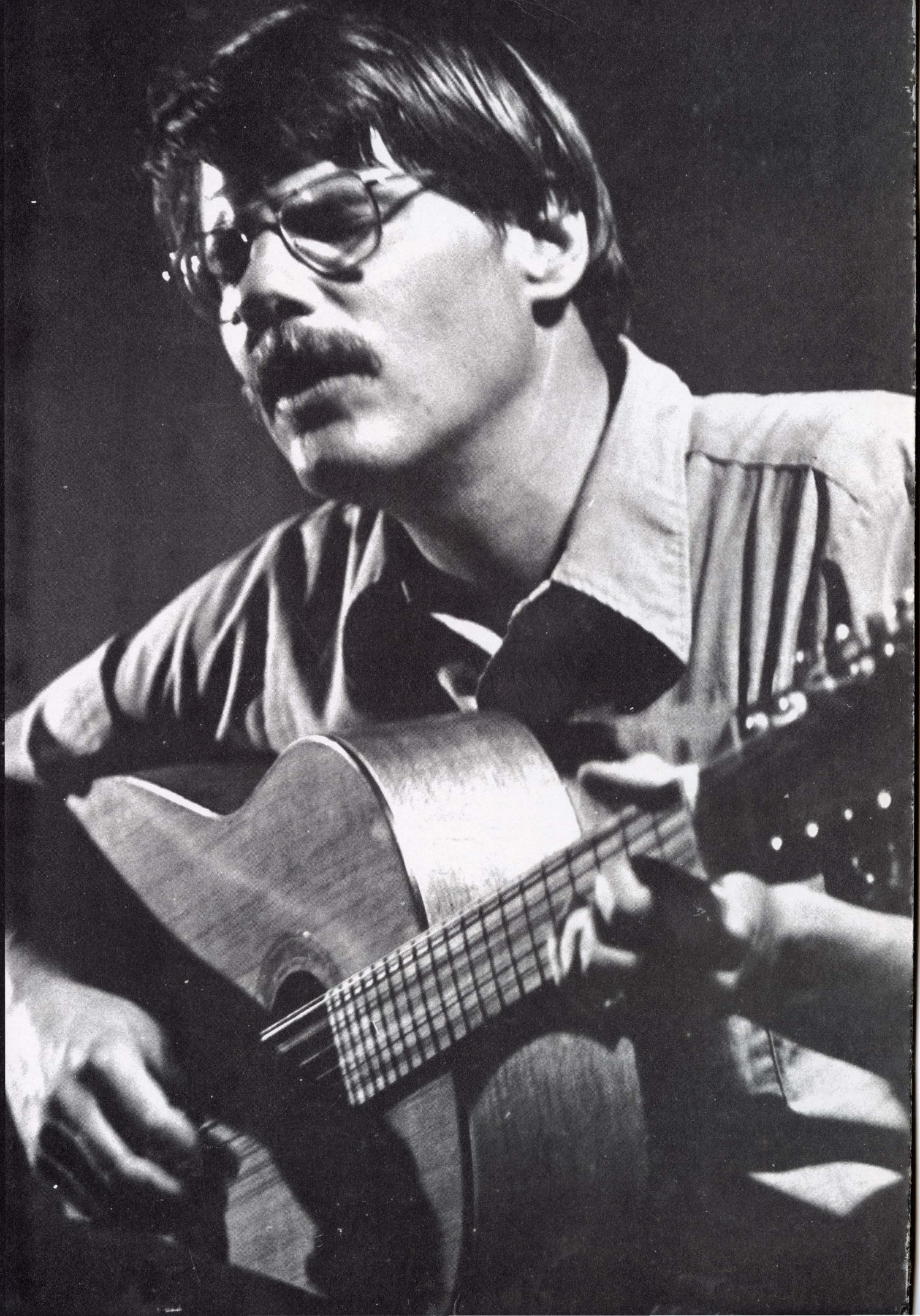


FSI-44  
STEREO

*Peter Kagan and the Wind*

**GORDON  
BOK**





*Peter Kagan and the Wind*

## GORDON BOK

*Recorded by Sandy Paton*

Gordon Bok lives and works among the fishermen of the Maine coast; he knows their language and their ways, he understands their fears and respects their courage.

