statement about the piano's inability to make sound vibrations sufficiently loud to cut deep enough grooves into the wax compound used for making the master disc. In his liner notes to the present album, David Jasen (himself a ragtime pianist)