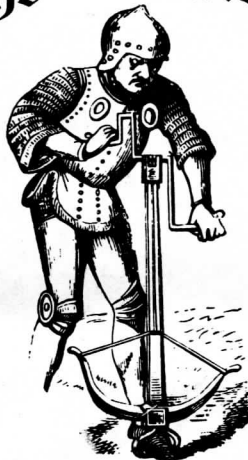


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EDITORIAL

TALKING or LISTENING? Part I.

One of the most vexing problems in the presentation of folk music in Melbourne is the amount of noise present at the various clubs. It is a question that has received more attention and less result than any other I have come across in regard to folk music. These editorials, and at this stage I don't know how many there will be, are an attempt to bring as many of the facets of the problem as possible, and to suggest some sort of answer to them. It is also designed to elicit some response from the readers; I have found that there are as many different views as there are people to ask, so perhaps this response will be forthcoming.

Unquestionably, the worst of the clubs generally is the Union on Friday nights. Like Dan O'Connell, there seems to be two distinct levels of folk music at the Union. Whereas at the Dan they appear on different days, at the Union they happen on the same night. First level is the one that occurs during the early come-all-ye session, from about 7.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. The people who arrive in time for this are there primarily to listen to and join in with the music. In all, they would comprise from thirty to fifty percent of the total audience on a given night. At this stage, the noise level is very low, and quite often the session is very good. No-one is expected to be totally silent—drinking, seeing friends for probably the first time that week, and being involved in a friendly sing-a-long atmosphere, is not a time to be silent—but they usually show a reasonable degree of consideration and good manners by restricting their conversations to saying hello, or at least not talking at the top of their voices.

But as the night goes on and people begin to arrive who have little or no interest in folk music as such, or who are only there for

the late license, the whole thing degenerates into a battle between the singers and the audience.

The whole purpose of folk music is defeated, and it becomes totally a matter of entertaining a pub-ful of drunks rather than sharing music with people. And yet, some tremendous stuff is still being done there.

The problem here seems to be a little different to the problem at the other clubs, however. The audience at the Union is far more varied than at, say, the Dan O'Connell, and so is the regular line-up of singers. This is probably part of the reason, the lack of understanding by one half of the audience of the other half's reason for being there, and for the music itself. But this is not the whole reason. Although it has been shown that it can, and does, work overseas and in the western states, drink and folk music do not seem to go especially well in Melbourne, particularly with late licenses. It seems probable that too much variety in music styles, such as we get at the Union, tends to attract a too incompatible group of people, people who will listen to their own personal choice but not let others listen to theirs.

Undoubtedly there are other reasons, and finding an answer to them all is going to be extremely hard. In the case of the Union, perhaps making the membership more exclusive by instituting an annual fee, booking singers of the same type on an individual night, and maybe even closing at ten o'clock instead of twelve, would be part of the solution.

I have not at this stage gone into the question of singers and management demanding silence. This is a very controversial subject, and I intend to come back to it later in this series of editorials. Next week we will look at the Dan O'Connell club and its problems, and in subsequent weeks at the Keeper, Frank Traynors, the Commune, Outpost Inn, and the teachers' colleges and Universities. In the meantime, I would

like to hear any views you may have
on this subject,
and maybe between us we can come to a
workable solution.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Mainly due to the fact that we used bigger
type-face last week, The Arbalest didn't
decrease in size. But, although I
hate to labour a point, it probably will in the
future unless we get more response from
you in submitting articles etc.
This week we'll have more than in
the past, but we can use a hell of a lot more.

In the meantime, we're beginning to include
material outside the folk idiom.
This week's issue has a couple of poems
and details of the activities
of the Melbourne Film Co-op. We hope
soon to have information on theatre
as a regular feature.
But we would like to keep the main
emphasis on folk music, at least for the
moment, and whether we do depends on your
contribution.

We also have this week a review on Ali
Akbar Khan, and this is the kind
of thing we're interested in. If any of you
who are going to the Clancy Bros. concert
would like to give us something
similar, we'd be very pleased.

And speaking of the Clancy Bros., those of
you who didn't make the Dan O'Connell
on Saturday 17th missed a tremendous
session.

Lou Killen and Liam Clancy were both
there, and both sang,
and the standard of music played by the
other singers there, who included
Peter Parkhill, Mike O'Rourke,
Danny Spooner, Karass, Christy Cooney,
and others, was a good as I've ever heard
there. This was undoubtedly folk music.

RECORDING SESSION at FRANK TRAYNOR'S.