A folklorist could visit these people and gather their songs, their sayings, and the superstitions that influence their actions. From such a study we could learn something of the outer aspects of their culture. Gordon Bok, however, is more than a folklorist; he is a poet, and as such he has lived among them, has become one of them. Thus, his insights are not those of an observer; they are born of a much deeper involvement. It is his particular genius to have found the words, and the music, with which to express those deeply personal concerns that rarely find their way into the social music and verbal lore of a traditionally taciturn population.

On the surface, then, these are songs of fishing and the sea, but they are also much more than that, for they reflect the concerns of all men. The scene may change, but the attitudes are universal. As the Maine fisherman with his boat and the sea, so the fine cabinet-maker with his tools and the woods he shapes with them, or the long-haul truck driver with his rig and the roads he travels. I have heard the wife of a Vermont dairy farmer speak of her husband, and his constant struggle to eke out a living on a scrubby hill-farm, in almost the same phrases as those used by Mrs. MacDonald (*Side 1, band 3*) as she watches her man go down, once again, to the sea. Hard as it may be, it is the only life he knows and, despite her anguish, she understands.

A special word about *Peter Kagan and the Wind*: for years, Gordon has pursued a near-mystic exploration of the widespread legends of the seal-folk. Out of this, and his understanding of the fisherman's soul, he has created a contemporary, though timeless, cante-fable. Drama, suspense, humor, tenderness — the story of Peter Kagan possesses them all, and only Gordon Bok could have given it to us.

*Sandy Paton  
Sharon, Connecticut  
December, 1971*

### Side 1:

Mister Eneos (Bok)	3:38
Hang On, John (Bob Stuart)	4:59
Mrs. MacDonald's Lament (Bok)	3:02
Cape Ann (Bok)	3:40
Gulls in the Morning (Bok)	3:18
Frankie on the Sheepscot (Bok)	5:21

### Side 2:

Clear Away in the Morning (Bok)	2:53
Threeboot Philbrick's Lament (Bok)	3:16
Ed McDermott's Handy (arr. Bok)	2:07
Peter Kagan and the Wind (Bok)	15:07

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Sharon, Connecticut 06069

PETER KAGAN AND THE WIND  
GORDON BOK  
FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS  
Cover photo: J. BRIERE

FSI-44

# Peter Kagan and the Wind

## GORDON BOK



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SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06069

**Mister Eneos**

*(The Cold South Georgia Ground)*

A true story, taken from a smooth-log of the last sailing whaler to go out of New Bedford: the *Daisy*, brig (R. C. Murphy, *A Logbook for Grace*).

Practically verbatim, this is the ship's carpenter's account (as reported by Mr. Murphy) of the drowning of fourth mate Anton Eneos off South America, on a voyage to South Georgia, an island in the latitude of Cape Horn.

(Murphy also wrote another fine book, with his own photographs, of a trip he took on the *Daisy* two years after this particular happening: *A Dead Whale or a Stove Boat*.)

The refrain here, the melody, and some of the phrasing are mine. (Played on the 12-string guitar.)

