

FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

April 1978

Volume I, Number 2

CONCERTS RESUME APRIL 27

The American Folklife Center's 1978 Neptune Plaza concert series at the Library of Congress will be inaugurated on April 27 with a program of Irish music by Joe and Antoinette McKenna.

A piper since age ten, Joe McKenna grew up in Dublin near the famous Cumann Na Piobairia Uilleann Club and learned uilleann pipes from the late Leo Rowsome, a famed player of this intricate instrument. McKenna has twice won the all-Ireland competition and in 1975 won the all-Britain piping competition. He and his brothers continue the family craft of building pipes in Dublin, and the instruments they build are highly complex. Uilleann pipes are powered by a bellows operated by the player's elbow (and are sometimes called "elbow" pipes) and have regular pipes which supply harmony as well as the chanter and drones of the more familiar highland pipes. They have long been considered the most difficult of pipes to play and among the most beautiful of the world's many varieties of bagpipes. They were a favorite instrument of Irish immigrants, and during the 19th century some of the best makers of the instru-

Continued page 7

NATION'S FIRST LADY ATTENDS OPENING NIGHT "FOLK ART AND FOLKLIFE" EXHIBIT AT LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The official opening of the *Folk Art and Folklife* exhibit brought the Nation's first lady Rosalynn Carter and daughter Amy to the Library of Congress January 26. They were escorted on a special tour of the exhibit by Librarian of Congress Daniel J. Boorstin and Mrs. Boorstin, Alan Jabbour, director of the American Folklife Center, and Michael Carrigan, the Library's exhibits officer, after which they attended the opening reception in the Library's Great Hall. The gathering brought together a variety of people including government officials, museum directors, heads of cultural institutions, professional folklorists, artists, and scholars.

Among the guests were Mary Beth Busbee, wife of Georgia Governor George Busbee, James T. McIntyre, director of the Office of Management and Budget, several Members of Congress, Isabelle Watkins, chairman of the Georgia Council for the Arts and Humanities, other representatives from the Georgia Council, and the many people who had journeyed to Washington from Georgia for the occasion. Dr. Boorstin introduced Mrs. Carter who



Amy Carter, Daniel J. Boorstin, First Lady Rosalynn Carter, and Michael J. Carrigan.

told the gathering: "Each generation plays a part in preserving its historical heritage. . . So much of the time, true character derives in large part from the functional works created in a family. It's important to preserve these things that are so much a part of our history and culture."

Some of the artists whose works appear in the exhibit traveled from Georgia to participate in the opening reception. Ulysses Davis, a woodcarver from Savannah, presented Mrs. Carter with a large wooden bust of President Carter. Other Georgia artists included

Continued page 4



FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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American Folklife Center

at the

Library of Congress

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

When the American Folklife Center was established by an Act of Congress in 1976, many people asked me if the Center was a special bicentennial project. My response then, and now, is that the national impulse which ultimately was responsible for the creation of the Center, though it found partial expression in the many and varied grassroots bicentennial celebrations, ran far deeper than and would last far beyond the occasion of the Nation's bicentennial year. Cultural preservation is much in the air these days—or, to use another locution, it is high on the personal agendas of our citizens, and their concern is beginning to show up in a pattern of flux, uncertainty, and initiative amongst local, state, and federal governmental agencies which address cultural concerns.

One such initiative last year was the idea of creating a National Heritage Trust, which was deliberated within the federal government's Department of Interior. As an array of task forces labored toward conception last summer, the subject of folk culture came up frequently. But what interested me most about the process was that *cul-*

tural preservation and *natural preservation* were yoked together, not only in the rhetoric, but in the administrative organization of the proposed Trust. Summer has now turned to winter, and the Trust has been transformed into a reorganization within the Department of Interior, with fresh initiatives confined to the subject of natural preservation. Still, the process has dramatized the possibility, already recognized in the mandate of older agencies such as the National Park Service, that the twin aspects of the national impulse toward preservation—namely, preservation of our natural heritage, and preservation of our cultural heritage—can be linked.

To take but one illustration, a few months ago I visited the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, a region long noted for both its extraordinary natural environment and its tenacious local folk cultural traditions. There has been much discussion in the past year about preserving the natural environment of the Pine Barrens, and several members of Congress have introduced legislation to that effect. Meanwhile, the hosts for my visit, the Pinelands Cultural Society, are working to preserve the local cultural traditions of the region: its music, its crafts and material culture, its stories, and in the broadest sense its traditional way of life. That way of life is of course intimately related to the natural environment of the Pine Barrens.

