

The
**LONESOME
TRAIN**





The
LONESOME TRAIN

**A MUSICAL LEGEND
AND ITS STORY**

BY DAVE SAMUELSON





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Alle Menschen
 sind Ausländer.
 Fast überall.



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The LONESOME TRAIN

*Give me words of significance, poetry that sings,
theater, film, dance, any kind of action that asks for
a musical underpinning, and I can compose just
fine.*

Earl Robinson (1910-1981)

Now virtually forgotten, *The Lonesome Train* was hailed as an American masterpiece when it premiered on CBS Radio in the midst of World War II. A parable framed around Abraham Lincoln's funeral train, it was staged in major concert halls with symphony orchestras and massive choirs. High schools mounted modest productions for daytime assemblies. Colleges and countless community theater groups delivered its inspirational message about freedom and racial harmony to audiences throughout the country. Its appeal was not just limited to the United States; productions were held in Canada and eight foreign countries.

Elementary school teachers played the DECCA album to honor Lincoln's February 12TH birthday. Many local radio stations also aired that album in tribute to the slain president.

Ironically, *The Lonesome Train* would disappear from public consciousness, a victim of Cold War paranoia. Persuasive zealots denounced the work as Communist propaganda, succeeding in getting the records banished from schools and the airwaves. Targeted by Congressional conservatives and right-wing watchdogs, lyricist Millard Lampell and composer Earl Robinson were blacklisted, unable to find work in film, radio or television.

With fascism, racism and antisemitism aggressively on the rise, *The Lonesome Train* may be more relevant now than ever.



The genesis of *The Lonesome Train* lies in *Sing For Your Supper*, a revue produced by the Federal Theater Project. A government-subsidized arts organization under the Works Progress Administration, the FTP offered opportunities for struggling artists during the Depression and underwrote low-cost theatrical productions for the general public.

Opening April 24, 1939 in New York City's Adelphi Theater, *Sing For Your Supper* featured eighteen skits built around the premise of Uncle Sam producing a musical to put unemployed performers to work.

For the finale, lyricist John Latouche and composer Earl Robinson contributed an eleven-minute folk cantata, "Ballad Of Uncle Sam." In his 1998 autobiography *Ballad of an American* (posthumously completed by Eric A. Gordon) Robinson described the concept: "After he is seen enough by the audience, doing his experiment in show biz production, Uncle Sam is buttonholed by the ushers, the costumers and others who are never seen on stage, whereupon they start asking him questions. 'Who are you?' 'Where are you from?' And out of these questions comes a musical history of the United States."

Running for sixty performances, *Sing For Your Supper* closed suddenly when Congressional conservatives cut off the FTP's funding. Robinson later suspected they objected to black and white actors dancing together in the show.

Fortunately, CBS Radio producer Norman Corwin caught the show before it closed. Corwin, along with Archibald MacLeish, Orson Welles and John Houseman, strove to elevate radio drama to a higher cultural standard. Impressed by "Ballad Of Uncle Sam," the producer approached Robinson about adapting the cantata for his Sunday afternoon broadcast, *The Pursuit Of Happiness*.

Under Corwin's direction, the newly renamed "Ballad For Americans" became a major production. The great bass-baritone Paul Robeson took the lead role, backed with an orchestra conducted by Mark Warnow and chorus led by Lyn Murray.

BALLAD FOR AMERICANS



PAUL ROBESON, Bass

MUSIC BY
EARL ROBINSON
WORDS BY
JOHN LATOUCHE

BALLAD FOR AMERICANS

song by PAUL ROBESON

In 1935 a young poet, John Latouche, felt the need for a sermon against intolerance and persecution that seemed to spread through the civilized world. In this temper he wrote the original poem BALLAD FOR AMERICANS in ballad form, using a narrative history of the United States as a burning symbol of freedom and democracy. He had previously come to New York from Richmond, Virginia. In New York he gained a reputation as a poet, winning poetry awards at Columbia University for two successive years, 1934 and 1935. It was in New York in 1939 that Latouche met Earl Robinson. Composer Robinson is still remembered in Washington State as a modernist who appeared on radio in overalls singing his compositions, accompanied by his own guitar.

Between these two men the stirring words and music became an amalgam of sturdy, lyrical, democratic, American poetry and song.



The "Ballad for Americans" was recorded at the New York Studios of RCA Victor.



Paul Robeson with Earl Robinson at the latter's apartment in New York.

On November 26th, 1939, BALLAD FOR AMERICANS had its first singing performance over the "Pursuit of Happiness" program. Paul Robeson's performance of the work stirred the radio audience as well as untold thousands of listeners into applause rarely equaled. In its November 20th (1940 TIME) recorded:

"In the studio, an audience of 500 stamped, shouted, cheered for two minutes while the show was still on the air, for 15 minutes later, in this next Airtel hour 150 telephone calls rang to get through CBS' jammed Manhattan switchboard. The Hollywood switchboard was jammed for two hours. In the next few days bars of letters, undated words, notes, recordings, walked into an ear for BALLAD FOR AMERICANS." A second performance on the air was made. Arrangements were made to have



The song is what the great singer is happy.

The American Brass, accompaniment for Robeson, Mr. Robinson, and Paul Robeson.



In the meanwhile, he consented to act in a play. In the audience, by chance, was the playwright, Eugene O'Neill. He came backstage and insisted that Robeson act in "Emperor Jones". Finally he consented. In 1923 he forced himself taking wildly applauded curtain calls in 1916 and other stage works. His speaking voice was the secret of much of his success.

It never occurred to him that he could sing well. He was induced to give a recital of negro spirituals in New York. His resonant voice held the audience spellbound. Great lines stood waiting for succeeding performances. A concert tour of Europe followed. In 1929 he returned to America, to Carnegie Hall. Here and from coast to coast he sang to sold-out theaters. In 1930 he returned again to the spoken stage in London where he appeared in Shakespeare's Othello. He toured Russia and learned to sing Russian without a trace of accent. Later in the film "Sanders of the River", he stood forth as a consummate actor and cinema figure.

To Robeson can be attributed no small share of the success of BALLAD FOR AMERICANS. Victor is happy to be able to present a superb American composition by a great American artist.

The great Negro bass, Paul Robeson, recorded the Ballad for Victor with the People's Chorus.

No work in American music has ever created such spontaneous, tremendous interest. Rarely has one won such enthusiastic comment from listeners and critics of its own first hearing. It seems to have caught in words and music the deep spirit of character and nobility of the heterogeneous American people. It is fortunate that it can be presented on Victor Records by the same great singer as a permanent unforgettable performance which can be enjoyed again and again in the home. It is not strange that the presentation of this native American work met liberally with such plaudits. Any song presented by the magnificent Paul Robeson is an experience. His career is worthy of great mention, to many it is familiar. His career as a singer and an actor has compassed the Continent, England, and the United States. His performances have been world-wide dramatic news.

Paul Robeson was born in Princeton, N. J. He was the youngest son of a Methodist minister. His mother died when Paul was six. The guidance of his father instilled in him a desire for perfection, which in high school brought him a scholarship to Rutgers. He became not only a four letter athlete and an All-American football selection, but won the Phi Beta Kappa key in his junior year—testimony to his extraordinary scholarship. His logical brain and gracious personality won him a place on a Yale debater. He completed a two-year law course at Columbia and took his degree.



Robeson is recognized by Earl Robinson and Earl Robinson.

Airing November 5, 1939, Corwin's half-hour program opened with talks by author Clifton Fadiman and stage actress Ethel Barrymore. As expected, "Ballad For Americans" enlivened an otherwise dry, austere broadcast. The studio audience responded with a cheering ten-minute ovation, while enthusiastic callers jammed CBS's New York and Hollywood switchboards with praise.

In the aftermath, the network scheduled a rebroadcast for New Year's Eve and M-G-M paid \$4,000 for rights to include the cantata in a feature film. More importantly, RCA VICTOR recorded it in February 1940 with Robeson accompanied by Robinson's American People's Chorus. Released as a two-disc 78 RPM album, *Ballad For Americans* sold 40,000 copies by year's end.

Impressed by the ballad's success, Warnow approached Robinson and CBS scriptwriter Millard Lampell about an Abraham Lincoln requiem. The conductor was likely aware of "Old Abe Lincoln," written by Robinson with lyrics by Alfred Hayes. Featured in the 1938 anti-fascist revue *Cabaret TAC*, the song was based on Lincoln's first inaugural address. "Lincoln emerges a revolutionary," Robinson boldly wrote, "his democratic message ringing loud and clear."

Like Robinson, Lampell (1919-1997) was also folksong enthusiast, founding the topical-singing Almanac Singers with Pete Seeger and Lee Hays. Lampell drafted a libretto based on the final chapter of *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, Carl Sandburg's Pulitzer Prize-winning multi-volume Lincoln biography.

The concept of Lincoln's spirit among the living may have been partially inspired by "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night." Robinson created an enduring labor anthem when he wrote a melody for Alfred Hayes' 1934 poem about the martyred labor leader and song parodist:

*I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
Alive as you and me
Says I But Joe, you're ten years dead
I never died, says he
I never died says he.*

Lampell and Robinson fully intended their Lincoln cantata to comment on the current president and his opponents. "In a lot of ways this caring, common man's president resonated strongly with the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt, making him a natural hero for our times," Robinson said. "Mill saved some bitter commentary for the 'copperheads' – such as the cotton speculator who turned away from Lincoln's

coffin to announce, 'All right, boys, the drinks are on me!' or those who cheered the day he died."

Named after the poisonous snake that strikes without warning, the Copperheads were northerners who supported Confederate causes during the American Civil War. Parallels between Copperheads and the Republican Party's contempt for Roosevelt's progressive ideas were apparent. "By historical analogy we thus criticized the foes of progress today, those who would hold back the New Deal, and those who would weaken the fight against fascism," Robinson wrote.

For the crucial scene in the African-American church, Robinson strove for authenticity. He drew upon field recordings of Southern preachers and black revival meetings that folklorist Alan Lomax played for him at the Library of Congress.

Receiving Lampell's script in early summer 1942, Robinson spent two months composing and orchestrating a 27-minute cantata, originally titled *Abe Lincoln Comes Home Again*.

Lee Hays read the initial draft and harshly criticized Lampell as opportunistic for presenting in Lincoln in the typical "Great Man" theory of history so as to appeal to the broadest – and lowest – common denominator. "Why, even Republicans might like Mill's Lincoln," Robinson reflected with irony.

The cantankerous Hays insisted the cantata reflect an active, fresh and usable truth about contemporary America. "He wanted more emphasis on the villains of the period, those who killed Lincoln, and those who stood to profit from cutting off the prophet of national unity," Robinson said.

Lampell and Robinson resisted making those changes. "In the narrowest sense, he was probably correct," Robinson later reflected.

Conceding to Hays's suggestion for more working-class content, Lampell and Robinson inserted Lincoln's quote, "The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside your family of course, should be the one uniting all working people, of all Nations, Tongues, and Kindreds."

When Robinson visited his hometown of Seattle in September 1942, he recruited a chorus of local singers to hear how *Abe Lincoln Comes Home Again* sounded on stage.

Back in New York, he booked the Brooklyn Academy of Music for an ambitious two-hour production that concluded with the Lincoln cantata. Billed as "a patriotic revue blending

BALLAD FOR AMERICANS

SUNG BY PAUL ROBESON

In 1935 a young poet, John Latouche, felt the need for a sermon against intolerance and persecution that seemed to spread through the civilized world. In this temper he wrote the original poem *Ballad For Americans* in ballad form, using a narrative history of the United States as a burning symbol of freedom and democracy. He had previously come to New York from Richmond, Virginia. In New York he gained a reputation as a poet, winning poetry awards at Columbia University for two successive years, 1934 and 1935. It was in New York in 1939 that Latouche met Earl Robinson. Composer Robinson is still remembered in Washington State as a modern minstrel who appeared at recitals in overalls singing his compositions, accompanied by his own guitar.

Between these two men the stirring words and music became an amalgam of sturdy, lyrical, democratic American poetry spirit.

On November 5th, 1939, *Ballad For Americans* had its first stirring performance over the "Pursuit of Happiness" program. Paul Robeson's performance of the work stirred the studio audience as well as untold thousands of listeners into applause rarely equaled. In its November 20th issue TIME reported:

"In the studio, an audience of 600 stamped, shouted, bravoed for two minutes while the show was still on the air, for 15 minutes later. In the next half hour 150 telephone calls managed to get through CBS's jammed Manhattan switchboard. The Hollywood switchboard was jammed for two hours. In the next few days bales of letters demanded words, music, recordings, another time at bat for *Ballad For Americans*." A second performance on the air was made. Arrangements were made to have the great Negro bass, Paul Robeson, record the *Ballad for Victor with the People's Chorus*.

