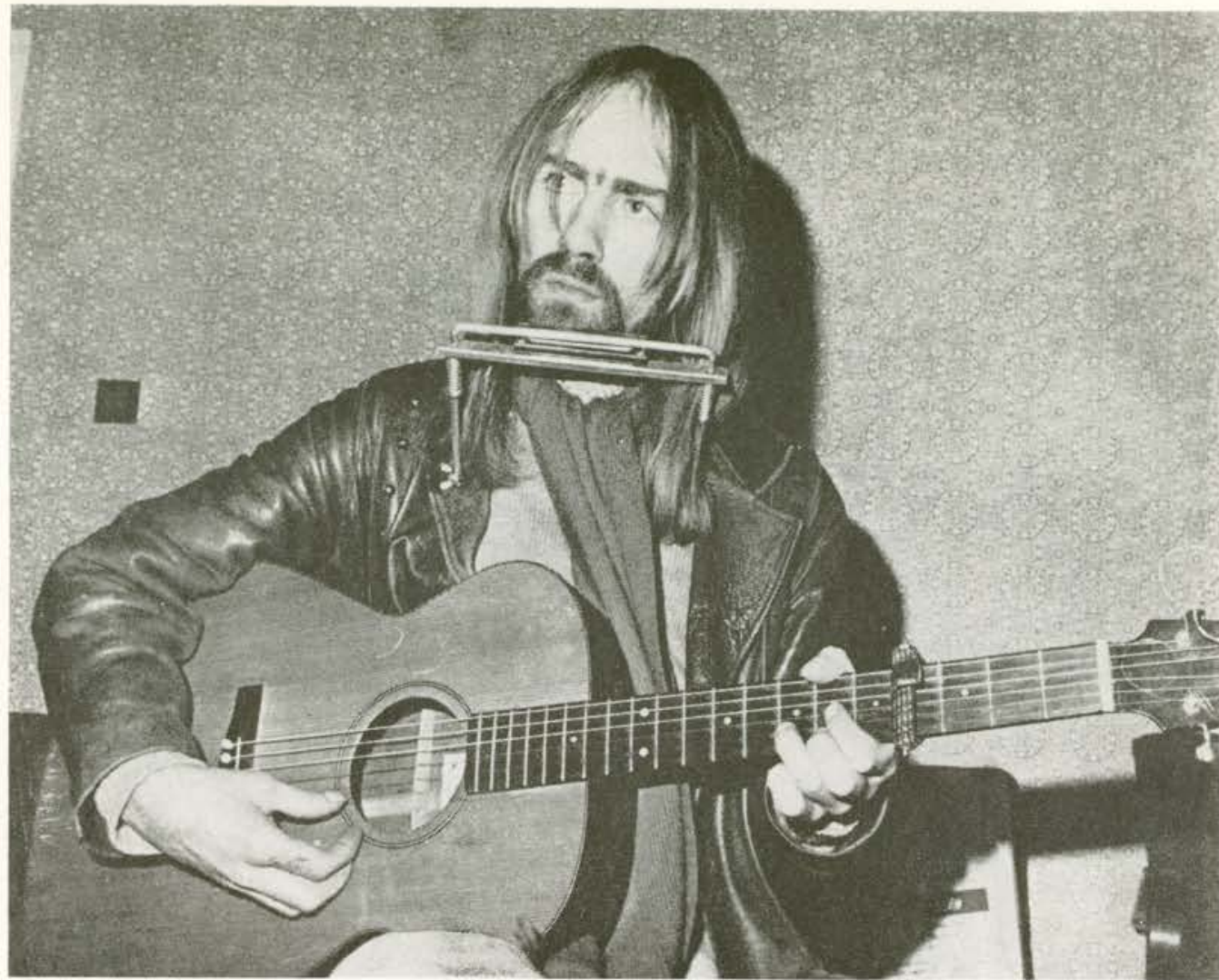


John Martin & Derek Block
with Marquee-Dolan
present

TOM PAKTON in person

70





ROY HARPER

"Hasta la victoria siempre paix"

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1. The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exit and entrance doors and such doors must at that time be open.
2. All gangways, corridors, staircases and external passageways intended for exit shall be kept entirely free from obstruction whether permanent or temporary.

3. Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any of the other gangways or any unseated space in the Auditorium, unless standing in such space has been specially allowed by the G.L.C. or the Watch Committee, as applicable. If standing be permitted in the gangways at the sides and the rear of the seating it shall be limited to the numbers indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.