As we mentioned last week, Marg Roadknight
and Dona Nobis are doing two almost
identical recording sessions at Frank
Traynor's on Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th
February. Peter Parkhill and Mike
O'Rourke, who normally do the two nights
will also be singing. The cost of
each session is \$1.00, but you will have
the option of paying this fee down as deposit
on the record.

Dona Nobis we have spoken of before, and Marg
Roadknight hardly needs any introduction
to Melbourne audiences, should be
very good nights, and well worth the dollar
admission.

USTAD ALI AKBAR KHAN by Stella Minahan

"My father learned from a great teacher and
we always keep the traditional thing,
like father to son, then son to grandson,
or students and disciples.
Therefore, I want to keep what my father
learned, I don't want it to die. It must be
spread all over the world."

This quote from Ali Akbar Khan well carries
my sentiments after being
privileged to hear his excellent
performance at the Dallas Brooks Hall.
From this performance I began to realise
that Indian music is not only
a medium of great beauty and a great source of
entertainment, but that it is a way of life
and a code of ethics,
a mode of thought.

Ali Akbar started studying music under his
father Allaudin Khan (who died last September
aged 110) at the ripe old age of three.
Six years later "serious studies began", he
practised music eighteen hours a day
for the next fifteen years,
learning vocal music, drums, and other Indian
instruments before concentrating
on the saud. In his early thirties he
was given the title of Ustad,
the Persian word meaning "master musician".

The title Ustad probably loses a lot
in the translation, because I can't find a
suitable word to describe the musical brilliance
of this man. One can see easily
that Ali Akbar Khan is so devoted to his music,
that his music, love and devotion emanates
from every note he gives to his audience.

One point - unless you have the ability to
concentrate deeply on what you
are hearing, then you cannot possibly gain the
full meaning and emotion of what he is saying.
As I said, Ali Akbar Khan's music is a
way of life

that he is offering to the world.
I don't think he offers any great ready-made
solution to the problems of
Western life, but if you are prepared
to listen to his music
then you are able to gain
the secure and serene frame of mind
which is three quarters of the way
to find any answer to any question.

"Thank goodness we have a strong man like Mr. Meagher, who is not afraid to stand up against pornography."

- from a reader's letter in the Melbourne Sun's column 50/50.

"Balls" John Armstrong heard at Dan O'Connells one Thursday night.

This article is to be a somewhat light attempt to assess the value of bawdy songs in our society today. If I seem to express the view that bawdy songs are fun you will find that there is a quite logical reason. I believe it. I do not agree that bawdy songs will pervert you but if you have any fears on those lines do not read any further.

History has shown two extremes in the attitude of people towards sex. From earliest times one generation would indulge in great sexual freedom, while the next would sweep it away and repress anything that mentioned sex. For instance, the courts of King Charles were often little more than lavish orgies, interrupted occasionally when the sign would be hung out that "The King has retired with the Pox" (The disease is as old as the cause)

Under Cromwell, however, pleasure became a crime and sex as a means of diversion had had the Richard, to coin a phrase.

More recently the eighteenth century and early nineteenth brought another wave of great sexual freedom with heroes like Jacques Casanova, whose memoirs were written in bed, and Lord Horatio Nelson, who is remembered almost as much for what he did to Lady Hamilton in Portsmouth as for what he did to Napoleon at Trafalgar. Strangely, one generation after his death came Victorianism, when the advice given to a girl on her wedding night was "Lie back, close your eyes, and think of the Empire".

Now we are in the enlightened 1970's when nobody knows what we want, except the censors who are doing a fine job of guarding the morals of the nation.

One legacy we have from all this is a wonderful wealth of folksong with sex as their main theme. They could be divided into the more subtle songs like the Gentleman Soldier and the Bonnie Black Hare,

and the more blatant songs like Charlotte the Hardot and The Good Ship Venus, but the distinction is more of degree than anything and probably stems back more to the wit and education of the writer rather than from any desire to be a "cleaner" song.

Sex songs are probably the biggest category of folk song which are still alive. Whereas with most types of song that are still popular are alive only as a remembrance to someone or something or because someone liked the song enough to write it down. This means that at best, the singer of most folksongs is not singing from personal experience but is merely copying or preserving a song that often has little social importance outside of basic historical or entertainment value, which are good reasons for singing a song, but are sometimes hard to relate to personally. Take for instance Australian shearing songs. How much significance have they to the average Australian city dweller, and how many of the singers have even seen the inside of a shearing shed, let alone known the backbreaking labour that goes on inside.