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In the meanwhile, he consented to act in a play. In the audience, by chance, was the playwright, Eugene O'Neill. He came backstage and insisted that Robeson act in "Emperor Jones." Finally he consented. In 1923 he found himself taking wildly applauded curtain calls in this and other stage works. His speaking voice was the secret of much of his success.

It never occurred to him that he could sing until he was induced to give a recital of negro spirituals in New York. His resonant voice held the audience spellbound. Great lines stood waiting for succeeding performances. A concert tour of Europe followed. In 1929 he returned to America, to Carnegie Hall. Here and from coast to coast he sang to sold-out theaters. In 1930 he returned again to the spoken stage in London where he appeared in Shakespeare's *Othello*. He toured Russia and learned to sing Russian without a trace of accent. Later in the film "Sanders Of The River," he stood forth as a consummate actor and cinema figure.

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ORIGINAL LINER NOTES

American folk music and dance," *It's All Yours* opened October 9, 1942, for four nights prior to a Broadway run. Among the featured artists: Woody Guthrie; Richard Dyer-Bennet; Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter; Sis Cunningham; Josh White with Sam Gary; and Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry. Pianist Art Hodes' jazz band played blues and boogies, and choreographer Sophie Maslow's dance troupe added visual color to Guthrie's *Dust Bowl Ballads* and other songs.

Abe Lincoln Comes Home Again was the rousing grand finale, Horace Grenell leading the orchestra and Robinson's American People's Chorus. Lead Belly was cast as the preacher, his sermon punctuated by White's stinging guitar licks. "He spoke-sang the powerful Lampell lines with immense truth, conviction and intensity," Robinson recalled. "We only had one problem: understanding the words."

It's All Yours proved unwieldy and never made it to Broadway, but that didn't diminish Robinson's ambitions. After one of the Brooklyn performances, Hollywood agent Charles Feldman offered to invest \$1,000 in *Abe Lincoln Comes Home* and shop it to major film studios.

Meeting Feldman in Los Angeles that spring, Robinson demoed the piece for studio executives using a solo arrangement he performed at the White House in January for First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau and Vice President Henry Wallace. "Charlie succeeded in getting Warner Brothers to take a seven-year option on *Abe Lincoln* for film," Robinson recalled. "The \$10,000 they paid was of course very welcome, but Mill Lampell and I feared for what they might do to the piece. For a time they considered using it in a cowboy picture."

Fortunately for the creators, a provision in the Warners contract allowed them to adapt their work for radio and theater one year after signing the contract. "When the year ended in March 1944, I went back to New York, where Norman Corwin of CBS had been champing at the bit to get the piece for broadcast, thinking of it as a new 'Ballad for Americans.'" By then Lampell was out of the picture, serving as a corporal in the U.S. Army Air Corps.



In January 1944 CBS announced a new Tuesday night showcase, *Columbia Presents Corwin*, to debut in March. Corwin announced the renamed ***The Lonesome Train*** would be the third program in the series. Editing it for radio, he wrote a concise opening narration, condensing the end of the Civil War and Lincoln's assassination into a single paragraph.

Canadian-born actor Raymond Massey was cast to recite the lines attributed to Lincoln. His role was small, but radio listeners already associated the lanky actor with Lincoln. Massey portrayed the future president in the 1940 film *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, garnering an Academy Award nomination.

Robinson expected to be cast as the ballad singer, but the network chose Burl Ives. The folksinger was already known to radio audiences, most recently on his own weekly CBS show. Deferring to Ives' casting, Robinson became the play's narrator and square dance caller. Lon Clark read Corwin's opening monologue.

Lyn Murray, the choral director on 'Ballad For Americans,' led both the orchestra and Jeffrey Alexander's Chorus. For the church sequence, Harlem actor Richard Huey was cast as the preacher; that scene also included Laura Duncan, Lavinia White, William Beazy and Charles Alto. Other cast members included Hester Sondergaard, Larry Robinson and Ben Ossiter.

Robinson's score required a driving five-string banjo behind the ballad singer. However, New York's union musicians couldn't replicate the sound Robinson had in mind. "So we got CBS to spring Pete Seeger from an army boot camp in Alabama and fly him up for the job," he said. "I cannot tell you my immense joy when Pete was able to relieve the much weaker player we had been stuck with, and 'frail' the hell out of the part."

CBS aired ***The Lonesome Train*** at 10:30 p.m., March 21, 1944. The production was dedicated to Carl Sandburg, whose biography inspired the work.

The studio audience enthusiastically responded to the broadcast, but Robinson admitted it didn't generate the immediate impact of "Ballad for Americans." "It was two and a half times as long," he recalled, "a much deeper work requiring a quieter, thoughtful response."

However, critics hailed ***The Lonesome Train*** as a magnificent, moving work. The following day Dave Kapp queried Corwin about recreating the entire production for DECCA RECORDS. "In order to keep the cast together, we decided to record just a week after the broadcast," Robinson recalled.

The DECCA session actually took place April 10, 1944, with most of the cast intact. With Raymond Massey back in Los Angeles, Corwin replaced him with Raymond Edward Johnson. Known to radio listeners as the sinister-voiced host of *Inner Sanctum Mysteries*, Johnson recently portrayed Thomas Jefferson on Broadway in Sidney Kingsley's play *The Patriots*.

CANDID PHOTOS TAKEN DURING THE RECORDING OF **THE LONESOME TRAIN**



(ABOVE) BURL IVES, PETE SEEGER • (ABOVE RIGHT) EARL ROBINSON, NORMAN CORWIN • (BELOW RIGHT) NORMAN CORWIN



(ABOVE) EARL ROBINSON • (ABOVE CENTER) JEFFRY ALEXANDER • (BELOW LEFT) MILLARD LAMPELL • (BELOW) RAYMOND EDWARD JOHNSON



Corwin pulled strings to bring PFC Seeger back to New York. Hester Sondergaard, who only had one line on the CBS broadcast, was replaced by an aspiring actress/singer working in the network's secretarial pool: Ronnie Gilbert, who later joined Seeger and Lee Hays in *The Weavers*.

DECCA released *The Lonesome Train* in October 1944 in a deluxe album with three 12" 78 RPM records with a 20-page booklet containing the libretto and the participants' biographies. Louis Untermeyer and Howard Fast contributed liner notes for the inner covers.

Meanwhile, Robinson adapted the piece for its first concert presentation, held at the Hollywood Bowl on August 25, 1944. Felix Waxman led a symphony orchestra and a 200-member mixed chorus, all volunteers employed by Los Angeles-area war industries. Raymond Massey returned to recite Lincoln's lines, Broadway tenor Alfred Drake was the ballad singer, and John Garfield was the narrator. Mischa Russell played fiddle and Charles Hopkins was the preacher. The banjo player's name is lost to history.

The Los Angeles Times reviewed the concert in the next day's edition:

The music of 'The Lonesome Train' is expressive of direct, rhythmic and melodic American folk song. The script is simple, too. Words were by Cpl. Millard Lampell. Composer Robinson himself called the square dances and there was a group of colored singers and speakers on one side of the stage and the narrator, Massey and a ballad singer, Alfred Drake, on the other.

So reverent and so free was this music and the words that inspired it that it is probable the 'legend' will become another 'Ballad For Americans.' This is a work which should be repeated in the Hollywood Bowl for several times 20,000.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt died unexpectedly on April 12, 1945, *The Lonesome Train* helped console a grieving nation. "In the days following the President's death particularly as the funeral train moved north, the transcriptions were broadcast by local stations across the length and breadth of the country," wrote broadcast historian Eric Barnouw. "And in many communities, school assemblies, and other groups listened to phonograph recordings of *The Lonesome Train*."

Barnouw recognized the message inherent in Lampell's script. "In depicting extremes of feeling toward Lincoln, *The Lonesome Train* had suggested a parallel with Roosevelt,"

Barnouw wrote. "War was another parallel. Ballad Singer: 'The slaves were free, the war was won. But the fight for freedom has just begun... Freedom's a thing that has no ending. It needs to be cared for, it needs defending.'"

The Lonesome Train ran through Eleanor Roosevelt's mind as she rode the train transporting her husband's body from Warm Springs, Georgia to Washington, D.C.: "I lay in my berth all night with the window shade up, watching the faces of the people at stations, and even at the crossroads, who came to pay their last tribute through the night," she later wrote. "The only recollection I clearly have is thinking about *The Lonesome Train*, the musical poem about Lincoln's death. I had always liked it – and now this was so much like it."

In a thoughtful analysis on the cantata, British academic Tim Crook claimed that *The Lonesome Train* could be the American equivalent of Handel's *Messiah*. "*The Lonesome Train* made the American public feel good about themselves and their history," Dr. Crook wrote in 2014.

"The program broadcast combined a summit of artistic expression in singing, composition, scripting, dramatic performance and direction, and musical arrangement that symbolized the success of an American ideal of asserting and protecting their notions of freedom, democracy and equality that was worth fighting for on the global stage. This is a docudrama for a nation at war where the collective spirit is being defined by positive political values: the fight against slavery; against hunger and poverty; the fight to protect freedom; and to find justification for killing to protect that freedom."

Responding to requests for amateur productions, Sun Music Co., a DECCA RECORDS subsidiary, published *The Lonesome Train (A Musical Legend)* as a 95-page book. The first edition reflected the DECCA album, limiting its theatrical potential.

Robinson knew this production would never play in the American South, where Lincoln was viewed with hostility. But he was concerned how white theater groups would handle the African-American church scenes. He also addressed the production's lack of female characters.

The second edition covered these issues. "Costumes are period," Robinson wrote. "The Ballad Singer is costumed as a Union soldier. There is no scenery, nor are many props necessary. Those used should be few and spare."

Robinson was specific about how Lincoln is portrayed: *Lincoln never appears. He broods over the unfolding story as myth and memory. The literal figure of an actor*

CANDID PHOTOS TAKEN DURING THE RECORDING OF **THE LONESOME TRAIN**



(ABOVE) RICHARD HUEY • (ABOVE RIGHT) JEFFREY ALEXANDER CHORUS • (BELOW RIGHT) LYN MURRAY



(ABOVE) LYN MURRAY ORCHESTRA • (BELOW LEFT) PETE SEEGER • (BELOW) LYN MURRAY, EARL ROBINSON



portraying him would only serve to diminish the legend. (In one production, however, a silhouette figure of Lincoln was projected on the rear screen, starting in dim, sharp focus and sharpening in intensity as the action went on.) In the scenes where Lincoln is supposed to be present, he is evoked by having the company act as if he was there. In the "Prayer Meeting" scene, a light on an empty bench or playing area serves to imply his presence. In the "Hoedown" scene, the Kansas Girl dances alone – but as though with an unseen partner.

For the "Prayer Meeting" scene, Robinson said "The Black Preacher" is:

...essentially a dramatic tenor, but the quality of his voice is less important than his style or dramatic ability. His spoken words must come through clean and clear as he sings and chants the sermon.

The chorus in this scene also must reflect an improvisatory quality in the spirit of the southern Baptist churches of the Civil War period. The individual voices need not be clear or distinguishable, but should rise and fall in response to the preacher's sermon.

In the hospital scene, a female character consoles a wounded Union soldier lying on a cot. A spotlight focuses on a bare spot shining near the soldier, as the preacher recites words from Lincoln. The play closes with "The Last Stop" with an "Old Friend" reciting additional words from Lincoln.

Between the ubiquitous amateur theatricals and frequent airplay of the DECCA records, *The Lonesome Train* became part of postwar American pop culture. The cantata returned to the Hollywood Bowl for a 1946 Labor Day celebration. This time Robinson and Alfred Drake were joined on stage by Gregory Peck and Vincent Price, accompanied by a full chorus and Franz Waxman conducting the Hollywood Bowl Symphony. The program also featured Frank Sinatra, who sang "The House I Live In," Robinson's plea for peace and understanding among races.

During his 1948 Presidential campaign, President Harry S. Truman launched a cross-country rail trip. Accompanied by an atypically small staff of aides, newspaper reporters immediately referred to it as "the lonesome train."

In March 1950 Robinson and a cast of 200 performers brought *The Lonesome Train* to Canada, playing two nights in Toronto's Massey Hall. In August members of Camp Woodland, a progressive youth camp in the Catskill Mountains, presented it in the American Legion Hall in Chichester, New York.

When the Central Railroad of New Jersey discontinued its underused seven-mile commuter line between Newark and Elizabethtown in February 1953, newspapers across the country ran the story as "Lonesome Train to be Retired."





