

Clearing - Clearing (1973)

Written by bluelover

Monday, 04 August 2014 20:23 - Last Updated Wednesday, 21 September 2016 08:46

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01. *Morning Has Broken* (Leon Maleson) - 2:24 02. *Morning Light* (Vici Frazer) - 4:00 03. *Sunshine Man* (Sara Benson) - 2:36 04. *She's Leavin'* (Sara Benson) - 2:48 05. *Greyhound Bus Song* (Joan Minkoff) - 3:47 06. *The First Time* (Jeff Brewer, Joan Minkoff) - 3:26 07. *The Church Where We Got Married* (Jeff Brewer) - 2:42 08. *Eve* (Jeff Brewer) - 2:42 09. *Seth* (Jeff Brewer) - 2:00 10. *When I Was A Young Boy* (Leeds Brewer) - 4:06 11. *My Father* (Sara Benson) - 3:42 12. *Clearing* (Joan Minkoff) - 4:41 - Sara Benson - vocals, flute - Joan Minkoff - vocals, piano, harpsichord, guitar, dulcimer - Jeff Brewer - vocals, guitar, banjo, mandolin + - Leeds Brewer - vocals, guitar - Vici Frazer - vocals, guitar - David Levine - guitar, vocals - Leon Maleson - cello

It's amazing, really, how often in life we do things with never a thought that someday we will be asked to explain ourselves. Case in point - "Clearing". In the 1970s, our little trio - Joan, Sarah and Jeff - performed throughout New England at a large variety of venues - often in Unitarian churches for Sunday services and other gatherings.

By 1973 we had expanded our interests and repertoire to the point where we wanted to make another record - of our own material - to be called simply "Clearing". We hadn't really enjoyed the "Ace Recording" experience, and besides we were low on cash, so we decided to record this one on our own. We managed to find some war-surplus recording equipment, and by this time Joan and I were living in the big house with its giant library room - perfect as an ad-hoc studio. Most of the recording took place there, with our friend Tom Rothschild at the rudimentary controls. It was an unlikely setting - with people coming and going and pauses as airplanes flew overhead - but we had the advantages of ignorance, enthusiasm and naivete. Some cuts were done at other locations - notably at a church we found in Waltham that had fantastic acoustics. For a very reasonable fee, we got to use it for a couple of evenings, late enough to avoid serious traffic noises. In the spirit of the times, we invited several friends and family members to participate on this record, as noted on the track list. The album had a pressing of 2000, most of which were sold at performances and through the UJA. Clearing continued on until about 1976.

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After Clearing, we pursued various interests. Joan Faber had a long career as a singer-pianist performing standards in various nightclubs in the Boston-Cambridge area. She is currently the head of the sheet music Department of Johnson String Instrument in Newton. Jeff Brewer developed an interest in rock climbing in the 1980s, and invented a treadmill-like machine for climbing called the Treadwall. He is currently partners in the company that manufacturers this device. Joan and Jeff still live on the big-house property with members of their extended family. Sara Benson moved from the Boston area to Charlemont, a western-Massachusetts town with an active alternative life-style population. She became an important and much-loved member of that community. In 2008 Sara passed away. Her loss is sorely felt by her friends and family. ---
Jeff Brewer

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