*Clew up your royals and topsails,  
Haul your headsails down,  
For you'll never see the whale no more  
Or the cold South Georgia Ground.*

*It was March twenty-ninth, nineteen  
and ten,  
The little brig Daisy did sail;  
The morning was clear, and the sea  
was down,  
And we raised a great pod of whale.*

*The captain had three of the boats  
lowered down,  
And in them the mates (they) did go:  
There was Mister Dalomba and Mister  
Alves,  
And Mister Eneos also.<sup>2</sup>*

*(chorus)*

*Now, the whales did rise a mile from  
the ship,  
And the other two mates made their kill,  
But Mister Eneos was caught in the pod  
Where the whales were lying still.*

*Mister Eneos stood still in the bow,  
And he had his lance in his hand,  
But the whale he had harpooned<sup>3</sup> would  
not break away  
And would neither sound or run.*

*It struck at the boat and lifted  
her high,  
And the men fell out over the stern,  
And we saw the flukes come crashing  
down  
Where Mister Eneos had been.*

*The captain had the stern boat lowered  
away,  
And we searched where the whales did  
sound;<sup>4</sup>  
Five men we gathered from out the sea,  
But Mister Eneos was gone.*

*(chorus)*

1. All mates of sailing vessels are traditionally called "Mister." Usually only that, by the captain.
2. The first mate, too, Mr. Almeida, if I remember correctly.
3. The whale his boat-steerer had harpooned, actually.
4. *Sound* = to get deeper, or to dive.

**Hang on, John**

*(John Taylor)*

*Copyright 1972 by Bob Stuart.*

This is a fine and magic song written by Bob Stuart, who is a sort of footloose minstrel who sings traditional, contemporary, and his-own music.

He said he got the story from a song-book that told it as a legend of a Nantucket sleighride that ended up on a back street of the town. There's another verse that I can't remember about how John Taylor sits on his porch and tells the story, but nobody believes him....

I've tried to stay as close to the original as I could, but you should still hear Bob sing it.

*John Taylor left his native home;  
After the whalefish he did go,  
Round the Atlantic coast and around  
Cape Horn  
To the South Seas where the whalefish  
blow.*

*Hang on, John; soon you'll see  
your native home.  
Hang on, John; you'll see Nantucket  
shores once more.*

*Well, his boat was sunk, and, his luck  
being gone,  
On a rocky island he made his home,  
And he prayed and he hoped, and he  
dreamed in vain  
For a ship to carry him home again.*

An old man come walking down the beach,  
Harpoon in hand and a smiling face:  
"I come from my home on the rolling sea  
To carry you back to your native place."

So they sang and rowed, and they sang  
and sailed  
Until they spied a newborn whale;  
The old man harpooned him in the back,  
And out to sea they hauled their slack.

They had not been sailing but a month  
or more  
When "Land Ho!" was the old man's happy  
word,  
And John saw the cliffs rising from  
the beach,  
Heard the cry of Nantucket birds.

But they never stopped when they  
reached dry ground,  
But they hauled their slack into John's  
home town,  
And John got off at his own front door,  
And he never saw the old man, or the  
whale, any more.

Side 1, Band 3

### Mrs. MacDonald's Lament

For many reasons, among them overfishing, pollution, lack of local government control, and our general economic structure, the small-time fisherman, the jack of all coastal fishing trades, is in danger of extinction.

His credit may be good, but his creditors are caught in the squeeze, too, so after a while he can't maintain his boat or his gear, and then he can't pay the taxes on the suddenly valuable land that his family has owned for so many generations. And so he leaves the fishing, and he goes. To Florida, to the West Coast, to the cities.

But, in going, he takes with him a way of thinking, a way of living, the value of which to the world can never be measured or replaced.

When the wind's away and the wave away,  
That crazy old fool will go down on  
the bay,  
Dodging the ledges and setting his gear,  
And come back when the wind drives  
him in.

He knows full well the fishing is done;  
His credit's all gone, and the winter  
is come,  
But as sure as the tide will rise and run  
He'll go back on the bay again.

When the snow is down on the Western Bay,  
That fool will go running the Fiddler's  
Ground,  
Hauling his gear in the trough of the  
sea  
As if he'd no mind of his own.

His father's gone, and his brothers  
are gone,  
And still he goes down on the dark of  
the moon,  
Rowing the dory and setting the twine,  
And it won't even pay for his time.

When the wind's away and the wave away,  
Our children go down on the morning sun;  
They go rowing their little boats out  
on the tide,  
And they'll follow their foolish old man.