A MUSICAL LEGEND

Music by EARL ROBINSON • Words by MILLARD LAMPELL
 LYN MURRAY and his Orchestra • Jeffrey Alexander Chorus
 EARL ROBINSON Narrator • BURL IVES Ballad Singer
 RAYMOND EDWARD JOHNSON Abraham Lincoln • RICHARD HUEY Preacher
 AND SUPPORTING CAST
 Entire production directed by NORMAN CORWIN

DECCA ALBUM NO. DA-375
 300 PERSONALITY SERIES
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DECCA ALBUM NO. DA-375
 THE PERSONALITY SERIES



THE LONESOME TRAIN DERAILED

The first attempt to derail *The Lonesome Train* was by William C. Kernan, a member of the Scarsdale (NY) Citizens Committee organized to purge the community's schools of Communist influences. For six years, this watchdog group routinely harassed Scarsdale school officials with paranoid accusations. Those threats escalated in February 1954 when sixth graders in Scarsdale's Edgewood School presented *The Lonesome Train* in an assembly honoring Bill of Rights Week and Brotherhood Week. Outraged, the committee distributed a written statement to the community:

In the study and presentation of The Lonesome Train the children have necessarily been led to believe that its authors are champions of American freedom, whereas in truth they are supporters of the Communist conspiracy to destroy American Freedom.

No one in the Edgewood School told the children the truth they are entitled to know – that the authors of The Lonesome Train, which they studied and presented in assembly, are in reality the close friends of worst and most deadly enemies America has ever known. Viewed in this light, the moral wrong perpetrated by the Scarsdale school authorities against the children entrusted to their protection is so blameworthy that only those can overlook it who are either too ignorant to realize its seriousness, or too pro-Communist to object.

Kernan recognized Millard Lampell and Earl Robinson among the 151 names cited in *Red Channels*. Published by American Business Consultants in June 1950, it revealed actors, writers, musicians and broadcast journalists allegedly supporting Communist ideologies within the entertainment industry. (Norman Corwin, Burl Ives, Lyn Murray, and Pete Seeger, all key figures in *The Lonesome Train*, were also named.)

The U.S. Senate Subcommittee Investigating Subversive Infiltration of Radio, Television and the Entertainment Industry identified Lampell as a "hard-core Communist." In its 1952 annual report, The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) named Robinson as a Communist.

In their later years Lampell and Robinson never denied their Communist affiliations. During the Depression, the party was an appealing alternative to capitalism's excesses and so-

cial inequalities. It also led an aggressive campaign against fascism and antisemitism in Germany, Spain and Italy, not to mention extremist movements within the United States.

But as anti-Communist hysteria gripped postwar America, even unaffiliated liberals were held to account for anti-fascist petitions they signed before World War II. "Across American society, the FBI devoted thousands of agents to the pursuit of supposedly dangerous radicals, often harassing them on a daily basis, making sure of their loss of employment but also offering them amnesty if they turned informer," wrote Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner in their 2003 book *Hide in Plain Sight: The Hollywood Blacklistees in Film and Television 1950 - 2002*.

For the anti-Communist right, Lampell and Robinson were easy targets. Lampell's radio and television writing assignments dried up. "By 1951, standard equipment for every Madison Avenue and Hollywood producer's desk included, along with the onyx ash tray and the gold cigarette lighter, a copy of *Red Channels* in the bottom drawer," Lampell wrote in 1966. "I sold my car, moved my wife and children to a cramped apartment in a cheap neighborhood and, when my savings ran out, lived on small loans from friends and what I could earn from a thin trickle of odd, ill-paid assignments."

Determined to keep writing, Lampell penned scripts under pseudonyms, sometimes using another writer as a front. He wrote novels, plays and a script for British cinema.

Cut off from lucrative film jobs, Robinson briefly pondered changing his name. "My income of \$25,000 a year in 1945 and '46 dropped to \$8-9,000 by 1950," he wrote. "If being listed effectively closed off work for me in film, radio or television, maybe the New York live theater world would be a better place to earn a living." Once in New York, Robinson, like the blacklisted Pete Seeger, made a modest living on the college circuit, singing folksongs to appreciative audiences.

The October 1954 issue of *The Catholic Review* published "Snake in Suburbia's Garden," Kernan's scathing attack on *The Lonesome Train* and the men who created it. "It is so patently loaded with Communist propaganda that even a tyro in Communist lore could detect it," he charged. Kernan also had harsh words for the Scarsdale school administrators who repeatedly dismissed his committee's concerns.

A controversy once limited to a local school board now spread to a wider audience. A Levittown, NY housewife discovered that teachers were playing *The Lonesome Train* in their music classes. Aware of Kernan's incendiary article, she rallied other parents to apply pressure to remove the records from District 5 schools. Responding to their complaints, District Superintendent Walter Clawson convened a panel of teachers and parents to review the cantata's contents. When that panel found nothing objectionable, the parents brought their case to the New York State Commissioner of Education. Placing a temporary ban on the records, the commissioner referred the matter back to the District 5 school board. By a majority vote, the school board refused to take action, a decision supported by the Levittown Teachers Association.

It was a hollow victory. In the next school board election, the members supporting *The Lonesome Train* were voted out of office. Clawson left the district, taking a job with the state's Department of Education. At its first public meeting, the new board voted to ban *The Lonesome Train*. One trustee publicly vowed to remove the album from every school in New York State. "I sometimes wonder what they actually did with it," Robinson pondered. "Broke it? Burned it? Buried it? And I wonder if *The Lonesome Train* has ever been heard in Levittown since."



By 1960 the blacklist began to crumble. Entertainment and advertising executives gradually reached out to affected writers. Resuming work on Hollywood film and episodic television, Lampell was commissioned to write an original drama based on Napoleon's exile in St. Helena. "Eagle in a Cage" opened the fifteenth season of NBC-TV's prestigious *Hallmark Hall of Fame*. He won the 1966 Emmy for "Outstanding Writing Achievement in Drama."

Robinson continued to compose for theater, films, television and concert halls. "Black and White," a song about brotherhood written with David Arkin in 1952, unexpectedly became a No. 1 pop hit for Three Dog Night in 1972.

As for *The Lonesome Train*? Maybe it didn't leave the station as often as it once did, but it was still on track. "By 1961, my cantata *The Lonesome Train* was beginning to be performed again in schools and colleges," Lampell said.

In February 1964 New York's Town Hall presented *An Evening of Music by Earl Robinson*. Joining the composer on stage was a popular folk trio, The Tarriers: Clarence Cooper, Eric Weissberg and Marshall Brickman. *The Lonesome Train*

closed the program with Leon Bibb as both narrator and preacher, accompanied by Robert De Cormier's 16-voice chorus.

In June 1965 Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage presented *The Lonesome Train* in a double bill with *Hard Travelin'*, Lampell's new play about the Great Depression. Moses Gunn played the preacher.

Celeste Holm headed a modest September 1974 production in Manhattan's Central Park. *The Lonesome Train* would not be staged again in New York City for almost thirty-five years.

In 1976 George Butler and Michael Stewart produced a new recording of *The Lonesome Train* for UNITED ARTISTS RECORDS, using an arrangement by Luther Henderson. With Brock Peters as the reporter, the folksinger Odetta handled the principal roles.



On the 2009 bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, conductor Maurice Peress headed a special performance of *The Lonesome Train* at New York City's Riverside Church. "It's gone to sleep, but we're bringing it back," Peress proudly told Tony Cox in an interview for National Public Radio.

It was not an easy challenge. By then both Lampell and Robinson were dead and the original Hollywood Bowl orchestration lost. Peress, who earlier recreated the 1924 Paul Whiteman concert that introduced George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," reconstructed the Lincoln cantata to match what Hollywood audiences heard in 1944 and 1946. Leading a cast of 220 participants, Ruby Dee served as the narrator with Michael Mark as the ballad singer. Eric Weissberg took the role created by PFC Seeger.

The Illinois Symphony Orchestra used the Peress reconstruction for two ambitious productions marking the sesquicentennial of Lincoln's funeral. ISO Music Director Alastair Davis credited Michael Tilson Thomas of the San Francisco Symphony for suggesting *The Lonesome Train*. "I told him that I was looking for an American composer to write us a piece of music that would rival Copland's 'Lincoln Portrait,'" Davis told a Bloomington, Illinois reporter. "And Mike said, 'Why don't you look at music out there that never gets played, like, *The Lonesome Train*?'"

"I looked at it and it seemed to have all the right components ... I mean, what piece of music could be more connected to us here in Springfield and Bloomington?"

The concerts became the ISO's biggest undertaking up to that point: a newly formed 150-voice chorus drawn from volunteers in Bloomington, Normal and Springfield; the Heritage Ensemble Gospel Chorus from Peoria; square dancers and caller Robert Weldon; and narration from Frank Williams, former chief justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

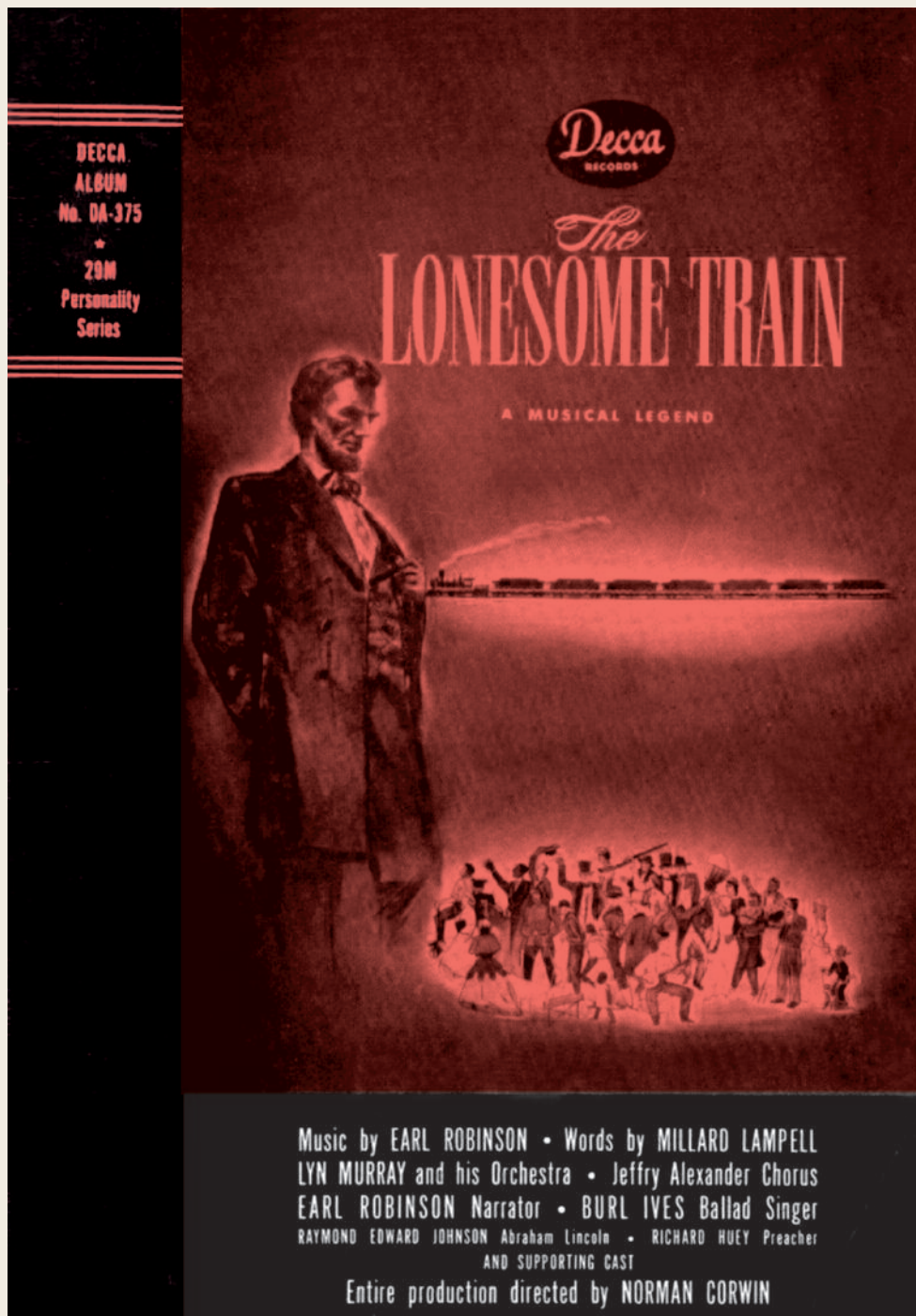
Performances were held in Bloomington on May 1, 2015, and Springfield the following day. **And Abraham Lincoln was standing with his friends in back of the crowd!** Yes sir!