Surely there is reason to think about natural preservation and cultural preservation together. Perhaps they can be wed in common cause. And if they are to be joined, perhaps folklife is the fulcrum. *Alan Jabbour*

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mrs. H. K. (Raye Virginia) Allen of Temple, Texas, has been appointed to a full six-year term on the Board of Trustees of the American Folklife Center by the Speaker of the U.S. House

of Representatives Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Mrs. Allen currently serves as Vice-Chairman of the Board.

Janet Anderson (Mrs. Roger Abrahams) was appointed for a six-year term by the President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate. Janet Anderson, a longtime resident of Oregon, now lives in Austin, Texas. She was an early advocate for the establishment of the American Folklife Center while she lived in Washington, D.C.

K. Ross Toole, Montana, resigned from the Board because of illness. The remainder of Dr. Toole's term will be filled by a U.S. Senate Appointment.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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CHICAGO PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

And where did you pick up the music itself?

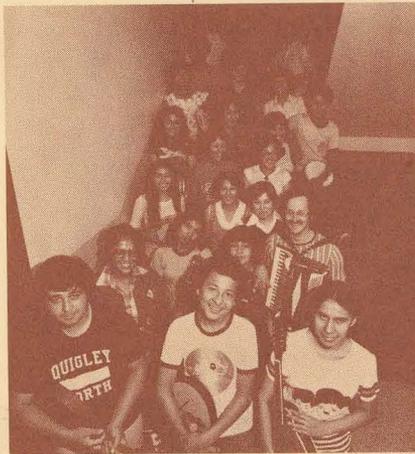
Well, my father was a fiddler, not a great fiddler by any measure, but the love for the music surely was there. And it's been—My earliest recollection was, musicians constantly in the house. You know the old story about around the kitchen fire and . . . and a . . . playing music until it was time to go home. Then the cup of tea and the bit of a sandwich or home-made bread, or whatever it was.

This exchange between fieldworker Mick Moloney and Noel Rice, a musician and leader in Chicago's Irish community, typifies in several ways the context and spirit of the arts in the city's ethnic communities. Mr. Rice's remarks convey the warmth of memory characteristic of active artists—particularly traditional artists—within urban ethnic groups.

The exchange is taken from one of the nearly four hundred recordings made during the Chicago Ethnic Arts Project conducted by the Center during summer of 1977, which is described in the last issue of *Folklife Center News*. In January, the Center presented its 561-page final report to the cooperating agency in the project, the Illinois Arts Council. The report will be supplemented by sound recordings and photographs selected from the body of work accumulated by the project.

Mr. Rice's remarks help us understand him as an Irish musician in Chicago but they also help us understand artists from other groups. Keenly felt in Rice's words is the hearth of his father's kitchen in Tipperary, Ireland. The setting and social aspects of music are clearly as important to Mr. Rice as the music itself.

This importance of the context for music is also stressed by fieldworkers



The students and teacher of La Estudiantina de San Pio, a music class and performing group in the Chicano community of Chicago. The group is led by Brother Michael Seiberlich, shown with accordion, and meets at Saint Pius V Church on South Ashland Street. (Photo by Jonas Dovydenas.)

who visited locales as diverse as South Side blues bars patronized by Afro-Americans, and the weekly meeting of *Harmonien*, the Danish Singing Society, whose practice session is followed by a round of drinks and small meal.

Although understanding the context for a performance can be difficult, it is harder to articulate the meaning of more subtle connections implied by comments like Mr. Rice's. His remarks typify a frequently observed correlation between an artist's memories and his or her creative activity. In each community, fieldworkers found that active tradition bearers and ethnic artists had positive and often cheerful memories of their early encounters with the arts.

Mr. Rice's case is that of a first generation immigrant recalling his homeland, but the positive correlation between memories and creativity seems to hold true for American-born artists as well. It can be heard in the words of Faith Bickerstaff, an artist visited by Shifra Epstein in Chicago's Jewish community. Her thoughts also

provide an insight into the important link between grandparents and grandchildren, which was observed in nearly every cultural group.

