1960

THEODORE BIKEL
assisted by Ray Boguslav

OSCAR BRAND
WILL HOLT
ORANIM ZABAR
ISRAELI TROUPE

featuring Geula Gill
NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL

1960

PROGRAM

Side One

OSCAR BRAND
1. TALKING ATOMIC BLUES (*Portrel/Shore's Songs)
2. GREAT SELCHIE OF SHULE SKERRY
3. HORSE WITH A UNION LABEL (*Battered-Arms/Thrice Music)

Assisted by The Shanty Boys

WILL HOLT
4. THREE JOVIAL HUNSTEN
5. EDWARD BALLAD

Side Two

ORANIM-ZABAR TRouPE
featuring Geula Gill
1. BUKHARA
2. RUSSIAN SPOOF
3. AYI AYI (*The Fire)

THEODORE BIKEL

Accompanying himself on guitar Assisted by Ray Douglas
4. AL HARIM (*On The Mountains)
5. MI CABALLO (*My Horse)
6. THREE JOLLY ROGUES
7. ERES ALTA (*Yes! Now Tell)
8. GALVESTON FLOOD

Everything looked promising on the eve of the second annual Newport Folk Festival but the weather. The first festival had ended in a drizzling rain, and now, the afternoon of Friday, June 24, 1960, before the second was to begin, there were warnings from the Weather Bureau, the Coast Guard, and Rhode Island State Police that the eye of a hurricane would pass through the area in several hours.

Albert B. Grossman and George Wein, the festival co-producers, looked grim. They had lined up a formidable array of talent for the weekend: twenty-three individual performers and a dozen groups, ranging from duos to a 125-voice choir. The producers' fears that the hurricane would blow the audience away were justified.

But the guardian angel of folk singers must have been working overtime. The storm veered off in another direction and the skies cleared. The three-day festival was held amid Newport's reputedly beautiful weather. And so the weather was a bigger, broader, and more representative roster of talent from many points of the compass. There were rough, natural, ethnic performers, polished professionals who had worked on the club circuit; there were young lads and older-timers; there were performers from half a dozen countries and Americans who reflected all facets of native and international folk music.

The big show at the second annual Newport Folk Festival got under way with a veteran skipper at the helm. Oscar Brand, the genial radio host of Sunday evening shows on New York's WNYC and of a nightly program on WCBN, took over as master of ceremonies at the first night. He did so with the casual manner and easy charm that have won him so many friends to folk music during his twenty years of performing. Oscar wore many hats at the festival, singing in a variety of veans and moods. On this record are three, that sadistic little gem *Talking Atomic Blues*, a rich ballad from the Hobo Songs, Great Selchie of Shule Skerry on which Oscar plays the twelve-string guitar, and to round out his Newport entry, Oscar sang a make-believe cowboy tune, *Horse with a Union Label*. Here he was backed up by the Shanty Boys (Roger Sprang, Lionel Kilberg and Mike Cohen). Listen to Rogers' playful five-string banjo poking its head in and out of the background on the whimsical ditty. Oscar suggested the audience might like to join in on the chorus, and it doesn't take much listening to hear that several thousand enthusiastic folk singers, audience-style, got on board.

A little later in the same concert, another Elektra recording artist had his chance on stage. To Will Holt, whom the New York Times has called "an effervescent innovator who takes the lowdown song and makes it sound like a breath of fresh air," Holt takes us down into the depths of the Boston subway for *M.T.A.*, the most famous underground song since the French Resistance.

On an international note, in came the Oranim-Zabar Troupe featuring the beatuetois Geula Gill. With Dov Seifter and Michael Kagan backing Geula vocally and instrumentally, the OZs give us some of the world's best hard-driving, light-hearted Israeli music that has endeared them to thousands of listeners. Geula's jet-powered voice gets a free wheel in the up-tempo *Bukhara*, and when they turn to satire in their *Russian Spook*, the OZs are obviously having themselves a ball. Here are some nimble-witted take-offs of "Russih" vocalizing with a delicious bit by Miss Gill doing a cluck-voiced satire of a Russian girl-singer. Israeli dances are becoming widely known for their abandon, and in *AyI AyI* the OZs and Miss Gill whirl away in a frenzy of musical vigor.

Oscar Brand opened the festival, and it was for Elektra's Theodore Bikel to conclude it. The big baritone went on stage at the end of three nights and days of music-making. It was a tough spot to fill with an audience that had been hearing a lot of fine music over a weekend. But characteristically, the famous actor-singer fixed his attention on one person here or one there in the vast line of chairs at Freer Park. With his winning stage manner he gave everyone the feeling that he was singing to them alone. And Theo rambled through his international song bag, traveler and speaker of many languages that he is. He chose songs from Israel, Chile, Chile, Britain, Spain, and from our own South. On the final four of his five selections Theo was assisted by the singer-guitarist Ray Boguslav, who has been earning increasing plaudits for his work with his friend and fellow artist.

From Oscar Brand to Theodore Bikel, it had been a long and exciting weekend of music.

production supervisor - JAC HOLZMAN

editing & mixing - MARK ABRAMSON

Elektra wishes to express its appreciation to the Vanguard Recording Society, Inc. for their assistance in the making of this recording. To complete your sound portrait of the 1960 Newport Folk Festival, Vanguard is issuing two additional albums with the following artists: Pete Seeger, John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Driftwood, Tom Maloney, John Lost City Ramblers, Mike Seeger, Alan Mills, Ken Carpenter, Ed McCurdy, Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, Furry Mountain Boys, Cisco Houston, Bob Gibson, Bob Camp.

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