THEODORE BIKEL SINGS SONGS OF ISRAEL
FOLK SONGS OF ISRAEL
SUNG BY THEODORE BIKEL

This album is not meant to be a work of reference; not an anthology of yellowing pages of folk history, nor a contemporary collection somewhat snuggly presented "strictly for the connoisseur." And although the connoisseurs will probably not find the items lacking in authenticity, we have tried to preserve the element of entertainment first and foremost. Being an actor, I hardly could have done otherwise.

What precisely is a folk song? The common definition reads somewhat like this: "A traditional song performed with or without accompaniment, often passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation and changing as it passes through oral tradition. As implied by the name, it is commonly sung by simple folk."

How then are we to justify the fact that all the songs contained in this album (as indeed all Israeli songs) were written by living composers within a period of twenty years or less? Is this not a direct contradiction of what a folk song should be?

Had this been the case anywhere else but in Israel, we would have had to acknowledge the fact that we were dealing in "pop" songs, created at the moment and for the moment. I must insist, however, that these songs should be labeled "folk songs" quite legitimately.

Consider the unique predicament of the Israeli nation: a people with a strong tradition of over 2000 years; with two millennia, ready to be taken out of the mawball at the required moment. Only new words had to be found for concepts then unknown, such as screwdriver, engine, or airplane. The never-changing basic concepts of life, on the other hand, that had been tailored down in other languages to fit our rational 20th Century—these still wear the beautiful and serene classical mantle in Hebrew. If an Israeli wishes to say to somebody, "I like you," he has no other form of expression but, "You find pleasure before mine eyes."

All this returning and re-tuning of the Hebrew tongue is reflected in the songs of Israel. They have a quality that firmly roots them in the soil of the land. Their greatest advocates are the children-carrier pigeons of folklore—who are much like the songs themselves. Their parents came from all over the globe; the children carry their heritage, yet have only one home. Thus do the songs bear witness to the Russian, Spanish, German, or Yemenite background of the pioneers, yet they have only one set of roots, one place of birth, distinct and undisputed—Israel.

THEODORE BIKEL

A Personal Note from Theodore Bikel

A word of explanation about this album is in order. Folksongs of Israel was the very first album I recorded, back in 1955, in the pre-stereo days. When the demand for stereo grew, we decided to record the album all over again for a new issue, both monaural and stereo. Same song, same artist, same cover (so as not to mislead people), but a new setting and a new performance. I have no way of knowing whether one grows to be better in six years or not. I do know that one grows to be different. Here it is then, Folksongs of Israel, brand new, as far as I am concerned.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS ENCLOSED
FOLKSONGS OF ISRAEL
sung by THEODORE BIKEŁ

1. DODI LI (Chen)
2. HECHALIL (Goldberg-Zahavi)
3. ANA PANA DODECH
4. ORCHA BAMILBAR (Fichman-Zahavi)
5. SHECH ABREK (Zaira-Pen)
6. KAREV YOM
7. SHOMER MA MILEL (Viner-Shelem)
8. UZI VEZIMRAT YAH
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1. SHIR HABOKRIM
2. EL GINAT EGOZ (Levy)
3. MI BARECHEV
4. SHIM U SHIM’U (Viner-Shelem)
5. SISU VESIMCHU (Viner-Shelem)
6. HANAVA BABANOT (Neeman-Nina Music BMI)
7. SUKA BAKEREM
8. PTSACH BAZEMER
9. LAYLA LAYLA (Alterman-Zaira)