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Letters

Oakland, CA
 ...Enclosed is a copy of a newspaper clipping of an incident that you folks probably caught wind of. For me it brought back to mind Woody Guthrie's "Deportees." It seems like things never change.

Associated Press
 "Kingsville, TX

A freight train plowed through a group of aliens walking across a railroad trestle in the dark, forcing some to jump into a shallow creek 31 feet below and killing four of them. At least seven were injured... He [Rod Saucier, U.S. border patrol agent] said most of the aliens probably either paid or agreed to pay smugglers between \$500 and \$600 apiece to be brought into the country."

But as I told Lenny Anderson (a westcoast folkie), things are also getting better. In San Jose, the police and city officials refuse to cooperate with customs agents when they round up Latino workers and send them back across the border. In Guthrie's time this never would have happened. I pass this on to you...

Mark Sherman

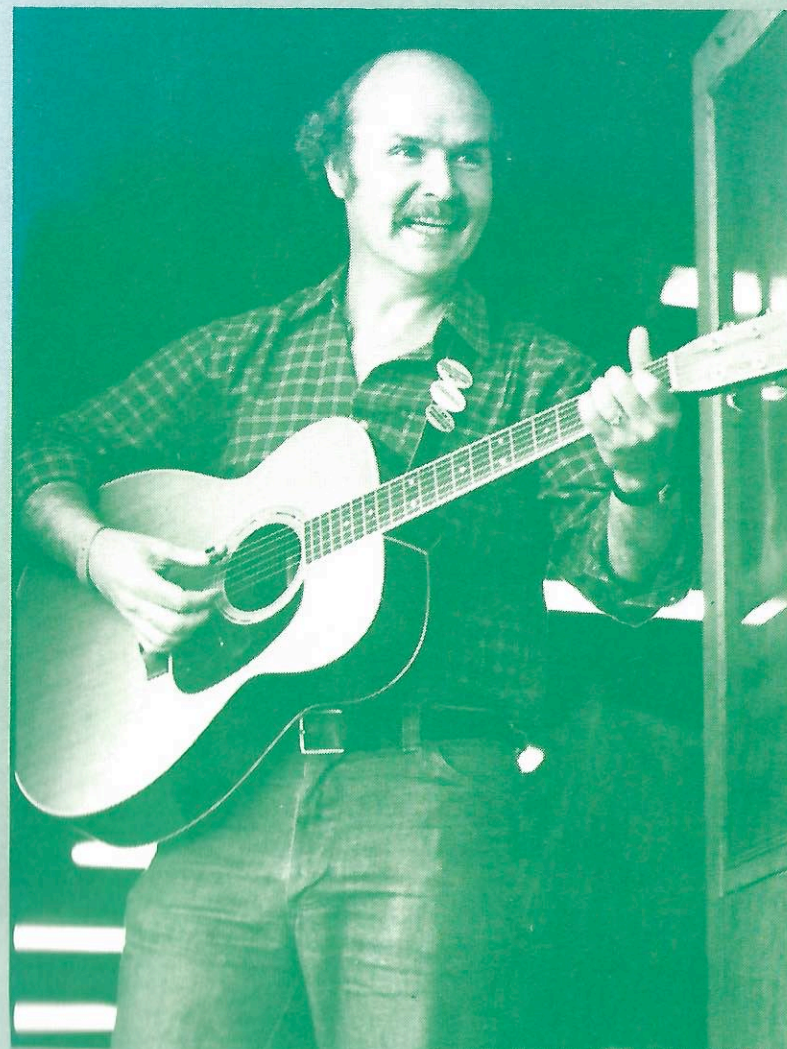
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SING OUT!

Volume 30/Number 3

July-Aug-Sept 1984 \$3.00

THE FOLK SONG MAGAZINE



In this Issue • Tom Paxton • Gabriel Yacoub • Charles Tindley • British Music Hall • Songs by Dave Van Ronk, Stan Rogers, Peggy Seeger and more.