My grandmother, in her last days . . . Her eyes were failing. So the lace, the handwork, was her art. She could not see too well. So she would touch something and say, "This is a circle. This is a diamond with littler diamonds around it. This is a scallop. Or this is," you know, "a line here and a line there." She said, "It's important that the family tradition keep going." Which is why she taught me. She felt it was important. And if I can keep it alive, I believe, that if she were alive, she would be quite pleased.

The documentary products created by the Chicago Ethnic Arts Project are being cataloged at the Center. Cataloging the sound recordings are Philip George, who also served in Chicago as a fieldworker, and Nathan W. Pearson, Jr., an ethnomusicologist who recently worked with folk music scholar Alan Lomax to produce a series of phonograph records. The photographs are being cataloged by folklorist Holly Cutting-Baker, who has worked indexing the Family Folklore collection of the Smithsonian Institution's Folklife Program.

The assembled materials and the report itself reveal the richness of private traditions within the city's homes and informal neighborhood meeting places. Although these forms were well documented, the project's directive to survey *all* cultural expression led to examination of organized activities and the work of ethnic organizations that might have been overlooked had the project been limited to "folk arts." Formal activities and ethnic organizations are vital to community cultural life and play a major role in the transmission of community traditions.

Some communities are spread over a large area, but members still gather for various events, often in a religious set-

Continued page 8

First Lady continued

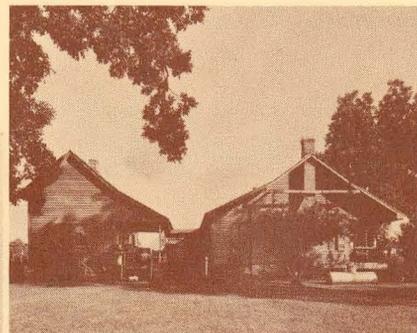
D. X. Gordy, a potter from Greenville, Columbus McGriff, a wire sculptor from Cairo, painter Mattie Lou O'Kelley, Eddie Owens Martin, a self-proclaimed innovator who has constructed a temple compound near Buena Vista, and Reverend Howard Finster, a painter and creator of a "paradise garden" behind his bicycle repair shop. Upon returning to his Summerville home Reverend Finster wrote the Center about his visit to the Library: "TO SAY IT WAS GREAT TO MEET YOU AND YOUR WONDERFUL STAFF. AND TO SEE THE GREATEST MASTER PIECE OF ART THERE WAS IN DISPLAY WHICH WAS THE STRUCTOR ITS SELF THE LIBRARY BUILDING. I MISSED OVER HALF OF THE SHOW TRYING TO SEE THE GREAT ART OF THE MANSION OF THE LIBRARY."

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Hill flew to Washington from their home in Chula, Georgia, where Mr. Hill is a well-known barbecuer and storyteller. They were surprised to find in the exhibit an enlarged photograph of Mr. Hill along with a sound recording of him telling one of his favorite fish stories.

Folk Art and Folklife is a two-part show which, focusing on the traditions of Georgia, provides two perspectives on American folk culture. *Missing Pieces: Georgia Folk Art 1770-1976* features paintings and objects produced by Georgians over the past 200 years and presents these traditional artifacts as works of art to viewers outside the community of their creation and use. *Sketches of South Georgia Folklife* portrays the interweaving of art and life within some south central Georgia communities through photographs, sound recordings, and texts. Sponsored by the American Folklife Center with assistance from the Georgia Council for the Arts and Humanities, *Folk Art and Folklife* was on view through April 2 in the Library of Congress building.

Missing Pieces: Georgia Folk Art 1770-1976 surveys the little-known but significant contributions of the Deep South to American folk art. The show contains paintings, drawings, sculpture, textiles, pottery, and environmental art created by Georgia residents, itinerant painters traveling through the state, or unknown artists whose works were purchased in Georgia or donated by Georgia families to local historical institutions. The exhibit was organized by Anna Wads-

worth Murray for the Georgia Council for the Arts and Humanities with assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts. *Missing Pieces* was shown in Georgia last year at the Atlanta Historical Society, the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences in Savannah, and the Columbus Museum of Arts and Sciences. It is the first major exhibit of



Daniel J. Boorstin, First Lady Rosalynn Carter, Amy Carter, Alan Jabbour, and Mary Beth Busbee, wife of the Governor of Georgia.