*Dave Samuelson
Camden, Indiana
October 2023*





THE LONESOME TRAIN LIBRETTO



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The
LONESOME TRAIN

A MUSICAL LEGEND

Music by EARL ROBINSON • Words by MILLARD LAMPELL
LYN MURRAY and his Orchestra • Jeffrey Alexander Chorus
EARL ROBINSON Narrator • BURL IVES Ballad Singer
RAYMOND EDWARD JOHNSON Abraham Lincoln • RICHARD HUEY Preacher
AND SUPPORTING CAST

Entire production directed by NORMAN CORWIN



THE LONESOME TRAIN

A Musical Legend

MUSIC BY

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NARRATOR

•

BURL IVES

BALLAD SINGER

•

RAYMOND EDWARD JOHNSON

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

•

RICHARD HUEY

PREACHER

AND A SUPPORTING CAST

Entire Production Directed by

NORMAN CORWIN

The Los Angeles Times of August 16TH, 1944, had this to say in criticism of "The Lonesome Train" when it was performed in the Hollywood Bowl:

"So reverent and so free was this music and the words that inspired it that it is probable the 'legend' will become another 'Ballad for Americans.' This is a work which should be repeated in the Hollywood Bowl for several times 20,000."



THE LONESOME TRAIN

Narrator:

The long war was over, and the tall man with the sad eyes and the stooping shoulders was tired. And so, one night he did what everybody likes to do sometimes when they're tired. He went to a show. He went down to Ford's Theater in Washington town and he sat in a box, and it was a number one box because he was a pretty big man. Well, the play went on and along about the middle of the evening, something happened that wasn't on the program. Guess you all know what that was. The news spread pretty fast.

Ballad Singer: They carried the news from Washington,
That Abraham Lincoln's time had come;
John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln dead,
With a pistol bullet through the head!

The slaves were free, the war was won,
But the fight for freedom had just begun;
There were still slaves,
The hungry and poor,
Men who were not free to speak.

Freedom's a thing that has no ending,
It needs to be cared for, it needs defending;
A great long job for many hands,
Carrying freedom 'cross the land!

Narrator: A job for all the people – carrying freedom across the land.
A job for Lincoln's people! – And you know who Lincoln's people were?

Singer A: A Kansas farmer, a Brooklyn sailor,
An Irish policeman, a Jewish tailor;

Singer B: An old storekeeper shaking his head,
Handing over a loaf of bread;

Singer C: A buffalo hunter telling a story,
Out in the Oregon territory.

Ballad Singer: They were his people, he was their man
You couldn't quite tell where the people left off,
And where Abe Lincoln began.

Woman (Alto): There was a silence in Washington town,
When they carried Mr. Lincoln down.

Chorus: A lonesome train on a lonesome track,
Seven coaches painted black.

Narrator: Mr. Lincoln's funeral train,
Traveling the long road from Washington to Baltimore,
Baltimore to Philadelphia, Philadelphia to New York.

Chorus: Albany, Syracuse, Cleveland, Chicago,
(Solo Voices): To Springfield, Illinois.

Chorus: A slow train, a quiet train,
Carrying Lincoln home again.

Ballad Singer: It wasn't quite mist, it was almost rain,
Falling down on that funeral train;
There was a strange and a quiet crowd,
Nobody wanting to talk out loud.
Along the street, across the square,
Lincoln's people were waiting there.

Narrator: A young soldier stood in the road and said:

Soldier: (SPEAKING) "You'd think they'd have warned him; even a
rattlesnake warns you."

Narrator: And an old man answered:

Old Man: "This one must have been a copperhead!"

Chorus: A lonesome train on a lonesome track,
Seven coaches painted black.
They carried Mr. Lincoln down,
The train started, the wheels went round,
You could hear that whistle for miles around.
Crying, Free - dom!
Free - dom!

Ballad Singer: They tell a story about that train,
They say that Lincoln wasn't on that train;

When that train started on its trip that day,
Lincoln was in Alabama, miles away!

(SPEAKS)

Yes, sir, down in Alabama.

(SINGS)

In an old wooden church,
Didn't have no paint,
Didn't have no floor,
Didn't have no glass in the windows...

(SPEAKS)

Just a pulpit and some wooden benches.

Negro Woman
(*Moaning Softly*): O, Great God Almighty, Lord...

Ballad Singer: Just a pulpit and some wooden benches,
Abe Lincoln on the last bench away in the back,
Listening to the sermon,
Listening to the singing.

Chorus (Softly): Amen, brother, amen.

Negro Preacher: You may bury me in the east,
You may bury me in the west,
But I'll hear the trumpet sound in the morning!

Negro Woman: In the morning, Lord, in the morning.

Preacher: This evening, brothers and sisters,
I come in the holiest manner,
To tell how he died.

Chorus: He died, yes Lord, He's dead.

Preacher: He was a-lyin' there,
His blood on the ground;
And while he was lyin' there the sun rose,
And it recognized him;
And just as soon as the sun recognized him,
It clothed itself in sack-cloth and went down!
O, went down in mourning!

Chorus: Oh, the sun went down! Yes Lord, it went down!

Preacher: He was a-lyin' there,
And the sky turned dark,
And seven angels leaped over the battlements of glory,
And come down to get him;
And just when they come near him, he rose.
Yes, Lord, he rose up and walked down among us,
Praise God,
He walked back down among his people!

Woman: Lord, he's living now!

Preacher: We got a new land, my dear friends, we got a new land!
Ain't no riding boss with a whip,
Don't have no backbiters,
Liars can't go, cheaters can't go,
Ain't no deputy to chain us,
No high sheriff to bring us back!

Woman's Voice: We got a new land!

Preacher: You may bury me in the east,
You may bury me in the west,
But I'll hear the trumpet sound in the morning!

Chorus: In the morning, Lord, in the morning!

Ballad Singer: Down in Alabama,
Nothing but a pulpit and some wooden benches,
And Mr. Lincoln sitting in the back, away in the back.



Chorus: A lonesome train on a lonesome track,
Seven coaches painted black;
A slow train, a quiet train,
Carrying Lincoln home again.

Solo Voices: Washington, Baltimore, Harrisburg, Philadelphia...

Chorus: Coming into New York town,
You could hear tha whistle for miles around,
Crying, Free - dom!
Free - dom!

Narrator: From Washington to New York people lined the tracks.

Ballad Singer: A strange crowd,
A quiet crowd;
Nobody wanting to talk out loud

Narrator: At lonely country crossroads there were farmers
And their wives and kids standing around for hours;
In Philadelphia, the line of mourners ran three miles!
And most of them were deep in mourning;
An old lady stood by the coffin, and said:

Old Lady: "Mr. Lincoln, are you dead? Are you really dead?"

Narrator: But some wanted him dead for a long time.
A cotton speculator turned away from the coffin, saying,

Speculator: "All right, boys, the drinks are on me!"

Chorus: For there were those who cursed the Union,
Those who wanted the people apart;
While the sound of the freedom guns still echoed,
Copperheads struck at the people's heart!

Ballad Singer: (SPEAKS)
I've heard it said that when that train pulled into New
York town,
Mr. Lincoln wasn't around.
(SINGS)
He was where there was work to be done,
Where there were people a-having fun;
When that funeral train pulled into New York...
Lincoln was down in Kansas town,
Swinging his lady round and round!

Caller: (FADING IN)
Swing your maw, swing your paw,
Don't forget the gal from Arkansas!

Chorus: (MEN AND BALLAD SINGER)
When young Abe Lincoln came to dance,
Those Kansas boys didn't have a chance!

Caller: Grab your gal and circle four,
Make sure she ain't your mother-in-law!
Now, promenade!

Chorus: They were dancing people, you could see,
They were folks who liked being free;
The men were tall and the girls were fair,
They had fought for the right to be dancing there!

Caller: Pretty little girl, around she goes,
Swing your lady for a do-si-do!
First to the right, and then to the left,
And then to the gal that you love best!
Duck for the oyster, dig for the clam,
Pass right through to the promised land!

Chorus: Those Kansas boys didn't have a chance!
When young Abe Lincoln came to dance!



Chorus: A lonesome train on a lonesome track,
Seven coaches painted black,
The train started, the wheels went round,

On the way to Cleveland town,
 Poughkeepsie, Albany, Utica, Syracuse, Cleveland...
 You could hear tha whistle for miles around,
 Crying, Free - dom!
 Free - dom!

Narrator: In Cleveland the crowds were there;
 Two hundred and fifty come from Meadville, Pennsylvania;
 Five hundred with two brass bands from Detroit;
 A million people came from Northern Ohio;
 They came to mourn,
 But a few went home to celebrate.

Ballad Singer: Some in the north and some in the west,
 And some by the President's side;
 They cursed him every day that he lived,
 And they cheered on the day he died!

Narrator: Yes, they cheered.
 The Copperheads...
 A New York Politician who didn't like Lincoln.
 An Ohio business man who didn't like Negroes.
 A Chicago newspaper editor who didn't like people.

Girl Alto: (SINGS SOFTLY)
 You couldn't quite tell where the people left off
 And where Abe Lincoln began.

Narrator: Naturally the Copperheads went home to celebrate.

Ballad Singer: When that train rolled into Cleveland town,
 Mr. Lincoln wasn't around;
 Lincoln sat in a hospital ward, far from the funeral train,
 Lincoln sat in a hospital ward, talking to quiet a soldier's pain.
 "Where were you wounded, son?" Lincoln said,
 Standing by the soldier's bed.

Soldier: (SINGS) "At Bull Run, sir, and Chancellorsville,
 I was shot when we stormed the hill;
 I've been worried since Chancellorsville,
 About killing, sir, it's wrong to kill."

Ballad Singer: Lincoln said, "That's been bothering me;
 How to make the war and the Word agree."

Chorus: Quiet and tall by the side of the bed,
 "There is a reason," Lincoln said;

Lincoln: (SPEAKS)
 Until all men are equal, and all are free
 There will be no peace.

While there are whips and chains,
 And men to use them,
 There will be no peace;
 After the battles,
 After the blood and wounded,
 When the chains are smashed,
 And the whips are broken,
 And the men who held the whips are dead!
 When men are brothers and men are free,
 The killing will end, the war will cease,
 When free men have a free men's peace!

Ballad Singer: "I'll be going home soon," the soldier said,
 Lincoln turned from the side of the bed,
 "I'll see you there," Mr. Lincoln said.



Chorus: A slow train, a funeral train,
 Carrying Lincoln home again...

Spoken Voice: Last stop! Springfield. Illinois!

Narrator: Lincoln's neighbors came,
 Farmers from over in the next country,
 Shopkeepers and shoemakers,
 Men who'd hired him for a lawyer,
 Men who'd split rails with him,
 They came from Mattoon and Salem.
 Fellows who'd swapped stories with Abe Lincoln during those
 long Illinois winter nights;
 Lincoln's neighbors were there.

Chorus: A slow rain, a warm rain,
 Falling down on the funeral train.

While the sound of the freedom guns still echoed,
 Copperheads struck at the people's heart!

Ballad Singer: When that train pulled into Springfield, you know where
 Lincoln was?
 He was standing with his friends in the back of the crowd!
 Yes sir!

*Chorus and
 Ballad Singer:* Standing tall, standing proud,
 Wearing a shawl instead of a shroud!

Ballad Singer: Abe Lincoln was with his friends, telling jokes!

Man's Voice: Mr. Lincoln, isn't it right that some men should be masters
 and some should be slaves?

Lincoln: "Brother, if God intended some men to do all the work and no eating,
 He would have made some men with all hands and no mouths."

Chorus: Standing tall, standing proud.

Woman's Voice: Well, I say, America for Americans. What happens on the other side of the ocean, shouldn't be any skin off our backs.
Right, Mr. Lincoln?

Lincoln: "Well, I'll tell you, ma'am. It seems to me
The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside your family,
of course, should be the one uniting all working people
of all *nations, tongues and kindreds.*"

Chorus: Wearing a shawl instead of a shroud.

Man's Voice: Somehow, I wouldn't expect a President of the United States
to be such a common man.

Lincoln: "I think God must have loved the common people – he made
so many of them."

Ballad Singer: They were his people, he was their man
You couldn't quite tell where the people left off,
And where Abe Lincoln began.

Chorus: A lonesome train, on a lonesome track.
Seven coaches painted black.

Abe Lincoln had an Illinois face,
And he came out of a pioneer race,
He knew how hard the fight would be
And he liked the idea of being free!

His heart was tough as a railroad tie,
He was made of stuff that doesn't die;
He was made of hopes, he was made of fears,
He was made to last a million years!

Freedom's a thing that has no ending,
It needs to be cared for, it needs defending!

F r e e d o m !

