

Joan Baez - Joan Baez (1960)

Written by bluelover

Thursday, 10 June 2010 10:52 - Last Updated Monday, 20 February 2017 14:20

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01. *Silver Dagger (traditional)* - 2:29
 02. *East Virginia (traditional)* - 3:40
 03. *Fare Thee Well (traditional)* - 3:17
 04. *House Of The Rising Sun (traditional)* - 2:53
 05. *All My Trials (traditional)* - 4:36
 06. *Wildwood Flower (traditional)* - 2:33
 07. *Donna Donna (music: Sholom Secunda; original Yiddish lyric: Aaron Zeitlin; English translation: Arthur Keveess & Teddi Schwartz)* - 3:10
 08. *John Riley (traditional)* - 3:49
 09. *Rake And Rambling Boy (traditional)* - 1:55
 10. *Little Moses (traditional)* - 3:27
 11. *Mary Hamilton (traditional)* - 5:54
 12. *Henry Martin (traditional)* - 4:11
 13. *El Preso Número Nueve (Los Hermanos Cantoral)* - 2:46
- Bonuses:*
14. *Girl Of Constant Sorrow (Previously Unreleased Verse)* - 1:42
 15. *I Know You Rider (Previously Unreleased Verse)* - 3:42
 16. *John Riley (Previously Unreleased Verse)* - 4:22

Personnel:

- Joan Baez

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- Fred Hellerman - guitar on (5,6,7,8,9,10,13)

At the time of its release, Joan Baez's debut album was something of a revelation. The folk music revival was beginning to gather steam, stoked on the popular side by artists such as the Kingston Trio and the Easy Riders, as well as up-and-coming ensembles such as the Highwaymen, and on the more intense and serious side by the Weavers. The female singers on

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the scene were mostly old-time, veteran activist types like Ronnie Gilbert and Malvina Reynolds, who was in her sixties. And then along comes this album, by a 19-year-old who looked more like the kind of coed every mother dreamt her son would come home with, displaying a voice from heaven, a soprano so pure and beguiling that the mere act of listening to her -- forget what she was singing -- was a pleasure. Baez's first album, made up primarily of traditional songs (including a startling version of "House of the Rising Sun"), was beguiling enough to woo even conservative-leaning listeners. Accompanied by the Weavers' Fred Hellerman and a pair of session singers, Baez gives a fine account of the most reserved and least confrontational aspects of the folk revival, presenting a brace of traditional songs (most notably "East Virginia" and "Mary Hamilton") with an urgency and sincerity that makes the listener feel as though they were being sung for the first time, and opening with a song that was to become her signature piece for many years, "Silver Dagger." The recording was notable at the time for its purity of sound, but, like a lot of Vanguard CDs issued in the 1980s, needed a serious remastering job, which it finally got in 2001, some 41 years after its original release -- gone are most of the hiss and background noise that marred the original CD, and Baez's voice soars with an awesome purity of "Fare Thee Well," "House of the Rising Sun," and "All My Trials," and the guitar accompaniment on "Wildwood Flower," among other tracks, comes through with greater richness and clarity. The album has also been augmented with the presence of three bonus tracks: "Girl of Constant Sorrow" and "I Know You Rider," which are as good as anything on the original LP, and the uncut version of "John Riley" (which also appears in its original shortened form) with its complete complement of verses. Nicely packaged and annotated, the August 2001 reissue CD is the way to hear and own this album. ---Bruce Eder, AMG

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