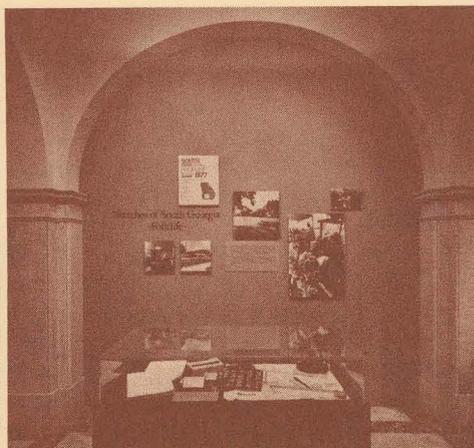
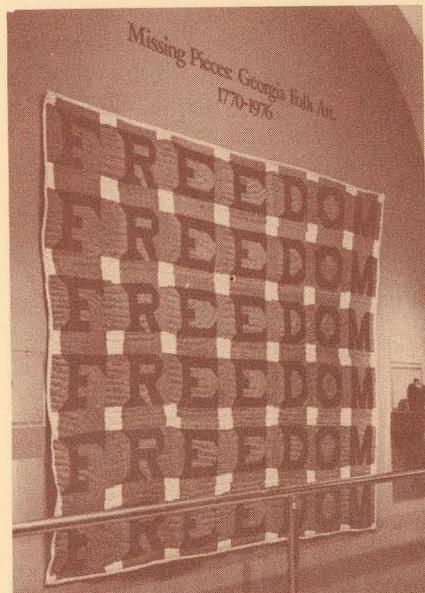
artifacts to be installed at the Library of Congress. The 28-minute film which accompanies the exhibit is shown hourly in the Library's new Orientation Theater.

Sketches of South Georgia Folklife illustrates through black-and-white photographs the traditional life and work of people in south central Geor-

gia. The pictorial essays depict such activities as tobacco harvesting, fishing, children's games, and storytelling. Aspects of small town life, folk architecture, and religious expression are also presented. After looking at the photographs of South Georgia, Mrs. Carter said the scenes made her feel "right at home."

The photographs were taken during the summer of 1977 as part of a field project organized by the American Folklife Center in cooperation with the Arts Experiment Station at Abra-

ham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia. Folklife Center staff and professional folklorists canvassed eight South Georgia counties and recorded on film and tape patterns of traditional life, work, and expression. In addition to fieldwork by Center staff members Howard W. Marshall, Carl Fleischhauer, and Alan Jabbour, the survey team consisted of Thomas A. Adler, Indiana University, William E. Lightfoot, Ohio State University, Beverly J. Robinson, University of Pennsylvania, and David H. Stanley, University of Texas. They visited Ben Hill, Berrien, Colquitt, Cook, Irwin, Tift, Turner, and Worth Counties.



Three artists who came to Washington for the opening renew their friendship with a researcher for the Missing Pieces exhibit. They are potter D. X. Gordy, Georganne Fletcher, presently with the Southern Federation of State Arts Agencies, preacher, painter, and bicycle repairman Howard Finster, and sculptor Columbus McGriff.

SOUTHERN FOLK POTTERY

A special program to honor one family of traditional Georgia potters was held March 17 in the Whittall Pavilion of the Library of Congress. "Southern Folk Pottery: The Meaders Family Tradition" focused on the Meaders family of North Georgia, who created some objects included in the exhibit "Folk Art and Folklife" at the Library of Congress.

The event featured a premiere viewing of the film *The Meaders Family: North Georgia Potters* produced by Ralph Rinzler of the Smithsonian Institution. The film is based on visits which began in the 1960s to Meaders' Pottery in Cleveland, Georgia, and emphasized the process from clay to finished pot as crafted by father, mother, and son.

Dr. John A. Burrison of Georgia State University, an authority on traditional southern potters, presented a slide lecture entitled "The Folk Potter Today: A Visit with Three Southern Mudslingers," which compares the contemporary styles and views of Lanier Meaders to traditional potters from North Carolina and Mississippi. Mrs. Cheever (Arie) Meaders and Lanier Meaders participated in an open dialogue with the audience about their life and work.