TIME VALUED MATERIAL



Gabriel Yacoub and Malicorne: French Folk Imports

by Anne LeMieux

The dark back room at Speakeasy, the Greenwich Village musician's co-op, was sweltering on a Thursday night near the end of July '83. Gabriel Yacoub, 32 year old singer, multi-instrumentalist, and founder of the then-defunct French folk group Malicorne, wiped sweat from his forehead and politely complimented the management, "Your heating system works very well!" After finetuning his 1934 000-18 Martin guitar, he introduced the next number as a Schottische, a dance tune from central France, brought by the soldiers of Napoleon. Suddenly the room resounded with the throbbing instrumental, Gabriel's guitar work strongly reminiscent of Martin Carthy's, with a crisp percussive attack (he uses fingerpicks as well as a thumbpick), ornamental modal texture, and highly melodic exploitation of the open tuning. (He mainly uses modal G [DGDGCD] and D open [DADGAD].)

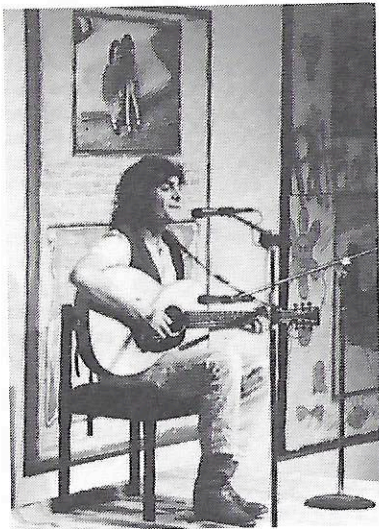
At the time, Gabriel was on his second solo tour of the U.S., dishing out a distinctively genuine taste of French culture to audiences from Maine to Pennsylvania. At Castle Hill, Ipswich, MA, and the Bear Mt. Festival, in New York state, he teamed up with former Silly Wizard fiddler, Johnny Cunningham, treating folks to a mixture of French, Breton and Scottish tunes, as well as their own songs. Judging from the enthusiastic response generated by both of Gabriel's tours, language is no barrier at all. "It's simple music - everybody can feel it, can understand it, even if they don't understand the words," says Gabriel, who, in performance prefaces each number with an English explanation of content and origin. As a solo performer, he has an easy rapport with the audience, to the point of giving mini-French lessons to involve listeners in various choruses. "I love [the American audience]," he adds. "Their response is so good. I was amazed at the beginning when I realized that all those people, most of the time, don't understand one word of French, but they come, drive a long way and listen very carefully. And they come to talk with me, ask me questions, say they like [my music], and that's great!"

Before the show at the Speakeasy, Gabriel spoke of his wish to return to the States with a band, or to play with American musicians if the technical and financial aspects of bringing his own retinue proved too cumbersome. Over Christmas, however, a development took place which should be welcome music to the ears of anyone familiar with Gabriel and his work. He decided to revive Malicorne, and plans for the '84 tour - now in progress - immediately commenced.

From 1973 to 1981, Malicorne was one of the most influential and successful folk groups spawned by the French folk re-

val. In the late '60s a dormant folk music scene in France began to be stimulated by the British and Celtic folk revivals, as well as American folk music, bluegrass in particular. Many French musicians started out playing the music of other countries. "We had the very sad impression that all other countries' folk music was great, but that ours was nothing, which was wrong, of course, but we didn't have any examples. I was a kid and it was easier for me to find bluegrass records, for example, than to find any types of traditional French songs," says Gabriel. He, himself, played for a while with a group called The New Ragged Company, which performed New Lost City Ramblers-oriented material. He spent two years, subsequently, with Breton harpist Alan Stivell playing guitar, banjo and dulcimer, then decided to explore the music indigenous to his native country, because, as Gabriel puts it, "Rather than play Breton songs and sing in Gaelic, I'd rather do it in French. Before Stivell, I had no idea of using electric instruments. When I was with him, the idea for Malicorne came." Another strong influence





Gabriel cites was the British group Steeleye Span, one of the first bands to perform traditional material using electric instruments. "I'm an old time friend of Martin Carthy, from whom I learned a lot of things and the idea of Steeleye Span gave me the strong feeling we could do something different in France." By searching through libraries and the dusty shelves of second hand book stores, Gabriel began to uncover a wealth of traditional material collected from the various provinces at the turn of the century,

PRELUDE DE GRENOBLE, released in 1973, was Gabriel's first recording of French music. The album featured his former wife, Marie Yacoub, as well as Stivell associates Alan Kloat'r on fiddle, Breton guitarist Dan Ar Bras (currently on tour in the U.S. with Gabriel and Malicorne), and bassist Gerrard Lavigne, among others. Soon after, Gabriel formed Malicorne (named after a small village a hundred miles or so southwest of Paris) with Marie and himself at the core.