Well, you blind old fool, your  
children are gone,  
And you never would tell them the  
fishing was done;  
Their days were numbered the day they  
were born,  
The same as their foolish old man.

Side 1, Band 4

### Cape Ann

A long-standing contributor of vessels and men to the Grand Banks fisheries. Also an awkward place to get around in a sailing vessel when the weather is bad.

This is a composite of two true stories: one happened to a friend of mine, one happened to me.

Long after I wrote the song, I was introduced to some variants of the idea: "The Drunken Captain," for instance. Turns out I wasn't saying anything new after all.

You can pass your days in the dory, boys;  
You can go with the worst and the best,  
But don't ever go with old Engleman, boys:  
Each trip you go could well be your last.

Don't you remember Cape Ann, boys?  
Don't you remember Cape Ann?  
Oh, that crazy old drunk was a loser, boys,  
He never cared if we never made in.

Don't you remember Cape Ann, boys,  
Don't you remember Cape Ann?  
You'll never catch me on the trawl  
again,  
For it's surely no life for a dog  
or a man.

(Cape Ann, cont.)

Don't you remember the Shoals, boys,  
Don't you remember the Shoals?  
And the Old Man asleep at the wheel,  
boys;  
By God, it was black and cold.

Well, the mate was the man with the  
gall, boys;  
He got the Old Man away from the wheel,  
He took him below and he locked up the  
hatch,  
And he threw all the booze o'er the  
rail.

Side 1, Band 5  
**Gulls in the Morning**

I made the majority of this tune sitting  
in the forecandle hatch of the dear old  
schooner *Steven Taber* on many bright win-  
ter mornings, watching the gulls.

A gull is one of the best fliers of all  
birds, and the song is primarily an imi-  
tation of that, rather than their speech.  
(You never hear a gull say anything really  
important, anyway.)

I made the song for my friend Peter  
Platenius, whose guitar playing (learned  
as a boy in South America) has made a  
strong impression on me.

Side 1, Band 6  
**Frankie on the Sheepscot**

This is about two friends of mine,  
Frank Wiley and his stepfather, Cleon  
Stuart, from Deer Island, New Brunswick.  
They run a sardine carrier out of Bath,  
Maine, and they're good fishermen.

The song is just a series of pictures  
of one particular day I was with them  
towing for shrimp out of Boothbay on a  
smaller boat, the *Elisa Glenn*.

It had been a hard winter, especially  
for the smaller boats. They hadn't been  
able to go "outside" all winter because  
of severe icing, and had been forced to  
work up the rivers. The shrimp were  
scarce up there, and the bottom was foul,  
and they were continually tearing up  
their gear, so on many days they would be  
out of the harbor at 4:30 in the morning  
and back in by daylight with the net to  
repair and only a couple of hundred pounds  
of fish to show for a day's work.

Frankie braids the purse-string, and  
Cleon sets the tow.<sup>1</sup>  
Frankie goes to pick them over in  
the well;  
He's never got a hat on, and the snow  
is all around him,  
And it packs around his head like his  
own skin.

"Don't I hate this foolish river!"  
Frankie cries,  
"Up and down her like a yo-yo on a  
string;  
You go out in the morning and tear up,  
mend all your afternoon,  
And all this dirty river staving by."

Ah, but boys, you should have seen him:  
Wearing the snow as you would wear  
your hair,  
Singing: "It's a hard life for a boy  
on the Gut..."<sup>2</sup>  
(He's got the words wrong, but he  
doesn't seem to care.)  
And the seagulls working easy out  
behind him.

Cleon slides the hatch back, and he  
shouts down: "Boys, we're anchored."<sup>3</sup>  
And you set your coffee down and go  
on deck,  
But the river's humping by so fast,  
the snow's so flying thick,  
You can't tell if she's moving or lying  
still.

