

In Memorium

by Mansel Davies

When writing about Stan Rogers, it can be hard to separate the man from his music. Stan's music and its influence had reached hundreds of performers and millions of listeners.

Stan, the man, had to me, a very distinctly different bearing when he was out of the public eye. He and brother Garnet used our Bragg Creek home as a resting and battery charging centre between stages of their Western tours.

There was at those times, very little talk of music. I don't believe that Stan opened his guitar case more than once in four years. That night sticks in my memory.

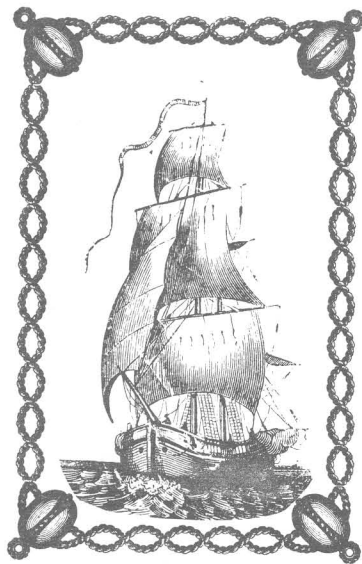
It was cold and quiet outside, warm and quiet inside. Stan had just completed "The Last Watch". He had tried it out on Al Rogers, his father, and as soon as he arrived at our house had wanted to sing it for us. I think that both Stan and Garnet regarded this song as one of the finest yet. I know that Al was intensely moved by the song and that was an indication of its quality. The Rogers are a tightly-meshed family.

Stan and Garnet's stay at the house was always easy. I think the fact that there was a certain anachronistic ambience to the house provided much common ground. Comparing photos of our children took the place of comparing the various guitar tunings we knew. Stan was a man whose value system differed from the contemporary norm; faith, hope and charity abounded in Stan Rogers.

He was a man of voracious appetites for learning, Scotch, home-cooked meals, good conversation and any snippet of information which would add to the already wonderfully accurate portrayals of people in song.

Many of those needs would be satisfied around the dining table or, just as often, the kitchen table. The Ballantine bottles

have witnessed many scenes; this bear of a man with tears rolling down his cheeks as he recalled the pleasure of singing with Tom Paxton; indignation when we, his hosts, were the target of idle gossip; laughter when recalling how he outgrew the school bully and paid him back tenfold what he had earlier received; and concern for her brother when he missed being with his wife. Stan felt each emotion intensely.



We all miss him. Some for what he had done and given so far; others were eagerly anticipating what he would have done. I miss him as a kindred spirit, and suddenly my friends are more precious.

To all his friends, a message from his parents: "Stan celebrated life. We will be happy again. Stan wouldn't want it any other way." (Al and Valerie Rogers, June 1983)