

2019

## Remembering Phil Ochs: a conversation between Sonny Ochs and Maurie Mulheron

Maurie Mulheron  
mmulheron@nswtf.org.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/ccs>

---

### Recommended Citation

Mulheron, Maurie, Remembering Phil Ochs: a conversation between Sonny Ochs and Maurie Mulheron, *Counterculture Studies*, 2(1), 2019, 95-136. doi:10.14453/ccs.v2.i1.16

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library:  
research-pubs@uow.edu.au

---

# Remembering Phil Ochs: a conversation between Sonny Ochs and Maurie Mulheron

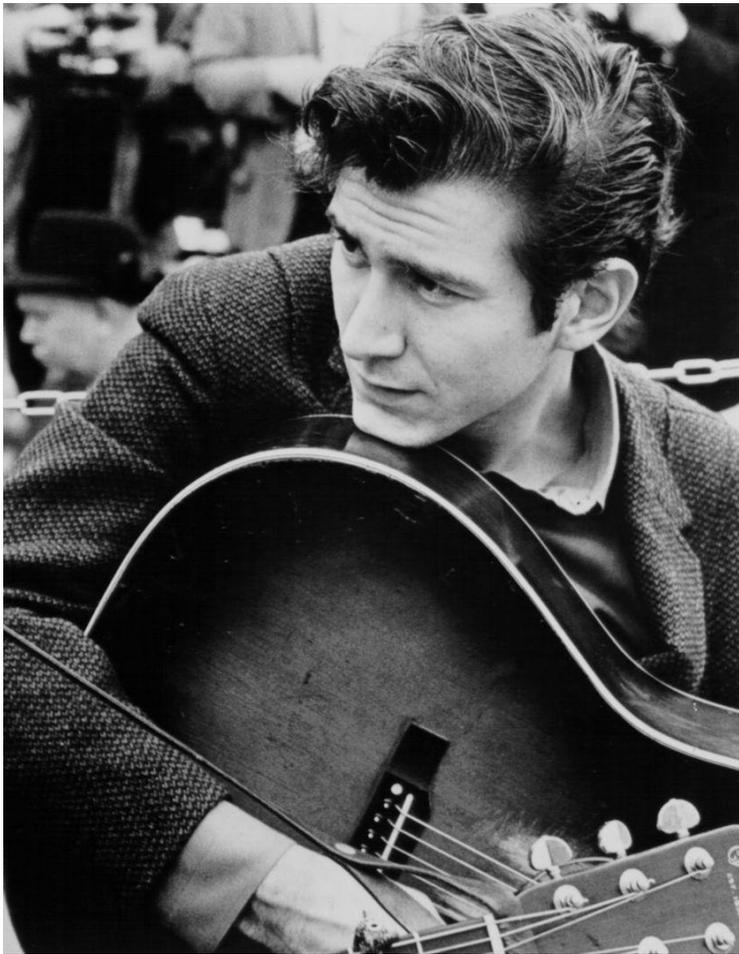
## Abstract

I had first met Sonny Ochs during her visit to Australia many years ago after she saw a production of a musical biography I had written about Pete Seeger. Phil Ochs had been mentioned in the show. Chatting backstage, we immediately connected. I had the honour of then performing in some of the *Phil Ochs Songs Nights*, at Sonny's invitation, along with other musicians. For over 30 years Sonny Ochs has been responsible for keeping the songs of Phil Ochs alive. She has done this primarily through the enormously successful *Phil Ochs Song Nights* that she produces regularly throughout the USA and overseas. Many of the artists that perform at these song nights are established and well-known performers. The song nights have led to a renewed interest in the work of Phil Ochs. Many of these musicians, from the established to the emerging, now include the songs of Phil Ochs in their repertoire and have also recorded many of them. What follows is an edited transcript of an interview that I conducted with Sonny over a number of days at her home in upstate New York, during May 2003.

## Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



## Remembering Phil Ochs

A conversation between  
Sonny Ochs and Maurie Mulheron



### Remembering Phil Ochs: a conversation between Sonny Ochs and Maurie Mulheron

---

I had first met Sonny Ochs during her visit to Australia many years ago after she saw a production of a musical biography I had written about Pete Seeger. Phil Ochs had been mentioned in the show. Chatting backstage, we immediately connected. I had the honour of then performing in some of the *Phil Ochs Songs Nights*, at Sonny's invitation, along with other musicians.

For over 30 years Sonny Ochs has been responsible for keeping the songs of Phil Ochs alive. She has done this primarily through the enormously successful *Phil Ochs Song Nights* that she produces regularly throughout the USA and overseas.

Many of the artists that perform at these song nights are established and well-known performers. The song nights have led to a renewed interest in the work of Phil Ochs. Many of these musicians, from the established to the emerging, now include the songs of Phil Ochs in their repertoire and have also recorded many of them.

What follows is an edited transcript of an interview that I conducted with Sonny over a number of days at her home in upstate New York, during May 2003.

Maurie Mulheron

---



*Recorded June 2003, Middleburgh, NY, USA*

*© Maurie Mulheron 2011*

### Remembering Phil Ochs: a conversation between Sonny Ochs and Maurie Mulheron

---

MM: Sonny, tell me about the *Phil Ochs Song Nights*.

SO: This [2003] is the twentieth anniversary of the *Song Nights*, quite coincidentally. They started in 1983 at the Speakeasy at Manhattan on MacDougall Street. Somebody had the idea that we get a bunch of people singing the old songs, so we did and it was just total chaos because nobody was really in charge [Laughs]. It was an absolute disaster. And it went for a long, long time. The second one, you know the Speakeasy was a collective of musicians, so this guy said,

'Let's do it again!' because the first one was so successful and I said, 'OK' and I thought he was in charge.

MM: And you were involved from the start?

SO: Yeah, well, sort of. I said, 'Yeah, let's do it', and I would recommend names. I thought that this person was in charge. And the second year I said, 'Well, could I have so and so in?' and he said, 'Sure'. He never said no, so I began to realise he really wasn't in charge. The second year I went down and I was MC for a while and it just went on for ever and there were a whole bunch more performers and I'm like going home before it's even over! The third year, by that time I'd started running the open night at Folk City around the corner, and I thought I'm moving it over here and I'm in charge and I'm going to choose the performers.

MM: At the famous Gerde's Folk City in West Village, New York.

SO: Yeah, and I had quite a few famous performers there in 1985, the one where I had Eric Andersen, Tom Paxton, Dave van Ronk, Christine Lavin and Rod MacDonald, Happy Traum and on and on. It was quite an adventure. And in those days we were only singing Phil's songs. And this went on at Folk City the following year. It was once a year in those days. Now it's a dozen or more a year, we could literally do this every weekend if we wanted because people keep asking for it. It's become a very popular thing and also I changed the format. Now each performer does one of Phil's songs and one of his/her/their own and that way showing how the writing is different today. There are people writing very beautiful songs and it adds much more variety to the show. It just has become fascinating. I have a core group of seven performers who do almost every show and that would be Magpie, Kim and Reggie Harris, Pat Humphries, Greg Greenway, Sonia, Tom Prasada-Rao and David Roth –

that's my core group which is really impressive – they are all amazing performers and writers and each place we go, we pick up one or two regional performers and include them in the family.

MM: Are you finding you are getting people to them who don't know much about Phil, and Phil's music is actually reaching new audiences, rather than just a nostalgic trip for people who already know about Phil?

SO: Yes. In the old days it was interesting. If you looked at the audience it was mostly grey-haired old Lefties, you know, a very sentimental thing, 'good old days' kind of thing. Now the audiences are getting younger and younger and we are getting teenagers coming in and it's a big difference. And as you said, it is introducing people to Phil's music but also I think some people come because of the performers I have, some people come because of Phil's name, some people come because they just go to that club and that club happens to have those particular performances. So we are definitely picking up new performers, there is no question about that.

MM: There's got to be something about how Phil's songs, the lyrics, still resonate with . . .