"Don't I hate this foolish river!"  
Frankie cries,  
"Up and down her like a yo-yo on a  
string;  
Go out in the morning and tear up,  
mend all your afternoon,  
And all this poor old river going by."

Cleon winds the wheel, and he cracks  
the power to her,  
And she pokes her head around, but she  
doesn't turn,  
And he takes her out of gear while  
Frankie goes to try to haul back;<sup>4</sup>  
He says, "I guess we've hooked the  
dear old State of Maine."

Ah, but boys, you should have seen him,  
Hour after hour, Cleon on that old wheel.  
There's nothing out there but hard times  
And time and the flying snow,  
And all that pretty river rolling by.

Oh, my boys, it made me wonder,  
Hour after hour, Cleon on that old wheel.  
There's nothing to see but hard times,  
Time and the flying snow,  
But Cleon watches, day and night and day.

1. From the winch on the boat, a cable runs to a bridle on two huge iron-bound wooden "doors" that hold the mouth of the net open as it drags along the bottom. The back end of the net, the "cod end," is kept closed during towing by a couple of pucker-strings, which have to be loosely braided while in use: a regular knot would never come undone when you wanted to dump the shrimp.
2. Frank's "song of the week" that trip was the British tune "It's a Hard Life for a Girl on the Cut" (the 12-string hums a bit of it after that verse), which he, disremembering, modified to apply to Thompson's Gut, where he and Cleon used to keep the boat.
3. *Anchored* = hung up. What he actually said was "tanker." He had started to turn to starboard and almost ran broadside into a huge tanker coming silently up the river, a great grey wall in the snow. He cut back on the power, the net swallowed a boulder, and it was all over.
4. *Haul back* = bring the tow aboard. Whatever it was that hung us up, we had to back and fill for awhile to get free, and, when we did get the gear up, there was nothing to do but head back in and repair it.

Side 2, Band 1

### Clear away in the Morning

From the years I worked on the Camden schooners.

Come fall, time to lay the vessel up, I never wanted to quit. It was my home, and the only place I felt I was really needed was on the deck of that schooner.

*Take me back on the bay, boys,  
Clear away in the morning,  
I don't want to go ashore, boys,  
Oh, bring her 'round.*

*Take me back on the bay, boys,  
I don't want to spend my pay, boys.*

*Captain, don't you leave me,  
There's no one here that needs me.*

*Nancy, oh my Nancy,  
She never played it fancy.*

*Bring me wine and brandy,  
I'd only ask for Nancy.*

*Captain, don't let the main down;  
Captain, don't let the chain run.*

*Captain, don't you need me?  
"There's nothing I can do, boy."*

*Nancy, oh my Nancy,  
Nancy, oh my Nancy.*

*Take me back on the bay, boys,  
I don't want to go ashore, boys.*

Side 2, Band 2

### Threeboot Philbrick's Lament

Philbrick isn't his name, though it might as well be; this is a composite of attitudes and opinions and hummings of more than one person. I've just changed the name to indulge the guilty. It doesn't really matter who says it anyway, as long as it gets said.

(Note on the first verse: The real Threeboot had a habit of talking to the rotten old sloop he lived on; he'd even sing to her, when he thought she was listening.)

*You're a dirty, hungry, scaly bag  
of timbers,  
And you've seen the last of your  
deep-water days,  
And I have, too,  
But I'd like to cut us free, and we'd  
go astray together,  
And we'd try that last long voyage,  
Me and you.*

*The young men make you wonder, more  
and more.  
They'd have you think a man that liked  
his home  
Was nothing but a fool,  
So they dress up and they go and leave  
The only thing they ever had,  
And if I ever could believe that it  
was worth it,  
I'd go, too.*

*But I'd just as soon be here as  
someplace there.  
I don't need many things: little  
coffee, little rum.  
And I can lie here in the cove  
With those little stars above me,  
And hear that wind running easy  
down the bay.*

*Go away, go away,  
They tell me that it's time  
to go away.*

(Threeboot, cont.)