In part, Malicorne's uniqueness stemmed from an eclectic combination of instruments,

ranging from rebecs, crumhorns, hurdy gurdies and dulcimers to electric guitars, banjos, electric basses and synthesizers. Referring to the early instruments, Gabriel comments, "We don't use them because they're traditional but rather because we like them. We use all the instruments -- well, first we need to be able to play them, then the only choice is what we like. Which means that in an arrangement, if we need a saxophone one day, we use one."

At the core of the vocals lies Marie's fluid, melismatic soprano and Gabriel's powerful reedy tenor, both of which reflect a wide range of influences. Gabriel interprets traditional material -- sometimes a cappella -- in the manner of the most distinctive folk singers, shading his voice with a full palette of nuances, again recalling Martin Carthy. Of his vocal techniques, Gabriel says with a laugh, "Well, I could say I learned in my bedroom or my bathroom because I didn't learn at all. I just sang for years. In most traditional music, the sound and technique of the voice is purposely very tight with the instrumentation. In Arabic countries, the singing is very similar to the decorations they play on pipes. And for me, it comes naturally with the music, like using drones, for example, in the music. I try to give that impression in my singing."

The groups hallmark is stamped on their harmonically intricate arrangements. From unaccompanied ballads in the recitative tones of early Gregorian chant to the highly polished studio productions, incorporating eerie synthesized sound effects, the traditional is skillfully blended with the modern to mold their idiosyncratic sound. "We always improvise," Gabriel says of the arranging process. "We have a small cassette and just do what we feel like doing. Especially in the harmonies. It's a way to

get unusual things."

Malicorne's repertoire spans a broad spectrum: ballads originating in medieval times when troubadours and trouveres, the wandering poet-composers roamed the countryside; instrumental dance tunes; material from the oral folk tradition which deals with themes common to the folk music of most Western European countries -- life-cycle songs, songs associated with work, entertainment, and those associated with magic, ritual and religion. More recently, Gabriel's solo work has included a number of originals in a more modern folk idiom.

During their nine years, Malicorne has toured extensively throughout Europe, North Africa and Canada, accumulating critical acclaim and such accolades as the "Grand Prix de L'Academie du Disque," one of the biggest awards in the French recording industry for ALMANACH, their double gold album (more than 200,000 copies).

The group's current lineup includes Gabriel (vocals, acoustic and electric guitar, banjo, mandocello); Marie (vocals, dulcimer, hurdy gurdy); Jean-Marc Alexandre (electric guitar); Michel Le Cam (vocals, violin,

guitar); Gerard Lavigne (electric bass); Franck Glicksman (drums); with guest appearances by Dan Ar Bras. They're doing a combination of older and more recent Malicorne material as well as new originals.

Malicorne never billed themselves as a purely traditional musical vehicle, although most of the material on their nine albums is strongly rooted in traditional sources. "We enjoy playing that music very much," Gabriel explains. "Traditional music has been a very strong inspiration. Historically, I think that the French always liked new things. The most popular folk instrument in France is the accordian, but it was only brought about a century and a half ago. There was a gap between the real tradition and the revival, but I'm pretty sure that if there was no gap, people would have used any kind of instrument -- guitar, or even synthesizer. I think that it would be silly to go on using candles -- well, I like candles a lot, but as long as there's electricity I'll use it as well. I don't think it's revolutionary to say that; I think it's normal. I don't want to make a museum out of the music -- I want to make it alive. ***SO!**



Malicorne

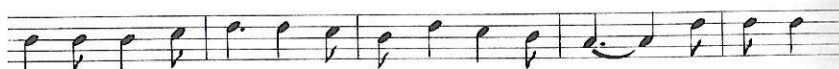
L to R: Michel Le Cam, Marie Yacoub, Gerard Lavigne, Gabriel Yacoub, Franck Glicksman, Jean-Marc Alexandre

Le Prince d'Orange

Gabriel describes this as "the oldest anti-war song I know." The 15th century ballad recounts the death of a young noble at the hands of the English. In his a capella performance, Gabriel freely ornaments the melody. The song is also well suited for harmonies as in Malicorne's rendition. Trad. Arr. Gabriel Yacoub



C'est le Prince d'O-ran-ge Au ma-tin s'est le- vé EST



al- lé voir son pa- ge Va sel- ler mon cour- sier Quo mau- dit



soit la guerre Va sel- ler mon cour- sier

C'est le Prince d'Orange
Au matin s'est levé
Est alle voir son page
Va seller mon coursier
Que maudit soit la guerre
Va seller mon coursier

Est alle voir son page
Va seller mon coursier
Mon beau Prince d'Orange
Ou voulez vous aller?
Que maudit soit la guerre
Ou voulez vous aller?