EARL ROBINSON



Earl Robinson was born July 2, 1910 in Seattle, Washington. He was graduated from West Seattle High School, then attended the University of Washington where, in 1933, he received a bachelor of music degree which prepared him to teach music. While at the university, he conducted his own compositions with the university symphony at annual composers' concerts. Robinson didn't particularly want to teach but it seemed the only way he could make a living in music which was, after all, his aim. However, after considerable search, the only teaching job offered was one including general science, history, mathematics, physics – and with an opportunity to start an orchestra after school hours. He did not accept this position, but instead went on a six-week trip to the Orient playing piano in the ship's orchestra. After he had returned, he headed for New York in a jalopy via California, Texas, Oklahoma and the Southern States. He had a \$2.00 guitar with him and sang along the way. At this time he became interested in native American folk music. Some of the songs he picked up on the way he later recorded for the Library of Congress. American folk music has influenced his writing ever since.

In New York, Robinson joined a Little Theatre group as musical director. Because it was a cooperative group, he not

only wrote and directed music but sang, acted, built sets and took turns at cooking. When the WPA Federal Theatre began, the group joined the project where Robinson wrote the music for some of the Federal Theatre hits: "Processional," "Life and Death of An American," "Sing For Your Supper" (for which *Ballad For Americans* was written). After the "Ballad" received its first radio performance on the Pursuit of Happiness program in the fall of 1939, Robinson received a Guggenheim fellowship in order to write a musical play built around Carl Sandburg's book "The People, Yes." He worked on this for a year and a half. In the meantime, DECCA recorded the "Ballad" with Bing Crosby and MGM bought it for a picture. Robinson did various odd jobs including the music for a film "People of the Cumberland," music for a review on rationing, the hit song of which was *Porterhouse Lucy The Black Market Steak*. He has done several large cantatas including "Battle Hymn" based on President Roosevelt's state-of-the-union speech, "The Freedom Plow," "Tower of Babel," "In the Folded and Quiet Yesterdays;" many songs – *The House I Live In, The Song of the Free Men, A Man's A Man For A' That, Free And Equal Blues, The Same Boat Brother*, etc.

Robinson went to Hollywood in August, 1943, under contract to Warner Brothers as part of a deal whereby they bought the film rights to "The Lonesome Train." They cancelled the picture. Robinson did odd jobs around Hollywood for eight months including some of the music for the Army film, "The Negro Soldier." He then went back to New York to assist in the first radio presentation and Decca's recording of "Lonesome Train." The Norman Corwin radio broadcast was so successful that MGM called Robinson long distance in New York the day after the broadcast with an offer of a contract. Robinson signed with them and is at the studio now as a writer and composer, which is for him ideal, because he likes to be connected with the words, ideas and content of whatever he does the music for.

MILLARD LAMPELL



Millard Lampell knows America. He is intimately aware of every breath she takes – of all her moods and idiosyncrasies. He has in the short span of his twenty-five years developed a keen understanding of America and a facility for interpreting her to the millions of her children.

When Millard became old enough to apportion his time and his movements as he himself wished – when, that is, he was attending the University of West Virginia, he would spend his summers among the working people of the South, from where his wanderings branched out to include the rest of the country except South Dakota (the freight lines he used always missed that state). He worked among the miners checking the coal, as a mechanic in a Brooklyn shipyard and as a folk song singer at Union meetings, at grange meetings, and on board ships. No matter where he went or what work he undertook, he would always swap songs with his fellow workers both for good cheer and good living. They would be songs he had heard or had written, catching the tempo of the people about whom he wrote. His folk songs are living, vigorous reflections of the natural simplicity that is in every man, woman and child sincere enough to give his emotions expression.

Until approximately three years ago, this New Jersey

boy (he was born in Paterson) had never written a word professionally. And as short a time ago as 1941, he had never been inside a radio studio. Today, his ideas have been proved so right and so sound that he has eight network radio shows to his credit.

Today he wears the uniform of a sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Forces. Programs of his own on the air today are the *Army Air Forces* over Mutual, *I Sustain The Wings* on the National Broadcasting Company network and *First In The Air* over CBS. He has worked on a series of movie shorts for the office of the Co-ordinator for Latin American Affairs. The Office of War Information has commissioned Millard Lampell to write a movie on American folk music as part of a series being developed to introduce and explain America and American culture to the peoples of Europe during the occupation of that continent after V-Day.

At the request of the U.S. Treasury Department, Lampell and Lyn Murray wrote a new cantata called "Liberation," the publication of which is being held pending the recapture of the Philippines.

Lampell believes that *The Lonesome Train*, which pioneers a new art form, is only the beginning for himself and Earl Robinson, his collaborator. The two plan to use the same form for a larger work. They feel this type of writing is completely flexible, and adaptable to almost any theme.

NORMAN CORWIN



Norman Corwin writes for the world – and it listens. His radio productions have universal appeal, placing the producer-writer-director in the select company of novelists and dramatists whose works are translated into many tongues. His "American in England" was re-broadcast from the shores of the North Sea to the ends of the African Veld; Australia, India, Egypt and the Soviet Union are familiar with his works. And in South America, they are put on the air in Spanish and Portuguese.

"The Lonesome Train" got its first big-league performance on Norman Corwin's own series for CBS, entitled "Columbia Presents Corwin." It was on a blustery March 21, 1944, that Spring came in like a lion with the production of this stirring work. The program created great excitement, and DECCA RECORDS immediately engaged Corwin and the original company, and Raymond Edward Johnson portraying Abe Lincoln, to make an album of the show. While the company was still "hot" the records were cut in a memorable session lasting from ten at night until six the next morning.

Corwin is one of radio's foremost pioneers in new techniques; his ideas are daring. His "Words Without Music" won an award from the Institution of Education as the radio program "best demonstrating the cultural, artistic, and socially

important use of radio." On his "Pursuit of Happiness" series he was acclaimed all over the country for introducing the John Latouche-Earl Robinson "Ballad for Americans," in October 1939. His famous broadcast of December 15, 1941, "We Hold These Truths," won the Peabody Award for the "outstanding dramatic presentation of the year." "26 By Corwin," "This is War!" "An American in England," "An American in Russia" – the list of his prize-winning radio programs could go on and on.

In February, 1942, he received the annual Advertising Award "for distinguished services to radio." In May, 1942, he won the first grant ever bestowed on a radio craftsman by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, "in recognition of the fire, versatility, and consistently high standards that mark his work." In June, 1942, he went to Europe to produce "An American in England" for the British Broadcasting Corporation. On his return to the U.S., Corwin continued to pioneer in the field of international radio by producing "An American in Russia," "Passport for Adams," and "Transatlantic Call."

Corwin is six feet tall, weighs 175 pounds, and has blue eyes and brown hair, and a moustache. Among his hobbies may be listed piano improvisations, writing poetry, and playing chess.

LYN MURRAY



Lyn Murray, the famous composer-conductor, was born in London, the son of a British naval engineer. He spent his childhood in the Haymarket, Leicester Square and Hammer-smith, where England's most popular music halls stood.

In 1925 the Murray family journeyed to the United States and settled in Philadelphia. Although Lyn liked the Quaker City, he liked the sea better; and when he was 17, he began a three-week vagabond trip on a freighter. This trip extended to six months. His next trip, on an oil tanker, was short-lived because his mother took him off bodily just before the vessel sailed. So ended this adventure.

After his sea-faring days were over, he worked on several newspapers. Soon he decided that music was a far more advantageous profession, and he accepted a \$15 a week position as church organist. He probably inherited his musical talent from his mother, who had some skill as an amateur musician.

Radio work at Newport News, Virginia, made him, by 1930, a microphone favorite. He was later called to WCAU to take charge of singers and put on a novelty program, "Bill and Ginger." In this work he was so successful that he was called to the master CBS station, WABC in New York, to direct orchestras and choral groups.

He has recently completed a ballet, "Camptown" which will be performed some time this season with choreography by Jerome Robbins. His musical compositions for the Norman Corwin series include "An American in England," "The Long Name None Could Spell" and "Movie Primer." Lyn can currently be found on the Squibb program "To Your Good Health."

JEFFRY ALEXANDER



"All living," says Jeff Alexander, "is rhythm." He believes there should be rhythm even in names. Illustrating his point, he mentions his little daughter's name, Jill, "Jill Alexander – it has rhythm, it is fluid." And so it is. So is everything the noted young composer, conductor and choral arranger undertakes.

Perhaps this feeling that pervades his life and work may be traced directly to his mother, an organist of no mean talent who gave him his musical foundation. Another great influence on his thinking was an uncle, an artist whom Jeff considers one of the greatest men he has ever known. It was this man who guided Jeff, as a boy, into the worthwhile channels of literature; who gave him an appreciation of art and science.

From almost the very beginning, in Seattle, Washington, and later on in Oregon and Hollywood, Jeff steeped himself in music. As a matter of fact, Jeff is still studying and until very recently was one of the regular pupils of the late Joseph Schillinger. Others who have benefited by the Schillinger method have been George Gershwin and Oscar Levant. Jeff believes completely in Schillinger's theory of composition. Very roughly, the principle is built around the laws of physics and mathematics. If one follows this theory, the melody, no matter

how simple or intricate, is always scientifically correct and admits no error. Of course the music does not become animated until the artist gives to it some of his own emotional quality. Jeff believes this type of composition is best when adapted to dramatic music.

In 1936, Jeff was invited by Georgie Stoll, MGM conductor, to direct a choir – the first "jazz choir" – for the Camel Show on the radio. This was so successful a venture – with such leading entertainers as Six Hits and a Miss, and the Pied Pipers developing from the group – that he was approached almost immediately by other radio producers and by the movies. He made pictures for RKO and for Republic.

Jeff's first outstanding radio program was the one in which he conducted the choir for Raymond Paige on the Westinghouse show. He auditioned 750 singers, choosing only 25; composed and arranged the choral music; conducted the choir, and traveled back and forth to Pittsburgh every week to do so.

Shortly after this he worked for and grew friendly with Lyn Murray, the orchestra conductor. This friendship has developed into a working partnership with both members enthusiastically proud of each other.

Jeff's normal schedule is apt to consist of from ten to fifteen radio shows a week in addition to transcription-making and recording. He is the choral director of such major radio programs as the Coca-Cola show, Owens-Illinois, Celanese, Schaefer Beer, Report to the Nation, and Columbia Workshop.

Jeff Alexander looks like a normal young business man. Tall, but giving the impression of being taller, he is broad-shouldered and solidly built. He wears glasses almost ostentatiously and has a pleasant, winning way about him.

BURL IVES



As you might guess from his physique, Burl Ives was headed toward a career in professional football after he left college. Later, he was well on his way toward Broadway success as an actor and popular club entertainer. But these achievements were interrupted by an urge just to be "on his way."

This "Wayfaring Stranger" is literally a wandering troubadour. Carl Sandburg, himself a famed ballad singer, considers Ives the greatest ballad singer of them all. The big, blue-eyed, friendly balladeer explains his entire career with an easy grin and the simple statement, "I just like to sing – that's all."

His ballads are an inheritance from a quieter, simpler, more colorful world – far removed from headlines, jitters and total war. In his leisurly wandering from state to state, up into Canada, down into Mexico, Burl has collected ballads native to each section – ballads refreshing in their originality, humor, and pictorial phraseology – ballads rich in Americana.

After completing his sophomore year at Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, Burl walked out of his home town, Newton, Illinois, with 15 cents in his pocket and in his hand, a banjo with "Burl Ives, Vagabond Lover" inscribed on it. He was on his way to New York. He walked eastward, from village to village, sometimes picking up rides along the way, singing

for his meals in small restaurants, sometimes even making a profit above the cost of his dinner. Leaning against the railing of a Hudson River boat, he enchanted passengers with his dreamy ballads sung to his soft, slow, echoing guitar accompaniment. In the Eastern mountains, in small cabins in the Alleghenies, the big Middle Westerner traded tunes and lyrics with raw-boned natives who sang him songs learned from their fathers and grandfathers, and so Ives added to his stock of folk music.

Back at school again, Burl managed to keep his place in the text-book for almost two more years. But a few months before he was to be graduated the fever struck again. Leaving his clothes, his books, all his possessions in his fraternity house, he walked off the campus, never to return. During the next few years, he alternated between troubadouring on a grand scale, and settling down briefly in one spot. He played professional football, sang at a radio station in Terre Haute, Indiana, travelled with a group of evangelists, and sang in Greenwich Village bars and on upper Broadway. In between he wandered off to the plains or to the hills and settlements in the mountains.

Broadway saw him in three productions, "The Boys from Syracuse," "I Married An Angel" and "Heavenly Express," but only as an actor. He didn't sing a note. At Madison Square Garden, he sang for a capacity audience, and in Washington he sang at the White House. Whether he's entertaining a government official or a mountaineer, singing for a family in a cottage or a tremendous crowd in an auditorium, Burl's manner is easy and unhurried. His store of melodies is endless.