The Management reserve the right to change the programme without notice and are not held responsible for non-appearance of any artist. The Management reserve the right to refuse admittance.

What makes a man a poet? Perhaps it is the ability to be inspired to creativity by all the small details of life that most of us simply accept or ignore. Tom Paxton has written over 200 songs in the last 9 years — children's songs, humorous songs, satirical, sad and frightening songs. His inspiration comes from the smallest things — a woman dining in solitude, a loaf of Wonder Bread, the Daily News. Or his inspiration can arise from the major problems and/or headlines of the day.

But no matter how major or minute the topic may be, Paxton treats them all with stunning objectivity and warm humour. For, as he says, "More and more, with every song I write, I try to record what I see and leave out what I think. What I'm really trying to do is document the time, not the attitudes of the time. But the time includes a lot of things. I got off the soapbox a long time ago, but I didn't quit caring."

Tom's musical beginnings can be traced to his undergraduate days at the University of Oklahoma, where he first started to play the guitar, sing (his inspirations stemmed from Burl Ives, Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie) and write songs. His very first song was called "Robert," a neo-Elizabethan murder and revenge number which Tom describes as "a spurious imitation ballad. There was nothing bland about us neo-Elizabethans," says Tom.

Both style and content underwent vast changes, and in 1960 Tom composed "The Marvelous Toy," now the oldest song in his repertoire, and featured in the current best-selling album, "Peter, Paul and Mommy." It was the success of this song that helped Tom, then a recently discharged army veteran, decide to make his living singing and writing songs. And it was playing this song for Chad Mitchell Trio that led him to Milt Okun, who became his publisher and is currently his musical director. In rapid order he became singer-in-residence for the old "Gaslight" coffee house and was then signed to Elektra Records, a company noted for the excellence of its artists.

The years between have mellowed Tom Paxton as an artist. Now he writes from himself, although he absorbs influences from many directions. And the writing is disciplined. Three mornings a week in

his home in East Hampton at the end of Long Island, Tom works at his songs, without waiting for "inspirations." The lyrics come first. The process is free association; he will relax and scribble anything that comes into his mind. "The song writes itself. I write songs down, I don't write songs. I have learned to trust associations and first impressions." For all that, Tom has been known to write six different sets of lyrics for a song before he is satisfied with the result.

His songs concern themselves with rabbits, love, politicians, pot, freeways, friends, courage, children. Written with insight and sensitivity, they immediately give Paxton away as being more than a singer and writer. They mark him a poet and philosopher, in the tradition of his idol, Jaques Brel. Tom is still learning. And what he has learned from Jaques Brel is: exciting songs that ebb and flow, that deal with 'important' things, with real things; love that's ugly as well as beautiful; war and what it does to people... John and Yoko... Marvelous Toys... the patchwork of our crazy world and times — are the natural fabric of his innate minstrelsy.

Tom Paxton off-stage is Tom Paxton on-stage. Nothing changes. His comments between songs, comments that he makes while playing cards or watching football, simply fall out, unrehearsed, exquisitely timed. "If I've had any success at all, it's because I never come on as anything I'm not. An audience knows when it's being fooled. It's the easiest thing to spot."

Tom lives with his wife, Midge, in a traditional wood shingled East Hampton house, with their two daughters, Jennifer (for whom he wrote "Jennifer's Rabbit") and Katie. He drives his volvo station wagon into New York for two days each week to work, to record, to keep in touch with what is happening in the music world.

Paxton is a man with a good deal of peace in his life. He has been able to put things together in some sort of reasonable order, and to drift through that order unhysterically. He makes his living the way he wants to and exists, with health and a good family, in hand-made tranquility. Ahead is music to be written for the theatre, for films, for albums, for pleasure. Tom Paxton's scene is cool.