ETHNIC BROADCASTING NEEDS FURTHER STUDY

In January the American Folklife Center received a report on ethnic broadcasting in America from Dr. Theodore Grame. The report presented a brief overview of ethnic radio, an analysis of program contents, bibliography, and an evaluation of the state of ethnic broadcasts in a few select areas.

Dr. Grame, president of the Study Center of American Musical Pluralism (SCAMP) in Tarpon Springs, Florida, and author of *America's Ethnic Music*, was asked in September 1977 to determine the feasibility of a long-term study of ethnic radio broadcasts in America. His initial research was broad-based and included both an extensive examination of printed resources and field trips to selected areas. He conducted interviews with broadcast personnel and recorded sample radio programs in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Denver, Colorado, and the Tampa Bay area of Florida.

Ethnic radio broadcasts comprise a substantial block of air time. Dr. Grame estimates that at least 30,000 hours of local ethnic programming are broadcast weekly throughout the

United States. Although ethnic radio offers practical and cultural information about the community life of numerous Americans, the study of ethnic radio broadcasting is an area hardly touched by scholars. Under the guidance of Dr. Grame the Folklife Center is launching such a study in order to promote scholarly attention to this aspect of American life. The study will draw upon approaches of the ethnic studies and communications fields, and will utilize the technological and trade data generated by agencies and institutions that deal with broadcasting.

The research will be complemented by careful documentation including field recordings of programs in various parts of the United States, and interviews with radio station owners, sponsors, and audiences. Special attention will be given to program hosts who, for the most part, are volunteer enthusiasts with a profound interest in their communities' cultural heritage.

The Center may also consider conducting a conference on the subject of ethnic radio in America. As work progresses, Dr. Grame will gauge the

interest of broadcasters in such a conference and note possible topics for discussion.

ARCHIVE OF FOLK SONG

On July 1, 1928, the Library of Congress established within its Music Division a national repository for documentary manuscripts and sound recordings of American folk music. Several distinguished scholars have directed and shaped the Archive's operations: Robert W. Gordon, John A. Lomax, Alan Lomax, Benjamin A. Botkin, Duncan Emrich, Rae Korson, Alan Jabbour, and Joseph C. Hickerson.

The Archive's chief concern continues to be American folklore, but worldwide traditions are also represented in the over 300,000 leaves of manuscript, 30,000 cylinders or copies, 20,000 discs or copies, and 10,000 wires or tapes. Many recordings were made by Archive staff, through cooperative projects with regional institutions, and through direct encouragement of private collectors. In addition, several thousand commercial recordings pertaining to folk culture are housed in the Library's Recorded Sound Section.

The Archive maintains a public reading room and responds to many telephone and written requests. It has published over 80 record albums, compiled more than 150 bibliographies, directories, and other reference aids, and instituted an informal intern program for students.

The Archive takes pride in its many innovative activities which have become policy and custom within the Library, other federal agencies, and the nation. We look forward with hope to our spiritual descendent, the American Folklife Center, as a complement to our archival and service capabilities.

Additional information is available from the Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. *Joseph C. Hickerson, Head*

Robert W. Gordon, Head of the Archive of American Folk-Song 1928-32, with part of the cylinder collection and recording machinery about 1930.



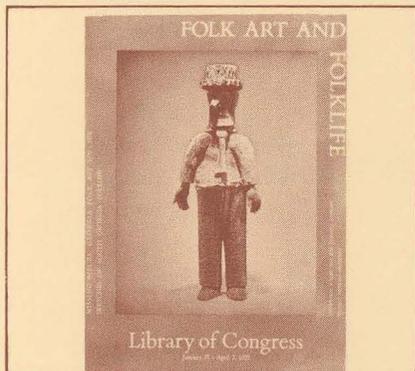
PUBLICATIONS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

Brochure—general information on the American Folklife Center. Available upon request.

Coe, Linda, ed. *Folklife and the Federal Government: Activities, Resources, Funds and Services*. Publications of the American Folklife Center, no. 1. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978. When available, details on how to obtain a copy directly from the Government Printing Office will be provided to *Folklife Center News* mailing list.

Fleischhauer, Carl, and Marshall, Howard W., eds. *Sketches of South Georgia Folklife*. Publications of the American Folklife Center, no. 2. Washington, D.C.: Information Office, Library of Congress, 1977. 32-page photo essay; \$2.00. Georgia residents should purchase their copies from the Arts Experiment Station, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Tifton, GA 31794.