When he went into the army two years ago, he was immediately cast in "This Is The Army." When the show went to Hollywood, Burl asked to be transferred to the Air Corps, hoping to be sent overseas. An Army doctor discovered a physical defect that led to his medical discharge and a return to civilian life.

Ives is unique among New York performers in that he chooses to live on a house boat instead of in a swank apartment hotel. His home, moored in Long Island Sound, was literally gotten for a "song." The previous owner liked Ives' warbling so much, he let Ives buy it for a ridiculously low figure.

Anchored in one spot for a long time, by the Ives calendar, it is perhaps the knowledge that his songs are reaching innumerable isolated listeners that has temporarily curbed his urge to wander far away into logging camps, mining communities, mountain settlements and prairie villages.

RAYMOND EDWARD JOHNSON



Raymond Edward Johnson is the voice of Lincoln on these records.

You probably know him as the sinister host on the Inner Sanctum mystery program – or have heard his voice in dozens of daytime radio plays. Ex-newsboy, caddy, soda clerk, dramatics teacher and director, he won acclaim in his Broadway debut as Thomas Jefferson – the starring role in Kingsley's, "The Patriots," voted the best play of the season by the New York Drama Critics' Circle. Tall, blonde and bemused, Johnson hails from Kenosha, Wisconsin, home town of Orson Welles and Don Ameche.

RICHARD HUEY



Richard Huey, who takes the part of the preacher in "The Lonesome Train," has had many years of dramatic training with an imposing record of Broadway appearances to his credit. Some of the shows in which he appeared include "Three Men on a Horse," "Sunny River," a musical comedy "Sing Out the News," and the current musical, "Bloomer Girl." He has a devoted and extensive radio following for his program "Lenox Record Man."

PETER SEEGER

Pfc. Peter Seeger, who travelled 1500 miles from his Army Special Service group in Alabama to play banjo for the "Lonesome Train" recording, grew up in a musical family, went to Harvard in the social science department, thought better of it and at the end of one college year took his banjo and left to study social science first hand among the people. Pete travelled through the South, listening to the old American banjo-picking style which was rapidly becoming extinct. He became an artist on the instrument, was the spark plug of the famed Almanac Singers, and is now playing a leading part in the tremendous revival of interest in real American folk music. He is at present serving with the American Army overseas.

LON CLARK

Lon Clark, opening narrator in "The Lonesome Train," was born and educated in Minnesota. When he was quite young he became absorbed in dramatic arts and appeared in repertoire shows and radio programs in the Middle West and in the East for thirteen years. He has been a member of Norman Corwin's group for some time. Mr. Clark has sung with the Cincinnati Opera Company, and he has been heard on many network radio shows including "Nick Carter," "Kate Smith Show," "Thin Man," "Inner Sanctum," and the "Mollé Mystery Theatre."



THE LONESOME TRAIN *A Musical Legend*

A complete folio containing music and lyrics for performance as a cantata – arranged for narrator, soloists and chorus with piano accompaniment and including notes on the production by Earl Robinson – has been published by Sun Music Co. Inc.

THE LONESOME TRAIN FOLIO



A Cantata

**THE
LONESOME TRAIN**

(A MUSICAL LEGEND)

TEXT BY
MILLARD LAMPELL

MUSIC BY
EARL ROBINSON

★

RECORDED ON DECCA RECORDS
ALBUM NO. DA 375

PRICE
\$2.50

SUN MUSIC CO. INC. • 50 WEST 57th STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.
A SUBSIDIARY OF DECCA RECORDS INC.

THE LONESOME TRAIN

A FOREWORD BY HOWARD FAST

IT WOULD BE TRITE, and also very much of a simplification, to state that in *The Lonesome Train*, Earl Robinson and Millard Lampell have produced another great piece of music. As with other forms of art, music cannot be weighed in the scale with a resultant estimate of this being greater than that. *The Lonesome Train* should not be compared; it stands alone with a stature that is at first awesome, and then as warm and understandable as the man Lincoln and the people he led. It is American music in a curiously American form; and for me it is one of the most exciting musical experiences I have ever known.

It is no accident that Robinson and Lampell should have been the first to produce a musical work so completely native and yet so magnificently skillful. For years, they have both trained themselves in the lore of the American ballad and folk song. They have wandered over the country, listened to the people sing, watched them dance; they steeped themselves in the rhythms of the American people, on the fields, in the factories, in the mines and in the tall cities. They love and understand this music of ours, and it was many years ago that Earl Robinson first began to experiment with the shaping from it of a new art form.

The Lonesome Train is the legitimate heir of *The Ballad For Americans*; but, more than that, it takes full advantage of the possibilities opened by the *Ballad*, exploring and broadening Robinson's conception of a native musical form.

No art can reach its fullest maturity until it understands the people and identifies itself with them; art cannot borrow, it must build, and thereby *The Lonesome Train* becomes a solid block in the making of our musical tradition.

More than that, this folk memory in song, story and music can prove a constant source of delight, entertainment and education. It is more adaptable to performance, I think, than the average major musical work – and I have no doubt that it will find, by and large, a more sympathetic audience. Perhaps because the problems of American Democracy are in a continuing tradition, it cuts deep into the crisis of today; and it has a wonderfully simple and direct power to move an audience.

Essentially, it is a portrait of Abraham Lincoln – or better yet, a memory, and the memory is compounded not out of dry facts but out of the love and gratefulness of a people. Though written as a funeral dirge, it is many-sided and varied, changing constantly from a dirge to a dance to a rollicking ballad; and as the lonesome train which bore Lincoln's body moves through the states, he comes alive in the hearts and minds of his people, and that life is so completely and lastingly a part of them that the listener is left with a feeling of triumph and exaltation rather than one of sorrow and regret. As Millard Lampell writes in one oft-repeated and splendid refrain:

*They were his people, he was their man.
You couldn't quite tell where the people left off,
And where Abe Lincoln began.*

Nor is it easy to say where the music of this wonderful folk tale leaves off and where the people of America begin. Here, the two are one.

THE LONESOME TRAIN

PRODUCTION NOTES BY EARL ROBINSON

THE ESSENTIAL THINGS to be kept in mind producing *The Lonesome Train*, aside from its musical and dramatic values, are simplicity, and clarity of diction. The words and music are strong enough not to need over-emphasis by an operatic or over-dramatic approach. The story and message of the piece, conveyed in the words, must be considered the most important thing to be put across to the audience.

BALLAD SINGER – High Baritone

The part of the Ballad Singer, while needing a certain vocal strength in one or two places (beginning with the words "Freedom's a thing that has no ending –") is mainly, as the word "ballad" indicates, one requiring a warm soft human quality. The singer should not be a stranger to the simple guitar or banjo accompaniment and could well keep those sounds in mind as he sings the piece. In certain places, in particular the solo (beginning with the words "It wasn't quite mist, it was almost rain –") the employment of the soft high falsetto quality in the voice will help in giving the sad and almost mysterious quality of quiet grief which permeates the waiting people. The same feeling should be present in the solo at the end of the Negro Church section (beginning with the words "Nothin' but a pulpit and some wooden benches –"). In general, a study and understanding of Lincoln and the times he lived in, the people who loved him and who felt a deep, personal loss at his death, would aid immeasurably in giving the part the significance it needs.

NARRATOR

Much of the above holds true for the narrator. He is not a detached person viewing the events taking place or looking at the remains of history. Neither is he the over-dramatic commentator. Rather he is a person who was there when all this happened, knowing and loving Lincoln and the people who made him, personally angry at the copperheads and enemies of Lincoln and the people. The part must be read with simplicity, simple warmth and simple indignation.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The text for the part of Abraham Lincoln may be spoken entirely, or one section of it (beginning with the words, "Until all men are equal –") sung and the remainder spoken. It will probably be simpler to find a person who can read the whole part with authority than to find a strong baritone who can also speak the simple speeches at the end so that they sound natural. The suggestions for the narrator also apply pretty much to Lincoln. It is recommended that a person with a naturally warm voice be chosen for this part, rather than having someone try to imitate what he thinks Lincoln sounded like.

CHORUS

Two elements are important as far as the chorus is concerned. One – sharpness and clarity of diction; two – the identification of the chorus, collectively and as individuals with everything happening along the route of the 1700 mile trip from Washington to Springfield. The soloists from the chorus should sing and speak as people intimately connected with the event. The entire chorus should actually become, in feeling and participation, the congregation of the little wooden church in Alabama. They should be the square dancers in the Kansas section. The quality of these two sections is very spontaneous and improvisatory and the individual expressions by chorus members, especially if authentic, should be encouraged. The feeling of reality rather than a conscious "folksiness" should be the goal.

THE ALABAMA CHURCH SECTION

This section will be the hardest to produce and will require the most rehearsal. It is written to approximate the sound and depth of feeling present in an old-time Southern Negro church. Ideally the presentation should include a preacher, soloists and a congregation who have real life experience in such a church. However, in many cases this is impossible and it is entirely practical to present this section with only a good Negro soloist as the singing preacher, the four Negro soloists (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) if possible, and the choral parts being taken by the regular chorus.

THE PREACHER

As indicated (where preacher first starts "You may bury me, etc.") this person should have a strong voice, baritone quality rather than tenor but capable of singing high notes. If the voice is untrained and of strong quality without much vibrato, so much the better. The important things are passion, depth of feeling, excitement, clarity of diction, and if at all possible, some experience or association with that type of singing-preaching style in old-time Southern churches. Generally speaking, an actor with a strong voice will probably do a better job than a well-trained concert singer lacking in dramatic ability. The notes and melody-line in the preacher's part are indications rather than notations to be slavishly followed. If the singer improvises better than the indicated notes, keeps the words clear, and preserves the character and excitement of the scene, he should be given freedom to do so.

SOLOISTS

The same goes for the four soloists, preferably Negroes. Here however, the voice lines should stick closer to the printed notes. On the spoken or shouted lines more freedom can be allowed if desired or felt by the singers. The quality of the voices can be trained, but in all four voices an occasional flat loud tone may be more authentic and more moving than a well-rounded tone. This is especially true in the case of the alto solos.

CHORUS

As indicated above, the feeling of the choir throughout this scene must be a natural and spontaneous outpouring of voices, especially when the preacher makes telling points. The words of the chorus need not come out clearly in this section.

SQUARE DANCE SECTION

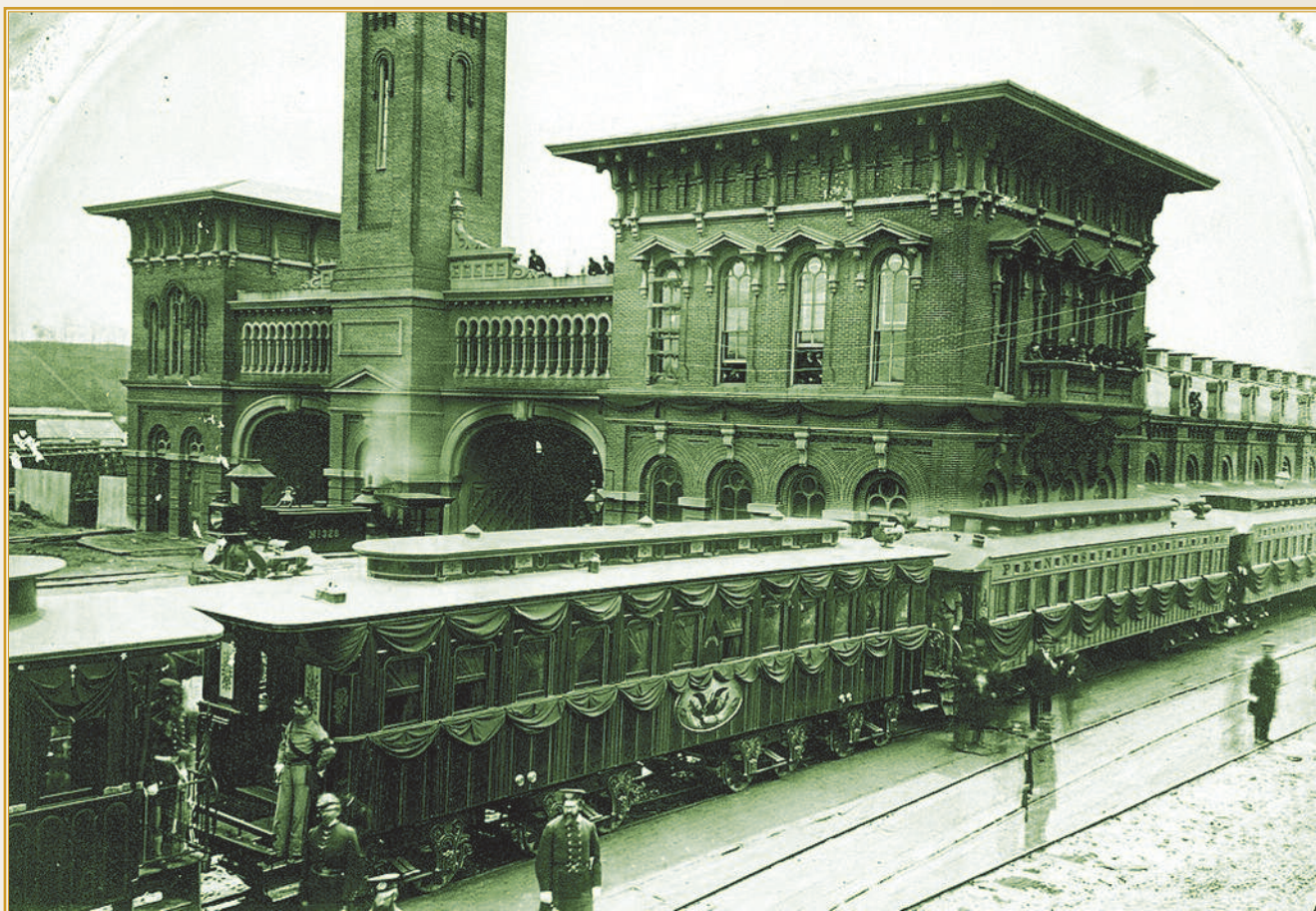
As will be noticed, a violin (fiddle) part is indicated all through this section. Here again the character should not be that of a concert performer but of a country dance fiddler. If a few notes are missed occasionally and a few double stops put in accidentally, the effect is heightened. If absolutely necessary, the piano can carry the whole section. However, if this is done, it might be expedient to simplify the left hand taking out the running counter-melody and just using the 'G' chord all the way through under the Caller sections.