But you're a dirty, hungry, scaly bag  
of timbers,  
And you've seen the last of your  
deep-water days,  
And I have, too,  
But, by God, I'll cut us free, and  
we'll go astray together,  
And we'll try that last long voyage,  
Me and you.

But there's snow on my shoes and  
on my head,  
And there's snow on that hungry  
northern wind.  
And you take a look around you,  
All your rambling friends are dead,  
And I guess it won't be long  
before the day comes  
We go, too.

Side 2, Band 3

### Ed McDermott's Handy

Cherish the Ladies

Garryowen

Haste to the Wedding

"Cherish the Ladies" is an Irish tune.  
I learned it (imprecisely) from Lani Herrmann, who learned it from that fine Irish fiddler, Ed McDermott, in New Jersey.

"Garryowen" was learned from Charlie Richards of Camden, Maine, who used to be a fiddler in the Old New Englanders, and from Everett Grieve, who kept them all together.

"Haste to the Wedding" is another tune Mr. McDermott plays, though I learned it from Charlie Richards.

Side 2, Band 4

### Peter Kagan and the Wind

Peter Kagan was a lonely man,  
in the summer of his years.  
But then one day he got tired of being  
lonely, so he went away off to the  
eastward, and, when he came again,  
he had a wife with him.

She was strange, you know, but  
she was kind, and people liked her.

And she was good for Kagan,  
she kept him company,  
and, winter come to summer,  
they were happy.

Kagan had a dory then, had a lugsail  
on her mast.  
He'd go offshore for three, four days,  
setting for the fish.

But oh, his wife was sad then;  
she never liked to see him go.  
She'd go down and call to him:

Kagan, Kagan, Kagan.  
Bring the dory home.  
The wind and sea do follow thee,  
And all the ledges calling thee.

He said that he could hear her singing  
twenty miles to sea, and, when he  
heard her, he'd come home,  
if he had fish or none.

She was a seal, you know.  
Everyone knew that; even Kagan,  
he knew that,  
But nobody would say it to him.

Then, one day in that year's autumn,  
Kagan says:  
I got to go now. Go offshore and  
get some fish.

But she says: No, don't go away.  
She starts crying: Please don't go,  
the wind is coming, and the snow.

Kagan, Kagan, Kagan.  
Don't go out to sea.  
The stormy wind and snow do come,  
And oh, but I do fear for thee.

But Kagan's not afraid of snow;  
it's early in the year.  
He puts his oars in,  
and he goes to sea.



Kagan sails out on the Middle Ground.  
The wind is west all day, and going  
down; the fish are coming to him.

Kagan reads the writing on the water  
and the sky.

He sees the haze, up very high,  
above the clouds.

He says: That's all right for autumn,  
only a change of wind. I'm not  
afraid of wind.

But Kagan reads it wrong this time.  
The wind goes away, and then comes back  
southeast.  
The fog comes 'round him.

Kagan says: I better go now. Find  
that gong-buoy off the Sunken Ledges.  
Then I'll know the best way home.

He puts the sail up, and he bears away  
to the northward for the gong.

But oh, the wind is watching. The wind  
backs 'round to the eastward and  
breezes on. They sail a long time,  
and the sail is pulling very hard.

Finally the wind's so strong the sail  
tears out.  
Kagan takes it in, and the dory goes  
drifting.

But then he hears the gong-buoy;  
it isn't very far away.

Kagan, Kagan, Kagan:  
Bring the dory home.  
The wind and sea do follow thee,  
And all the ledges calling thee.

But the dory goes drifting;  
Bye and bye the buoy goes away.

Kagan says: Okay.  
He puts the oars in, starts to row back  
up for the gong.

But oh, the wind is watching. The wind  
backs 'round northeast, and makes  
the sea confused.

The wind says: Listen, I got something  
to tell you.  
Kagan, rowing: I don't want to hear it.