Poster "Folk Art and Folklife." Five-color exhibition art poster, depicting undated carved figure by Kent K. McEntyre; 24 by 32 inches, blue background, and bordered in brown with white lettering. \$10. Order prepaid from: Information Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Georgia residents should contact the Georgia Council for the Arts and Humanities, Suite 1610, 225 Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303.



Antoinette and Joe McKenna, Irish folk musicians

Concerts continued
ment lived in Philadelphia.

Antoinette McKenna was reared in a Dublin family which boasted a fiddling father and a fiddling mother, but her favorite instrument is the rare Irish

FIELD RESEARCHERS SOUGHT

One major activity of the Center is the design and implementation of field research projects around the nation. For the Center's two completed field projects—in Chicago's ethnic communities and in rural South Georgia—teams of experienced professional folklorists were contracted to perform the ethnographic research in the areas of study. The Center will conduct various kinds of field projects in the future, and researchers and scholars who wish to be considered for contract work should send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae to the Director.

harp. She accompanies Joe and sings Irish ballads.

The second concert, to be held May 25, will feature the music and dancing of a group of Arab-Americans from Northern Virginia. The group is composed of immigrants of Egyptian, Lebanese, and Moroccan extraction. They sing in Arabic, play the oud and percussion instruments, and perform Egyptian stick dances and the classical Egyptian belly dance.

These concerts were begun in 1977 at the suggestion of The Librarian and were popular with an audience composed of Library and other Capitol Hill employees, who brought lunches and occasionally sang along or danced with the traditional folk performers the series features. Performances in the 1978 series are scheduled for the last Thursday of each month through September. Programs begin at 12 noon and conclude at 2:00 p.m. and are sponsored by the Library's American Folklife Center, with arrangements handled by the National Council for the Traditional Arts.

ting. Churches are an important communal force both in terms of worship and devotion, and as community centers and meeting places. Numerous church-related and secular events take place in church halls and associated schools.

Most communities have Saturday or Sunday schools designed to transmit language, religion, history, literature, and other cultural traditions. Music and dance ensemble practice sessions, like those of the Ukrainian Bandurist Youth Group, the German community's Chicago Zither Club, and Irish dance classes provide communal recognition of and appreciation for shared ethnic traditions. One important aspect of these activities was identified for fieldworker Antony Hellenberg by a member of the Chicago chapter of the Deutsch-Amerikanishen National-Kongress, a German-American association.

Speaker #1: *I used to live on the South Side, on the near South Side in Chicago. And I move to the North Side for one reason; to give my children the opportunity to meet*

more other German kids.

Hellenberg: *Uh huh*

Speaker #1: *So we moved to the North Side . . .*

Hellenberg: *That's an interesting thing to . . . a . . .*

Speaker #1: *. . . joined German organizations and two out of three are married now through our move and through getting to know different German kids here they're married to.*

Organized activities within ethnic communities provide a forum for group expression with a particular impact upon young people. Their camaraderie parallels that created by the shared experiences of older immigrants, but is expressed through different forms and contributes to cultural change. One member of the Ukrainian music group *Vesely Chasy* described these forces to fieldworker Robert Klymasz, as he discussed aspects of the community that provide direction and inspiration for the group's music.

Speaker #1: *We . . . we tried to open an avenue that . . . that wasn't*

there before. A . . . to put, say so . . . some of the ideas and poetry and song and verse out for the younger Ukrainians.

Speaker #2: *Right.*

Speaker #1: *We figured—You know. Alright. There . . . there's the Ukrainian and everything the Ukrainian has is . . . is Old World Ukrainian. But there's a lot of Ukrainians here. And there's an Americanized Ukrainian, which is the youth, and he still is . . . is a Ukrainian. And if we open up an avenue to up—modernize, I guess, reflect what the American Ukrainian is like. There's a—Like—There's an American Chicano, and there's an Americanized type Pole and a German and so forth. Why not the Ukies? the Ukies tend . . . tend to reflect everything in the Old Country and don't reflect about their life here. That's why a lot of our songs tend to . . . like . . . like . . . are on topical subjects, or the Ukrainian here in Chicago, the Ukrainian here in the United States rather than the Ukrainian over in the Ukraine.*

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