SO: That's a bit scary. I mean, some of the songs you'd think could have been written last night, *Cops of the World*, I think, should be our national anthem, *And we'll find you a leader that you can elect / Those treaties we signed were a pain in the neck*. Was that written last night or what?

MM: Well, I was thinking of when I had to take my shoes off at the airport, Phil's lines about the American imprisoned by his own paranoia. We were on orange alert in Washington last week.

SO: Yes it's amazing. And *There But for Fortune*, the last verse: *Show me the ruins of the buildings once so tall*. We did that too and, *Power and Glory*, with the fourth verse he never recorded.

MM: He's been described as a topical songwriter but it struck me that he had a universality that took him beyond the immediate, didn't he?

SO: Unfortunately I don't think he realised that his songs would be topical 30 or 40 years later.

MM: So they were just written for the time.

SO: Well, maybe he thought they were at the time, but they certainly weren't.

MM: Where did his music sensibilities come from, because he has strong melody lines, unorthodox chord progressions?

SO: OK, his musical influences were, he liked country music, early rock and roll and classical which he learnt to play on the clarinet, and, for example, if he takes a song in the key of G, the main changes that he would use in G would be B minor or a B7 and he would also throw in an A, which normally you might not. . .

MM: So many of his melodies are really distinctive, so it's not just the words but his music too. It's so strong. What about the early days? How did he get started?

SO: The early days, well, he was a very introverted person. He kept to himself a lot. He was shy and moved around a lot which was horrible for him because he had a horrible time making friends. So he kept very much to himself and he did writing, he loved to write, and he went to the movies non-stop – he was just an addict, and if allowed to go every night, he would have.

MM: Who were his movie heroes?

SO: A really bizarre combination, John Wayne, Audie Murphy, people you'd never expect.

MM: So he had a real love of popular culture from the start.

SO: Oh, very much so. So he started out actually writing stories. When he was in high school he actually won an award, first prize in a short story contest. Not political back then, no politics in our family, no politics discussed. Then he went to a military school of all places and graduated with John Dean who was involved in the Nixon Watergate scandal and graduated with Michael Goldwater, who was Barry Goldwater's son. Barry Goldwater actually gave him his diploma! Really bizarre. But when he got to college, just by chance, he had a room-mate named Jimmy Glover whose father was a socialist and a union guy and very well-read, and he would go to their house for dinner and he picked up a lot of politics there.

MM: They called themselves *The Singing Socialists*, didn't they?

SO: [Laughs] Yes, that's what they called themselves at first. Jim actually taught Phil how to play guitar.

MM: Tell me the story about that first guitar.

SO: Well, the first, the Kay guitar, he won because he made a bet with Jim in the 1960 election. Phil bet Jim that Kennedy would win and Jim said, no chance, Nixon was going to get it. So he got his first guitar, a \$35 Kay, a piece of junk and that's how he started.

MM: And then they started performing as *The Sundowners*.

SO: Yes, they performed briefly. Jim was the most laid-back person on the face of the earth. I've never met anyone who was so laid-back! Phil would write some songs and tell Jim, 'OK, you have to learn these by the weekend. We'll perform them.' But he was so laid-back, it frustrated people.

MM: So what did Phil do then? How did he break into the music scene?

SO: What happened was, he was playing at a place in Cleveland called Farragher's, which was a little back room place, and Jim had quit school and gone to New York City and this just happened to be the early sixties and things were starting to happen. And Jim says, 'Phil, you've got to come here, this is where it's happening'. So Phil, after his third year of college, quit school, because he was majoring in journalism and they were censoring what he wrote because he was very political and Ohio State was a right-wing school. And he couldn't write, so what was the point in majoring in journalism if he couldn't write? So, he followed Jim to New York City and there were a lot of places there where they passed the hat or a basket, where the performers never got paid by the owners. They arrived to play; they'd come in and do a set

MM: Folk performers mainly?