There are perhaps only two avenues of folk song that after all the years have as much meaning as when they were written. One is anti-war songs which have been around as long as war has, and the other category is songs about sex. In both of these categories we haven't progressed much. The song "Johnny I hardly knew you" makes little difference to the message if Johnny was hit with a cannon ball or with napalm.

In the realm of sexual activity we haven't changed much either. In the first century A.D. Vatsayayana listed 64 ways coition in his book the Kama Sutra. About the fourteenth century Shaykh Nefzawi, in the Perfumed Garden lists eleven ways he considers favourable with a note that he considers the other Indian methods to be more gymnastics than attempts to have a good screw. These days the field seems to be narrowed even further, but then who these days is fit enough to try this:-

"Seventh Manner-El Kelouci
(The summersault)

The woman must wear a pair of pantaloons, which she lets drop upon her heels;

she then stoops, placing her head between her feet, so that her neck is in the opening of the pantaloons. At that moment, the man, seizing her legs, turns her upon her back, making her perform a summersault; then with his legs curved under him he brings his member right against her vulva, and, slipping it between her legs, inserts it. It is alleged that there are women who can, while lying on their backs, place their feet behind their head without the help of pantaloons or hands."

Actually it sounds more like a method for acquiring a multiple rupture than for enjoying the back seat of an F. J. at the drive-in.

As we said there are two realms of song, (getting back to songs as this still is a folk song magazine), which have some meaning in modern society. Perhaps this is the reason why they are the two realms of song most frequently banned by the government censors. This brings me to my next point.

The official attitude is that any songs about sex must be detrimental to our mental health and should therefore be banned. Speaking as a verified sex-maniac, and long time collector of bawdy songs, I would like to explain why I hold the opposition view. However, I can only speak for myself and you must each decide for yourself - for or against.

Firstly, bawdy songs are educational. I learnt inki Pinki Parlex Vous at the age of nine, and by the time I was eleven and made High School, I had learned more from songs and jokes than I ever learned from the ninepenny book that my red-faced father thrust into my hand as he hurriedly walked out the door, one day when I was about thirteen. I sold the book to a school friend and learned lesson No. 2. Apart from being educational, there was money in sex, and it wasn't very long until my repertoire of bawdy songs became a commercial proposition.

Indeed on a wandering trip in Queensland when I was relying on singing in pubs for a living, I found that bawdy songs had several advantages. They were witty (usually), had good rousing choruses and could be sung even when blind drunk.

This brings me to the third point. Bawdy songs can be fun. Nothing is more satisfying or provides a

better release than throwing back your head and having a good sing. A good degenerate song gives a fine opportunity to do this as they require little vocal skill.

As we have said, current government policy is to ban recordings of any songs that mention sex, but who knows, this may be good. Instead of buying a record and hearing someone else singing we will have to sing the songs ourselves, and that could be even better. One thing is for sure. The songs will never die. They find themselves all over the world and add and swap verses with every generation. This is pure folk music in action.

One final point - think to yourself how many bawdy songs you know. They have sometimes lived for hundreds of years, yet in all that time no-one has written a lasting song praising the censor.

TRADING POST

FOR SALE: Estruch classical guitar, made in Spain.
\$260.00 a. n. o.
Refer Arbalest A001 or ring Merv. on 57-4549.

WANTED TO BUY: Back copies of Astounding Science Fiction, Analog Science Fiction, Fantasy and Science Fiction, or Worlds of Tomorrow, in good to fair condition. Or exchange for If from Vol. 1, No. 1, to 1972 issues some in excellent condition. Contact Arbalest A002 or ring Phillip at 311-0611.

by Helen Benjamin

Someone just dropped out of your life
You look around to see who can help you,
But you don't really want their help
You want someone else
Someone who won't ever die
Someone who won't cry,
And someone who for sure won't ever say
goodbye.

IN MELBOURNE THIS WEEK

FRIDAY 23rd FEBRUARY

Union Hotel
Fenwick and Amess Sts., North Carlton.
7.30 p.m. - 12 midnight.
Danny Spooner, Phillip Day,
Peter Parkhill, Peter Holden and Neil

Frank Traynor's
100 Lt. Lonsdale St., City.
8.00 p.m. - 12.30 a.m.
Dave Brannigan, John Crowle,
Russ Shipton.

Outpost Inn,
52 Collins Street, City.
8.00 p.m. - 1.00 a.m.
Danny Spooner, John Crowle.

Commune
580 Victoria St., North Melbourne.
8.00 p.m. - 1.00 a.m.
Mervyn Dennehy, Graham Dodsworth.

SATURDAY 24th FEBRUARY

Dan O'Connell's Hotel,
Princes & Canning Sts, Carlton.
3.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Come-all-ye.