SQUARE DANCE CALLER

The calls should sound authentic. If an experienced caller can be found, he should be given free rein and restricted only to actual entrances on the calls. In any case, the notation and indicated rhythms are suggestive rather than mandatory. The voice should be loud whether shouted or sung, and exciting. The same things apply to the whoops and hollers of the chorus. Let individual voices be heard in these but the general effect must be one of an exciting and happy square dance.



A careful hearing and study of *The Lonesome Train* record album (DECCA album No. DA-375) especially of the Negro church section, will be of great assistance in producing the composition.



(ABOVE) LINCOLN'S FUNERAL TRAIN IN HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA



LINCOLN'S FUNERAL TRAIN

by DAVE SAMUELSON

President Abraham Lincoln died April 15, 1865, seven hours after being shot by actor John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.

As Lincoln's body lie in state in the White House East Room, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton was planning the slain president's funeral itinerary. His widow, Mary Todd Lincoln, gave Stanton proxy for handling the body and funeral events. Although Lincoln's old friends in Springfield, Illinois arranged for a tomb to be built in town, Mrs. Lincoln insisted on a burial in Oak Ridge Cemetery two miles north. She also requested the body of their late son Willie be removed from a Georgetown cemetery and reinterred with her husband.

Although she asked that their bodies be transported by the most direct route, Stanton felt this would deny grieving citizens from paying their respects. He mapped a 1,662-mile route along twenty railroad lines across five northern states. Mrs. Lincoln reluctantly gave permission for the upper half of the coffin to be opened in ten cities along the route, allowing mourners to file past Lincoln's body.

Lincoln's black mahogany coffin was moved to the U.S. Capitol Rotunda for a final Washington viewing on April 20, 1865. The next morning soldiers moved it to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Depot, where it was loaded onto the presidential railroad car.

Originally built to transport Lincoln and his cabinet, the 16-wheel railroad car featured upholstered walls and etched glass windows, and included parlors for work and relaxation. The exterior sides sported painted crests of the United States. Lincoln died before ever using it.

As 10,000 people surrounded the depot, the funeral train departed for Baltimore at 8 a.m. on April 21. The engine pulled nine cars, most reserved for family members, federal and state officials, military personnel and their baggage. The presidential car carrying the two coffins was draped in mourning. Another car carried the elaborate hearse used for funeral processions through the selected towns.

Mrs. Lincoln declined to be part of the entourage, but Stanton allowed male members of the Todd family to make the trip. An embalmer and undertaker were also on board.

The train was limited to 20 mph throughout the two-week journey, and engines were exchanged at various points along the route.

"Lincoln's body held up well through the first stops of the funeral train: Baltimore, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia," wrote historian Richard Wightman Fox in his book *A Cultural History: Lincoln's Body*. "During the twenty-hour marathon viewing in Philadelphia, perhaps 150,000 passed by his coffin, after waiting up to five hours."

The funeral train arrived in New York City on April 24. A half-million mourners witnessed the 16-horse procession pulling the hearse to City Hall, where Lincoln's coffin was opened for public viewing. Lincoln's body was visibly deteriorating. Some doubted the embalmer could keep his features presentable. Before leaving Albany, the Illinois delegates, including Gov. Richard Oglesby, wired the Springfield funeral committee, asking the May 6 memorial service be moved to May 4.

Proceeding to Albany and Buffalo, the public viewings continued. "Perhaps more moving than the grand spectacles of collective mourning, though, were the private moments of sorrow exhibited by those who traveled from miles around to camp along the railroad tracks, seeking a momentary glimpse of the presidential coffin through the railcar's windows," wrote historian Christopher Klein in 2022. "For a country that bottled up four years of grief during the Civil War, the funeral train served as an emotional catharsis."

On April 28, mourners in Cleveland viewed Lincoln's remains under an elaborate pavilion built in the public square. The next day Lincoln's coffin was displayed in the Statehouse in Columbus, Ohio. Across the state line, the city of Richmond, Indiana, erected a 25-foot arch over the track. At 3 a.m. an estimated 12,000 residents solemnly witnessed the funeral train passing through as it headed towards Indianapolis.



TERRE HAUTE & RICHMOND RAILROAD.
FUNERAL CEREMONIES
OF THE LATE
PRESIDENT LINCOLN!

To be Observed at Indianapolis Sunday, April 30, 1865.

SPECIAL TRAINS will be run at Half the regular Fare on the above date, according to the following schedule, to carry all persons wishing to participate in the above ceremonies.

GOING EAST.				GOING WEST.			
No. 3	Leave.	No. 1.		No. 2.	Arrive	No. 4.	
6.30	A.M.			7.20	P.M.		
6.48	"			7.02	"		
7.00	"			6.50	"		
7.15	"			6.38	"		
7.25	"			6.27	"		
7.41	"			6.19	"		
8.02	"			5.52	"		
8.15	"	7.30	A.M.	5.45	"	6.20	P.M.
8.30	"	7.46	"	5.23	"	6.05	"
8.41	"	7.57	"	5.12	"	5.53	"
8.49	"	8.05	"	5.05	"	5.45	"
9.01	"	8.18	"	4.52	"	5.32	"
9.11	"	8.30	"	4.41	"	5.18	"
9.20	"	8.40	"	4.33	"	5.08	"
							"
9.30	"	8.52	"	4.22	"	4.53	"
9.50	A.M.	9.15	A.M.	4.00	P.M.	4.30	P.M.
	Arrive.				Leave.		

Pennsylvania Rail Road.----Philadelphia Division.

SCHEDULE
FOR
SPECIAL TRAIN,
WITH THE REMAINS OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN,
TO BE RUN FROM
HARRISBURG TO PHILADELPHIA.
On Saturday, April 22d, 1865.

LEAVE EASTWARD.

Stations	Distance	Time	Special Instructions.
HARRISBURG,		11 00	A. M.
Highspire,	6.2	11 19	
Middletown,	3.7	11 30	
Branch Intersection,	1.0	11 33	
Conewago Siding,	4.6	11 46	
Rizabadtown,	3.0	11 55	A. M.
Kuhn's Siding,	3.2	12 04	P. M.
Mount Joy,	3.2	12 14	
Landisville,	4.4	12 27	
Kaufman's Siding,	3.5	12 37	
Gettysburg,	7.3	12 47	
Lancaster,	1.2	12 55	
Bird-in-hand,	7.0	1 15	
Gordonville,	3.3	1 25	
Leaman Place,	1.1	1 28	
Kinners,	3.2	1 37	
Gap,	2.9	1 46	
Christiana,	2.5	1 53	
Penningtonville,	1.5	1 57	
Parkesburg,	3.1	2 06	
Chandlers,	1.5	2 11	
Louisa,	3.2	2 30	
Gallagherville,	3.3	2 36	
Downingtown,	1.5	4 43	
Dakeland,	4.1	2 53	
Steamboat,	3.2	3 04	
West Chester Int.,	4.8	3 15	
Paoli,	1.8	3 21	
Eagle,	4.1	3 35	
Morgan's Corner,	3.8	3 41	
White Hall,	3.1	3 50	
Fifty Avenue,	4.8	4 04	
West Philada.,	4.8	4 17	
BALTO. DEPOT,		4 30	P. M.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—A Pilot Engine will precede the Special Train, running ten minutes ahead of it.

GEO. C. FRANCISCUS,
Supt. Philad. Division.

ENOCH LEWIS,
Gen'l Superintendent.

After receiving mourners in the Indiana Statehouse on April 30, the funeral train headed to Chicago. In Michigan City it stopped briefly to allow a delegation of Chicago officials to escort the train into the city. Along the route to the city courthouse, the train passed under an elaborate ornamental arch near the current site of Soldier Field. A mile-long line of mourners waited to see Lincoln's body. The courthouse opened for viewings at 5 p.m., May 1, and remained open until 8 p.m. the following day.

Departing Chicago at 9:30 that night, the funeral train headed to its final destination: Springfield, Illinois. After services in the Illinois Statehouse, 70,000 mourners viewed Lincoln's clearly withered and darkened face. At 10 a.m. May 4, the coffin was sealed. A brief ceremony featured a 250-voice chorus singing the hymn "Peace, Troubled Soul," accompanied by Lebrun's Washington Band from St. Louis. The St. Louis Silver Cornet Band followed with the newly written "Lincoln's Funeral March," then the procession followed Abraham Lincoln and his son Willie on their final journey to Oak Ridge Cemetery.

The military initially assumed stewardship over Lincoln's presidential railroad car, which was later sold to various railroad companies. Thomas Lowry of Minneapolis-St. Paul's Twin City Rapid Transit Company acquired the car in 1905, restoring it to its original luster. After Lowry's death in 1909, The Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs took possession, storing it in a suburban Columbia Heights lot. Before it could be moved into a permanent location, the car was destroyed in a March 14, 1911, grassfire.



DECCA®

THE
LONESOME TRAIN
A Musical Legend

Earl Robinson-Millard Lampell

Entire Production Directed by Norman Corwin

DL 5054
(MG 1216)

Side 1

LYN MURRAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA
JEFF ALEXANDER CHORUS

EARL ROBINSON—Narrator
BURL IVES—Ballad Singer
Lon Clark—Opening Narrator
Richard Huey—Preacher
And Supporting Cast

LONG PLAY 33 1/2 RPM



DECCA

THE LONESOME TRAIN

A Musical Legend

Earl Robinson-Millard Lampell

Entire Production Directed by Norman Corwin

DL 5054
(MG 1217)

Side 2

LYN MURRAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA
JEFF ALEXANDER CHORUS

EARL ROBINSON—Narrator

BURL IVES—Ballad Singer

Raymond Edward Johnson—Abe Lincoln
And Supporting Cast

LONG PLAY 33 1/3 RPM



DECCA MICROGROOVE LONG PLAY 33 1/3 RECORD UNBREAKABLE DL 5054

The LONESOME TRAIN

A MUSICAL LEGEND

Music by EARL ROBINSON • Words by MILLARD LAMPELL
 LYNN MURRAY and his Orchestra • JEFFREY ALEXANDER CHORUS
 EARL ROBINSON Narrator • BURL IVES Ballad Singer
 RAYMOND EDWARD JOHNSON Abraham Lincoln • RICHARD HUEY Preacher
 AND SUPPORTING CAST
 Entire production directed by NORMAN CORWIN

DECCA LONG PLAY MICROGROOVE UNBREAKABLE RECORD—DL 5054

DECCA ALBUM DL 5054 • 10" • 1949



THE LONESOME TRAIN (Robinson-Lampell) About Abraham Lincoln DECCA DLP 5054

DLP 5054 THE LONESOME TRAIN

The LONESOME TRAIN

A Musical Legend
 Music by EARL ROBINSON • Words by MILLARD LAMPELL
 LYNN MURRAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA
 JEFF ALEXANDER CHORUS

EARL ROBINSON • **BURL IVES**
 Narrator • Ballad Singer
 Lon Clark • Opening Narrator
 Raymond Edward Johnson • Abraham Lincoln
 Richard Huey • Preacher
 and Supporting Cast

Entire production directed by NORMAN CORWIN

Side One

THE LONESOME TRAIN—Part 1

Side Two

THE LONESOME TRAIN—Concluded

THE LONESOME TRAIN

Musically by Lon Clark

"The long way was over," the narrator begins, "and the tall man with the sad eyes and the stooping shoulders was tired. And so, one night he did what everybody likes to do sometimes when they're tired. He went to a show. He went down to Ford's Theater in Washington town and he sat in a box, and it was a number one box because he was a pretty big man. Well, the play went on, and along about the middle of the evening something happened that wasn't on the program. Guess you all know what that was. The news spread pretty fast."