But the wind humps up — makes the seas  
short, makes it hard for him to row.  
Finally the seas are so steep Kagan  
knows he isn't getting anywhere.  
He takes the oars in, and the dory  
goes drifting, now.

Kagan says: Okay, now I got something  
to show you.

He takes a slip of wood to make a  
needle, waxes up the handline for  
a thread — sews the sail up smaller,  
sews a reef in it.

Wind says: What you doing?

Kagan says: You keep watching.

Kagan puts the sail up now, bears away  
to the northward for the gong.

But oh, the wind is watching, now.  
The wind backs north-northeast.  
Kagan can't hold his course, now.

Kagan says: Okay, then. He brings  
the boat about;  
Now he's steering east.

The wind says: You're heading out  
to sea.

Kagan says: I'm not afraid of water.  
I'll come about, bye and bye,  
when I can fetch that gong.

The wind says: I'll veer on you;  
I'll go east again.

Kagan says: You go ahead. Then I can  
hold my course again.

The wind says: I'll back.

Kagan says: You back too far, and  
you'll have to clear. You know that.  
I can keep ahead of you.

Wind says: You may be smarter, but  
I'm stronger. You watch.  
Wind gets bigger, blows harder.

Finally there's too much wind.

Sail says: I can't do it.

Kagan says: I know that. Thank you.

He takes the sail in, and the dory  
goes — drifting.

Kagan takes the sail off the yard.  
He pulls it 'round him: Now, you  
keep me warm.

The wind says: He can't keep you warm.

Wind snatches off north-by-east:  
I'll freeze you.

Kagan says: I'm not afraid of cold.  
But Kagan is afraid. He doesn't know  
what to do.

But oh, the wind is working, now;  
the wind brings ice and snow,  
The wind blows long and long and black.

Kagan says: I'm dying. Sail,  
keep me warm.  
Sail says: I can't do it, Peter.

Kagan dying, and the wind blows.

Kagan, Kagan, Kagan,  
Turn thee now to me;  
Turn thy back unto the wind  
And all the weary, windy sea.

Kagan, Kagan, Kagan,  
Lay thee down to sleep,  
For I do come to comfort thee,  
All and thy dear body keep.

So Kagan lies down in the bottom  
of the boat, and tries not to be  
afraid of the dying.

And he dreamed of her then,  
of his wife.  
He dreamed she was coming to him.  
He heard a great calling down the  
wind, and he lifted his head,  
and he saw her coming.  
Over the rail of the dory she came,  
and laughing, to his arms.

And all in the night and the storm  
they did lay, and the wind and the sea  
went away.

And in the morning they found him,  
asleep, with the sail wrapped  
'round him.  
And there was a seal lying with him,  
there, curled over him like a  
blanket —  
and the snow was upon the seal.

Lug rig = single yard crossing the mast  
fore-and-aft, the sail usually loose-  
footed and always sets on one side of  
the mast. The "standing lug" or  
"North Sea" lug was traditional for  
many small boats on this coast.

Gong-buoy = as opposed to a bell-buoy,  
which has only one bell and tone, the  
gong-buoy has four discs, hung upside  
down, one above the other, and clap-  
pers for each. Gives a very distinct-  
ive ring, and can therefore be set in  
the same area as a bell-buoy.

Backing = wind shifting against the sun,  
or counter-clockwise, as opposed to  
the normal "veering" clockwise.

Kagan's wind was backing all day;  
he should have gotten worried long  
before he did.

Brings the boat about = he was downwind  
of the buoy; he had to tack, or beat  
up to it, zig-zag.

Fetch = reach the objective in one tack.

Notes by Gordon Bok

\* \* \* \* \*

(Editor's note: Gordon writes: "Some of  
the written words differ from the sung  
or said words, probably. What I wrote  
down was the proper way it should go.")

For their help on the various choruses,  
our thanks to: Ann Muir, Allyn Fenn,  
Chris Fenn, Noel Stookey, Caroline Paton,  
and Sandy Paton.)

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