Mon beau Prince d'Orange
Ou voulez vous aller?
Je veux aller en France
Ou le Roi m'a mande
Que maudit soit la guerre
Ou le Roi m'a mande

Je veux aller en France
Ou le Roi m'a mande
Mis la main sur la bride
Le pied dans l'etrier
Que maudit soit la guerre
Le pied dans l'etrier

Mis la main sur la bride
Le pied dans l'etrier
Je partis sain et sauf
Et j'en revins blessé
Que maudit soit la guerre
Et j'en revins blessé

Je partis sain et sauf
Et j'en revins blessé
De trois grands coups de lance
Qu'un Anglais m'a donne
Que maudit soit la guerre
Qu'un Anglais m'a donne

It's the Prince of Orange
In the morning he rose
He went to see his page
Go saddle up my steed
Cursed be the war
Go saddle up my steed

He went to see his page
Go saddle up my steed
My good Prince d'Orange
Where do you want to go to?
Cursed be the war
Where do you want to go to?

My good Prince d'Orange
Where do you want to go to?
I want to go to France'
Where the King has sent for me
Cursed be the war
Where the King has sent for me

I want to go to France
Where the King has sent for me
He put his hand on the bridle
His foot into the stirrup
Cursed be the war
His foot into the stirrup

He put his hand on the bridle
His foot into the stirrup
I left safe and sound
And wounded I returned
Cursed be the war
And wounded I returned

I left safe and sound
And wounded I returned
From three great thrusts of
An Englishman's spear
Cursed be the war
An Englishman's spear

De trois grands coups de lance
Qu'un Anglais m'a donne
J'en ai un a l'epaule
Et l'autre a mon cote
Que maudit soit la guerre
Et l'autre a mon cote

J'en ai un a l'epaule
Et l'autre a mon cote
Un autre a la mamelle
On dit que j'en mourrais
Que maudit soit la guerre
On dit que j'en mourrais

Un autre a la mamelle
On dit que j'en mourrais
Le beau Prince d'Orange
Est mort et enterre
Que maudit soit la guerre
Est mort et enterre

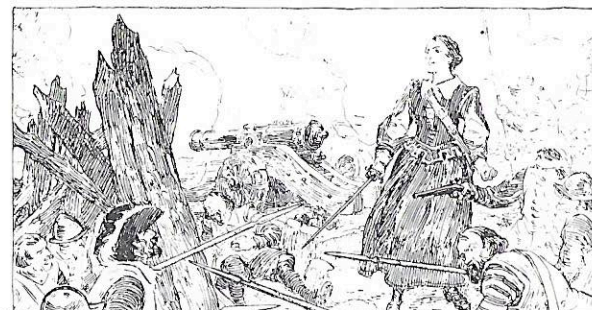
Le beau Prince d'Orange
Est mort et enterre
L'ai vu porter en terre
Par quatre Cordeliers
Que maudit soit la guerre
Par quatre Cordeliers

From three great thrusts of
An Englishman's spear
One to the shoulder
Another to my side
Cursed be the war
Another to my side

One to the shoulder
Another to my side
Another to my breast
They say that I will die
Cursed be the war
They say that I will die

Another to my breast
They say that I will die
The good Prince d'Orange
Is dead and in the ground
Cursed be the war
Is dead and in the ground

The good Prince d'Orange
Is dead and in the ground
I saw him being buried
By four Franciscan Friars
Cursed be the war
By four Franciscan Friars



DISCOGRAPHY FOR GABRIEL AND MALICORNE

Although beyond this summer no future plans are definite, a successful tour will, in all likelihood, mean a new Malicorne album. With revamped importing and distribution in the U.S. -- Carthage is importing the titles which are currently available through the Record Roundup (PO Box 154, Cambridge MA 02140) and Down Home Music (10341 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530) -- the previously difficult to obtain recordings will be more readily available.