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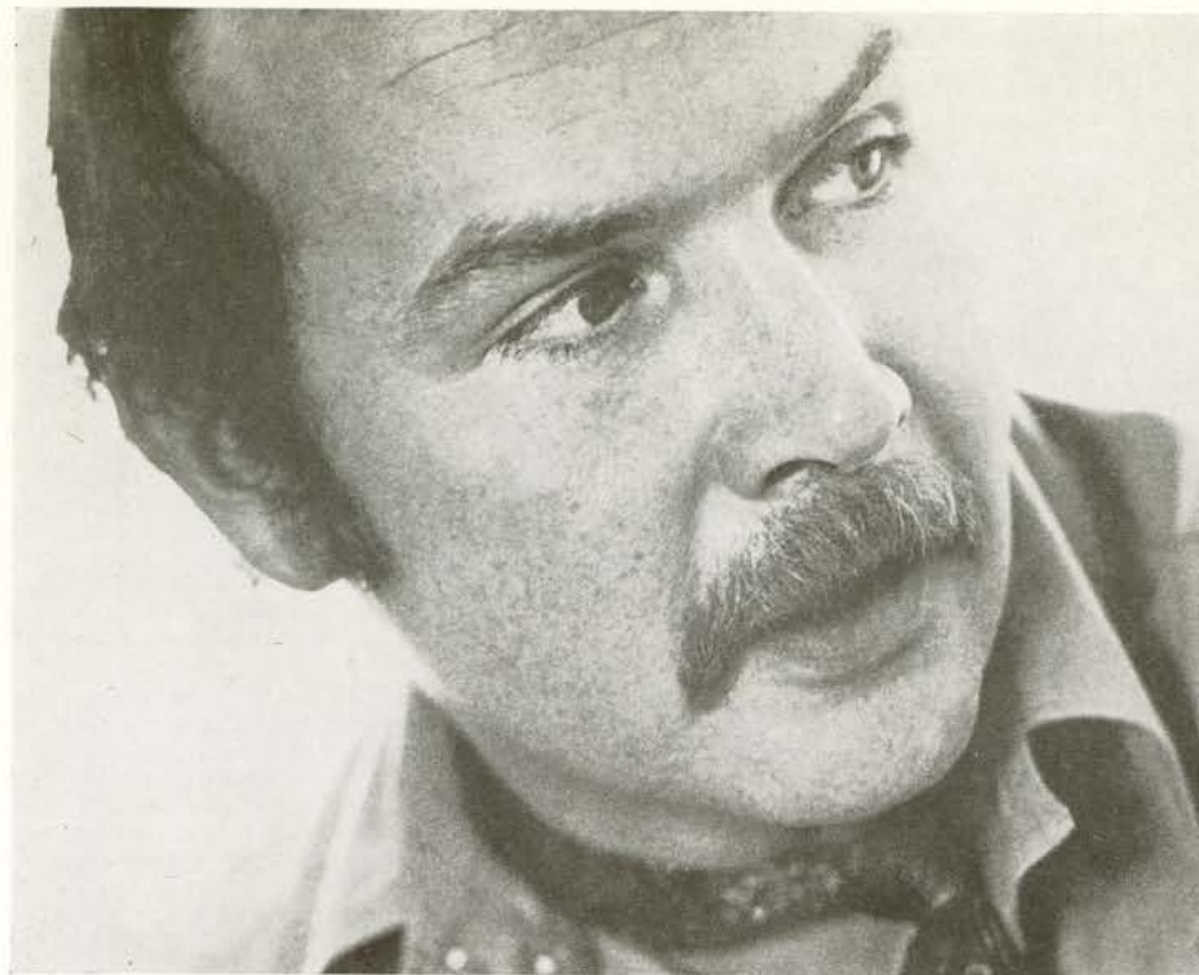


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PAXTON'S**

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NUMBER 6
2469 003

AND HIS LATEST SINGLE IS

FOREST LAWN/JIMMY NEWMAN
2101 002

Distributed by Polydor Records Ltd.

Isle of Wight 1969 : the height of the electronic revolution in pop, with Bob Dylan, electrified apostate of folk music as chief commissar. The stage is filled with tons of amps, whose pilot lights glow redly like the eyes of computer demons. Each act takes at least half an hour to set up its equipment and get it balanced.

On comes a single man, slightly balding under his hat (no teenybopper rave, that's for sure), carrying a single acoustic guitar. He gets the biggest ovation of the entire event so far.

Thus did Tom Paxton serve notice that amplitude was not going to have things all its own way and that the folk scene, pronounced dead so many times by all the pundits, was just not going to lie down. Indeed, so far from being ready to read its own obituary, folk has become, once more, one of the most significant influences in pop, from Dylan himself cavorting gaily along the skyline of Nashville to the tender wooden music of Crosby, Stills, Nash and their associates, from the bluegrass-tinged laments of Dillard and Clark to the electrifying reinterpretations of traditional balladry by the Fairport Convention.