Frank Traynor's
8.00 p.m. - 2.30 a.m.
Longford Street Band, Julie Wong,
Peter Parkhill, Mike O'Rourke,
Gordon McIntyre

Outpost Inn
8.00 p.m. - 1.00 a.m.
Andrea McIntyre, Peter Howell and Jan
Clark, John Graham, Tom Cochran.

Commune
8.00 p.m. - 3.00 a.m.
Tom Cochran, John and Terry

SUNDAY 25th FEBRUARY

Frank Traynor's
8.00 p.m. - 12 midnight.
Phillip Day, Mike Deany.

Outpost Inn
8.00 p.m. - 12 midnight
Margret Roadknight, Dona Nobis.

Commune
8.00 p.m. - 12 midnight
Crucible

MONDAY 26th FEBRUARY

Frank Traynor's
8.00 p.m. -
Recording Session with Margret Roadknight,
Peter Howell, Bob Kinnard, and Peter Doley.
Martin Doley and Ian Clark of Dona Nobis.
Bracket also by! Dona Nobis.
\$1.00 admission.

TUESDAY 27th FEBRUARY

Frank Traynor's
8.00 p.m. -
as for Monday.

Commune
9.00 p.m. - 11.30 p.m.
Dutch Tilders and Guests.

Outpost Inn
8.00 p.m. - 11 30 p.m.
New Faces, with David Stephens

WEDNESDAY 28th FEBRUARY

Frank Traynor's
8.00 p.m. - 12 midnight
Christy Cooney, Tony Lavin & Guests.

Melbourne University
2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.
George Paton Room.
Danny Spooner - Erotic Music of the
British Isles.

THURSDAY 1st MARCH

Dan O'Connell's Hotel
7.30 p.m. - 12 midnight
Danny Spooner, Gordon McIntyre,
Longford Street Band

Frank Traynor's
8.15 p.m. - 11.30 p.m.
John Crowle, Julie Wong

Commune
8.30 p.m. - 11.30 p.m.
Classical Guitar Night.

Melbourne University
2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.
Concert. Prince Phillip Theatre.

FRIDAY 2nd MARCH

Union Hotel
7.30 p.m. - 12 midnight.
Danny Spooner, Phillip Day,
Peter Parkhill, Campbell Muir and Others.

FRIDAY 2nd MARCH (Cont'd.)

UNION HOTEL

by David Langsam.

Frank Traynor's

8.00 p.m. - 12.30 a.m.

Julie Wong, Peter Parkhill,

Mike O'Rourke.

Outpost Inn

8.00 p.m. - 1.00 a.m.

Dona Nobis and Others.

Commune

8.00 p.m. - 1.00 a.m.

Keeper Folk Club,

Lord of the Isles Hotel,

Fyans St., Geelong.

8.00 p.m. - 12 midnight

Longford Street Band

Grand Re-Opening Benefit Night.

Melbourne University.

3.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.

George Paton Room.

Phillip Day - Contemporary British and
Australian Folk Music.

ADELAIDE

FRIDAY 23rd FEBRUARY

and MARCH 2nd.

The Lord Raglan Hotel

Waymouth Street, Adelaide.

Informal. Come-All-Ye.

8.30 p.m.

SATURDAY 24th FEBRUARY

and MARCH 3rd.

Lord Raglan Hotel

Selected Singers.

8.30 p.m.

FILMS

Every night from THURSDAY 22nd
FEBRUARY.

Melbourne Film Co-Op,

161 Spring Street, Melbourne.

The Curse of Laradjongram.

A Woman of our Time.

K-Tape 1 by Jim Wilson

and

Where Are You Taking Me?

On the Ball

The Commercial

Our Luke

Pisces Dying.

Union Hotel

I'm back

From across the seas.

Hugh and Phil

Roger and Gary

Brendan and Pedr

All at the Union

On Friday night.

So good to be back home

At the Union

You feel at home

With Joan and Faye

And Peter and Peter

Back home.

It's a good place

For a drink

Or a song

Or just to meet friends

And have a yarn.

And the dog lies on the floor.

He has it good

The pub's dog on the floor.

Phil sings a song

We all join in

And the golden Labrador

Scratches his bum.

Things are slow and easy

On a warm summer's night

People singing, talking

And the dog goes walking.

He looks for a friend

To pat him and scratch his head

He lies on the Floor

He has no cares

The pub's dog on the floor.

I suppose we would all like to be like him

No cares, no worries

Just lie and relax on the floor

All day

Meanwhile we sing and drink

We talk and sing

It's just as good.