So far "The Lonesome Train" proceeds in the manner of colorful but colloquial prose. Suddenly the prose ceases—and poetry takes over.

They carried the news from Washington. That Abraham Lincoln's time had come; John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln dead. With a pistol bullet through the head! A great long job for many hands. Carrying freedom 'cross the land!
 The slaves were free, the war was won. But the fight for freedom was just begun; There were still slaves, The hungry and poor.
 Men who were not free to speak.
 Freedom's a thing that has no ending. It needs to be cared for, it needs defending; A great long job for many hands. Carrying freedom 'cross the land!"

Without further preamble or explanation, the work swings into a new art form, a musical legend flexible in style and free in spirit. It tells the story of the train which carried Lincoln's body across America—and the work, reflecting that momentous journey, has become a classic. Produced by Norman Corwin, with words by Millard Lampell and music by Earl Robinson, the collaboration immediately became a landmark. Corwin's stature as a director as well as a creator is world-renowned. Robinson is the composer of many unusual and

uplifting themes, including "The House I Live In" and "Benedict For Americans," which Decca recorded with Bing Crosby. Lampell is an author whose writings have ranged from radio scripts to a probing novel, "The Here." The joint work of these three is given a glorious interpretation by the Jeff Alexander Chorus and Lynn Murray and his Orchestra, abetted by Earl Robinson as narrator, Richard Huey as the preacher, Raymond Edward Johnson as the voice of Abraham Lincoln—and Earl Ives as the singer who interweaves folk ballads with chants of freedom.

When "The Lonesome Train" was performed in the Hollywood Bowl, the Los Angeles Times wrote: "So reverent and so free in use this music and the words that inspired it that it is probable the 'legend' will become another 'Benedict For Americans.' This is a work which should be repeated in the Hollywood Bowl for several times 20,000." The praise was not only deserved but prophetic. Since its first performance, "The Lonesome Train" has been heard countless times in schools, at civic occasions, and in homes throughout the country, wherever "Freedom's a thing that has no ending."

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- MORTY DICK (Maltby)—Charles Laughton with supporting cast. 12-inch Long Play Record. DECCA DLP 5145
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THE LONESOME TRAIN (Robinson-Lampell) About Abraham Lincoln DECCA DLP 5054

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN POETRY AND PROSE

by **DAVE SAMUELSON**

The Lonesome Train would remain in the DECCA catalog for nearly twenty-five years. In 1949 the label reissued it as a 10" LP with new liner notes from poet Louis Untermeyer. When the industry abandoned the 10" LP format, it was reissued again in September 1958 as the first side of a 12" thematic LP anthology, *A Lincoln Treasury*.

Drawing upon recordings primarily made during World War II, DECCA filled Side Two with *Abraham Lincoln in Poetry and Prose*.

With an eye towards marketing spoken-word recordings to schools, libraries and institutions, DECCA RECORDS signed **Orson Welles** (1915-1985) to a contract in 1944. At the time Welles was radio's best-known actor, his troubled film-directing career on hiatus. His broadcast earnings for that year reportedly totaled \$170,000.

Between August 1944 and August 1945, Welles waxed twenty-seven masters for DECCA, including literary works, patriotic speeches, Biblical stories and Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince."

On November 19, 1863, Lincoln delivered his most enduring speech during the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Four months earlier, it was the site of the Civil War's deadliest battle, Union armies defeating Confederate forces. Welles recorded Lincoln's Gettysburg Address on August 31, 1944.

When Lincoln delivered his second inaugural address on March 4, 1865, the Confederate armies faced certain defeat. Although welcoming the end of slavery, his speech reflected a tone of melancholy, regretting the unnecessary conflicts that divided the country. Welles recorded his interpretation on August 20, 1945.

Poet, folksinger and Lincoln biographer **Carl Sandburg** (1878-1967) recorded six masters for DECCA in November 1942. Two were stories for children; two were never released; and two were readings from his *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*

(1939). Although largely dismissed by today's historians, Sandburg's multi-volume biography appealed to general readers and helped create an enduring popular conception of the Civil War president. If the succeeding decades have not been kind to Sandburg's epic biography, his sonorous readings retain a folksy appeal.

Patriarch of an illustrious theatrical family, **Walter Huston** (1883-1950) is best remembered as the grizzled prospector in the 1948 film *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, directed by his son John Huston. A native of Toronto, Ontario, he began his stage career at age nineteen. He was cast in the lead role of **D.W. Griffith's** first sound film, *Abraham Lincoln* (1930). While it received positive reviews at the time, the movie offers little to contemporary viewers beyond Huston's understated performance. Admittedly not a singer, Huston persuaded Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson to write a number for him in their upcoming 1938 Broadway musical *Knickerbocker Holiday*. His poignant reading helped make "September Song" a pop standard.

In 1900, the Republican Club of New York City commissioned **Edwin Markham** (1852-1940) to write a poem commemorating Lincoln's ninety-first birthday. Markham presented "Lincoln, The Great Commoner" at the club's annual Lincoln Birthday Dinner.

At the February 1, 1922 dedication of The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, Markham recited the now-retitled "Lincoln, the Man of the People" to an audience of 50,000 people. Robert Todd Lincoln, the late president's surviving son, was in attendance.

Louis Untermeyer included the poem in his influential 1919 anthology, *Modern American Poetry*. "Markham's lines mix biography with exaltation and show Lincoln as the instrument of destiny," he wrote.

Vachel Lindsay (1879-1931) viewed poetry as a performance art. Welcomed in small-town opera houses and meeting halls during the early 20TH century, Lindsay delivered

NOTES BY LOUIS UNTERMEYER

"The long war was over," the narrator begins, "and the tall man with the sad eyes and the stooping shoulders was tired. And so, one night he did what everybody likes to do sometimes when they're tired. He went to a show. He went down to Ford's Theater in Washington town and he sat in a box, and it was a number one box because he was a pretty big man. Well, the play went on and along about the middle of the evening, something happened that wasn't on the program. Guess you all know what that was. The news spread pretty fast."

So far *The Lonesome Train* proceeds in the manner of colorful but colloquial prose. Suddenly the prose ceases – and poetry takes over.

They carried the news from Washington,
That Abraham Lincoln's time had come;
John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln dead,
With a pistol bullet through the head!

The slaves were free, the war was won,
But the fight for freedom was just begun;
There were still slaves,
The hungry and poor,
Men who were not free to speak.

Freedom's a thing that has no ending,
It needs to be cared for, it needs defending;
A great long job for many hands,
Carrying freedom 'cross the land!

Without further prelude of explanation, the work swings into a new art form, a musical legend flexible in style and free in spirit. It tells the story of the train which carried

Lincoln's body across America – and the work, reflecting that momentous journey, has become a classic. Produced by Norman Corwin, with words by Millard Lampell and music by Earl Robinson, the collaboration immediately became a landmark. Corwin's stature as a director as well as a creator is world-renowned. Robinson is the composer of many unusual and uplifting themes, including "The House I Live In" and "Ballad For Americans," which DECCA recorded with Bing Crosby. Lampell is an author whose writings have ranged from radio scripts to a probing novel, "The Hero." The joint work of these three is given a glorious interpretation by the Jeff Alexander Chorus and Lyn Murray and his Orchestra, abetted by Earl Robinson as narrator, Richard Huey as the preacher, Raymond Edward Johnson as the voice of Abraham Lincoln – and Burl Ives as the singer who interweaves folk ballads with chants of freedom.

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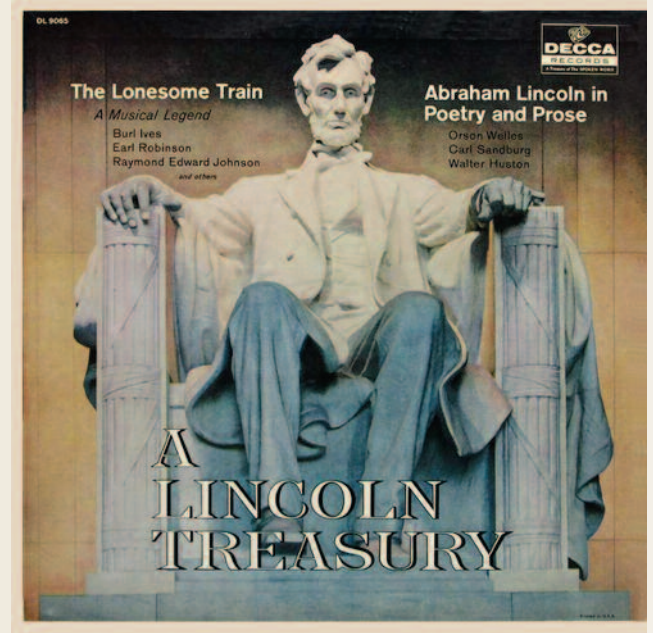
ORIGINAL LINER NOTES FOR DECCA DL 5054

his rhythmic cadences with an enthusiasm associated with Midwestern evangelists and soapbox orators.

Written in 1914 at the cusp of the First World War, "Abraham Lincoln Walks At Midnight" describes the sleepless president pacing the streets of Springfield, Illinois, in despair over the crisis in Europe. He ponders who might bring peace to the world so he may sleep again.

The poem was also anthologized in *Modern American Poetry*. "Telling us that Lincoln is always with us, the poet implies that Lincoln's spirit must stay and suffer until all men act like brothers in a world free of tyranny," Untermeyer wrote.

Huston recorded both works and Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!" in New York City on May 16, 1946, backed by an orchestra conducted by Lehman Engel.



DECCA ALBUM DL 9065 • LP • 1959

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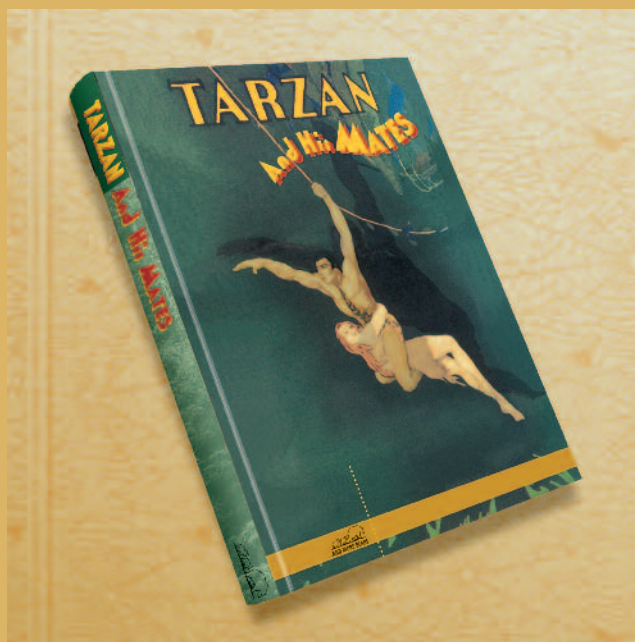
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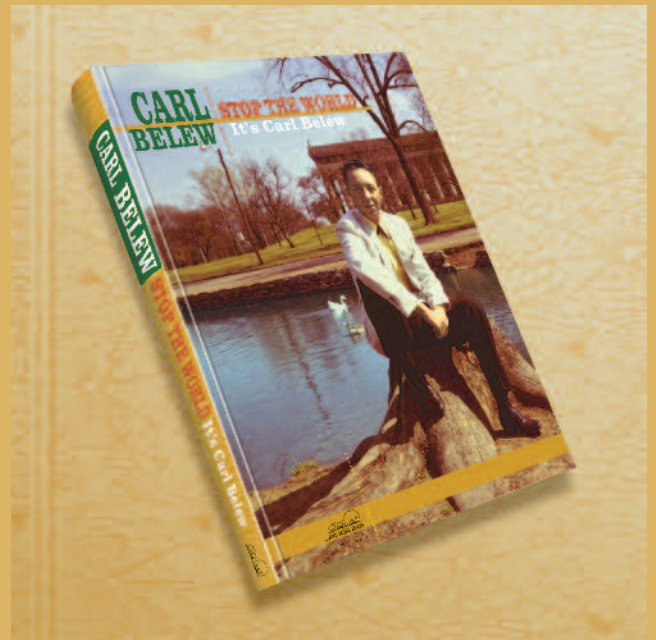
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