Paxton is no stern traditionalist (though get him alone with a few friends, some beer and a guitar and he will sing only traditional material: try asking him for "Strawberry Roan" for starters) but he is without a doubt the most craftsmanlike songmaker to come out of the American folk revival. Like all the great artists before him, Seeger and Leadbelly and Woody, he is not at all afraid of sentiment, which is why audiences continue to warm to songs like "Last Thing on My Mind" and "Rambling Boy" long after the words have become so familiar that they have almost lost their meaning.

What is not always so obvious, I think, is the steel beneath the velvet, the strain of toughness that stiffens his back, making him a critic of significance. These days, when revolution is packaged and sold to the revolutionaries to stop them revolting, it is rather too easy to be a critic of the status quo. The establishment has learnt to turn its opponents into licensed clowns, funny men with long hair and moustaches who struggle with police, get broken heads, and then are welcomed on to TV talk shows to jump through verbal somersaults and illustrate how permissive we are.

Dylan saw the danger before any of us, which marks his sudden switch from the obvious radicalism of even his best "protest" songs like "Hattie Carroll" to the rather more probing attack of "Maggie's Farm" and "Subterranean Homesick Blues." Incredibly, Paxton has managed to avoid the pitfalls of protest without wrapping up his meanings in obscurity. He doesn't serve up his message on a silver salver, like a Western Union telegraph boy. You have to listen; you have to think.

What makes "Crazy John" such a powerful warning is the fact that you have to hear it a few

times before you realise that here Paxton is putting his finger squarely on to the dangers John Lennon is running at the moment, and his courage. "Now That I've Taken My Life" doesn't go on about the commercial and other pressures which force a man to abandon all the things which give his actions meaning, but to hear it in close proximity to "Mr. Blue" there is a sudden chill when you realise that here are two sides of one coin.

In one song the young man grows out of his ideals and comes to terms with corruption; in the other, the dangers of non-conformity are spelled out for all who will not fit in. And it is part of Paxton's genius that he sets the song to a gay, rollicking tune rather than a sombre dirge. The man saying good morning to Mr. Blue has no reason to be unhappy: he knows he has the silent majority on his side, that each of us has to stand up alone to the billy club behind his back, that few people really care, personally, about the easy rider sent skidding from his bike with a shotgun blast. When we really listen to a song like "Mr. Blue" we can say that we have seen the future, and its stinks.

Which is only one side of the story, as it is one side of Paxton's art. Love, real love, not the phoney flower power hype, is an important part of the other side. Apart from the occasional bit of countification like "I Followed Her Into the West," these are mostly urban lovesongs, tender, sometimes even faintly tear-jerking, grappling with what it is like to meet a woman, marry her, get her with child, leave her, return, miss her, get your own breakfast in the cold light of a lonely morning in a city like New York.

He is an adult, writing songs for adults, which is probably why the rapidly maturing teenagers cleave to him so firmly at this point in time. Eros takes its place in his songs but as a central focus for the social relationship that love implies: not merely coupling grubbily on the blanketed floors of crash-pads, but carving out, painfully, from our own flesh the way we can live with each other.