With Alan Stivell
LIVE AT THE OLYMPIA (Fontana)
CHEMINS DE TERRE (Fontana)

Gabriel and Marie Yacoub
PIERRE DE GRENOBLE (Barclay)

Malicorne
MALICORNE #1 (Hexagone)
MALICORNE #2 (Hexagone)
ALMANACH (Hexagone)
MALICORNE #4 (Hexagone)
L'EXTRAORDINAIRE TOUR DE FRANCE
D'ADELARDE ROUSSEAU
(WEA 52272)
LIVE IN MONTREAL (WEA 52270)

LE BESTIARE (WEA 52271)
BALANCOIRE EN FEU (WEA 52280)

Solo
GABRIEL YACOB SOLO/TRAD. ARR.
(Ballon Noir)

In Preparation
SORCIER

Any correspondence or inquiries regarding Malicorne can be addressed to: Dan Behrman, Immigrant Music, 205 W South Orange Ave, South Orange, NJ 07079.

Bon An, Mal An

Gabriel wrote this song about "a relationship that should have worked out but didn't." "Bon An, Mal An" means "Good Year, Bad Year" and is a seasonal collage of moments and emotions. Literal translations seldom do justice to the original and this is no exception. You can hear this as well as more of Gabriel's music, both as a solo and with Malicorne, on a sampler available from Dan Berman, (See Discography).

Lyrics & music by Gabriel Yacoub
© 1985

La pre-nière fois, tu t'en sou-viens pas on s'est car-res-sé les che-veux toute une nuit du bon-heur pour la vie puis cét-ait le prin-temps je dis tou-jours que c'est le mo-ment ou tout s'ar-range et bi-en sou-vent on a vu les bour-geons sur tous les bal-cons Bon an, mal an on s'en sor-tait bien tous les deux, Bon an, Mal an l'un dans l'autre on aur-ait pu être-heu-reux aur-ait pu être-heu-reux

La premiere fois, tu t'en souviens pas
On s'est caresse les cheveux
Toute une nuit, du bonheur pour la vie,
Puis c'etait le Printemps,
Je dis toujours que c'est l'moment
Ou tout s'arrange et bien souvent
On a vu des bourgeons sur tous les balcons.

The first night, you don't remember
We caressed each others hair
All through a night, happy with life
Then it was the spring
I always say that was the time
When everything was just right and very often
We saw buds on all the balconies.

CHORUS:

Bon An, Mal An, On s'en sortait bien tous les deux
Bon An, Mal An, l'un dans l'autre,
On aurait pu être heureux
(repeat)

CHORUS:

Good year, bad year, we brought, put the best in each other
Good year, bad year, one within the other
We should have been able to be happy

La deuxieme fois c'est toi ou c'est moi,
Mensonge d'une nuit d'Ete,
Bonjour ciel bleu, t'en fais pas pour si peu,
Regarde ce soleil,
Bourdonnement d'abeilles
Et si tu te reveilles
Et que tu m'aimes toujours on ira faire un tour, CHO.

The second time, it's you or it's me
Lie of a summer night
Hello, blue sky, don't worry about something so petty
Look at the sun
The humming of bumblebees
And if you wake up
And love me always, we take a walk. CHO.

La fois d'apres, j'oublierais jamais
On a passe une heure ou deux
Sans rien dire, la peur de mourir,
T'ecoutes pas les vents d'Automne
Tu t'etannes et tu tatannes,
Tu fais comme s'ils n'existaient pas
Et cet enfant de lait qu'on a jamais fait CHO.

The time after, I'll never forget
We passed an hour or two
Without saying anything, the fear of death
Don't listen to the winds of autumn
You're surprised and you grope around
You act as if it didn't exist
Like the child that we never had. CHO.

La derniere fois on tremblait de froid,
On s'est caresse les cheveux
Il gelait blanc sur nos reves d'enfants
Cruelle comme l'Hiver
L'habitude, la maniere
De changer un coeur en desert,
Ne pas lire la paleur d'un sourire en pleurs CHO.

The last time we trembled with the cold
We caressed each other's hair
It froze white on our children's dreams
The way, the attitude
Of changing a heart into desert
Unable to read the paleness of a smile in tears. CHO.