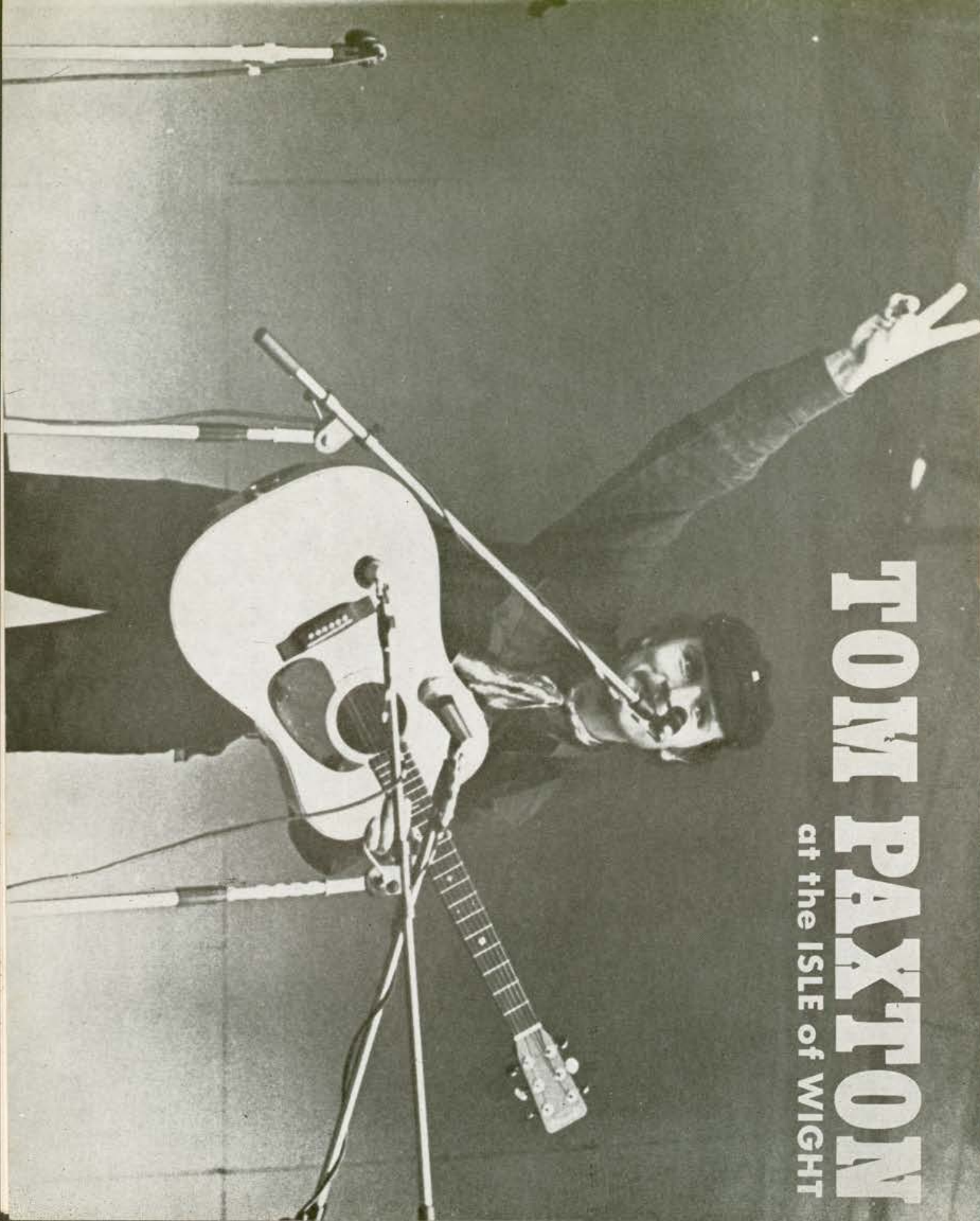
I have always believed, for this reason, that love songs, real love songs like "The Foggy Dew" and "So Much for Winning," are the most political songs we have, simply because they set up another human standard against the machine age technocracy that is trying to crush the humanity out of us.

Paxton's politics are not the politics of sterile debate, of slogan shouting, the cattlemarkets that are political conventions in Britain and USA and the USSR and China today. To borrow a phrase from R. D. Laing, Paxton's are the politics of experience. His experience — which is what makes them yours and mine, as well.

KARL DALLAS

(Karl Dallas writes on folk and pop music for the Melody Maker and for The Times)





TOM PAXTON
at the ISLE of WIGHT

Bilham Town Hall + Bass + Piano
May 21st 1970

Someone's morning begins
Can't help but wonder what I'm bound
On my mind

Whose garden was this
Now that I've taken my life.

Saturday Night
About the children
Through a window
Yesterday, today, tomorrow

Space between
Time shows no face

I'd be leaving London tomorrow
Molly Bloom.

Outward Bound
The Ballad of Spiro Agnew

Good Morning Mr. Blue
If I had a hawbadder.

"Ekezoote" - Mamma's boy.

Cordy's song → how do you
spend your night

Theresa Jones -
I never used to care
Uncle Jack.
Oh Lay me Down in Forest Long
Take me back again



Run shaker life
Universal joint
Most likely you'll go
your way, I'll go mine

Jennifer's Rabbit
(Katie) I give you the day

I went Zipp etc - marvellous
Little Toy

Stephen Dolan -
acoustic string bass & electric bass guitar

Mike Carless -
drums, conga & other percussion

Michael Dolan -
various acoustic & electric guitars

Together for their first album
they've made a special record,
seven songs for you to listen to.

Crazy John
All night long -

Talking blues - Ujamaa
Pot.

Get up, Jimmy Newmar
Rambourig boy.

On my mind



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