SO: Yes, and they would come in off the street, play a set, pass the basket around. If the audience liked you they would put some money in the basket. There was one on Third Street called the Third Side and Phil used to go there all the time. And the owner of the Third Side loved Phil so much, loved his music, and so did the audience love his music and with pass the hat, the owner said I guarantee that you'll make at least \$20 a night which sounds ridiculous right now with today's prices but in those days Phil was renting an apartment for \$110 a month. So \$20

a night was not so horrible. Paid his rent. So that's how he started out, with passing the hat and then he went over to Folk City and Mike Porco who was running it then. And Mike in those days would hire somebody for a week or two and Phil got steady work for two weeks and that's where he really got started in the Village.

MM: Tell me some of his contemporary performers.

SO: There was Eric Andersen, Dave Van Ronk, Tom Paxton, Dylan, Pat Sky, Buffy Sainte-Marie. There was a whole scene down there and a lot of passing the hat.

MM: Peter, Paul & Mary?

SO: Peter, Paul and Mary were a tiny bit later. I remember going to see them. I had never been to the Village, and I had a cousin who lived in the Village and I said, 'I want to see some folk music, where should I go?' He said, 'Why don't you go to The Bitter End? There's a trio playing there who are pretty good.' So I went to The Bitter End and saw Peter, Paul and Mary before their first album came out, very early on.

MM: What were some of the issues that Phil started to write about then? We are talking early sixties now, aren't we?

SO: Yeah, the early sixties. Well, of course the Cuban missile crisis, he got very involved in civil rights and also in union stuff. He and Eric Andersen drove down to where the mines were .

MM: . . . Kentucky . . .

SO: Yeah, Kentucky, where they say 'mining is a hazard in Hazard, Kentucky'. [Laughs].

MM: I noticed in Phil's FBI file a reference to him performing in Kentucky.

SO: Yeah, but they didn't really get hot and heavy on him until '68, during the Democratic Convention, that's when the real surveillance started.

MM: His first really big concert was in Carnegie Hall, of all places.

SO: 1966. January of 1966. He sold out Carnegie Hall, which was amazing and I'll never forget. I went there with my mother and the kids and my grandmother, and we were so proud. There we were, fourth row, centre, and I looked around and the place was packed. And I felt like saying, 'This is my brother, this is my brother!', you know, and I turned to my grandmother and I said, 'Grandma, what do you think? Isn't this wonderful?' And she looked around and she said, 'You know, a barber could make a good penny here'. [Laughs]

MM: Brought everyone back to Earth. [Laughs] Phil went on to record his first album.

SO: His first album was actually a quarter of an album on Vanguard Records. It was called *New Folks 2*. He was on there with Eric Andersen, a woman called Lisa Kindred and another blues guy, I think his name was Bob Jones, and they each had four or five songs on that album.

MM: Before *All the News That's Fit to Sing*?

SO: This was before that. That was the first full album.

MM: There were some terrific songs on that first album that are still being sung on your *Song Nights*.

SO: I think it is amazing that little brown songbook [*Songs of Phil Ochs*] that came out I think in '63 or '64, and if you look at the songs written by then, *Power and Glory*, *I Ain't Marching*, some of his greatest hits. And that's another funny story, about *Power and Glory*. Mother and I went to visit him in his apartment in Greenwich Village and the whole time we were sitting there he sat there playing the first four chords of *Power and Glory* over and over and over and over again. I said, 'Phil what are you doing?' After a while, it had got annoying. And he said, 'I am writing the greatest song I'll ever write'. I said, 'Well, what are the words?' And he said, 'I haven't written them yet'. I said, 'Well, how do you know it's going to be a great song?' He said, 'I just know'.

MM: *Power and Glory*, of course, has been compared to Woody Guthrie's song.

SO: Yeah, *This Land is Your Land*.

MM: There's a verse that I didn't know existed, a wonderful verse that wasn't recorded.

SO: I can see why he didn't record it. It was very powerful and yet it could have been written last night: *Our land is still troubled by those who have to hate; they twist away our freedom, they twist away our fate; fear is their weapon and treason is their cry; we can stop them if we try.*

MM: People say that others went on and sought stardom, found it, like Bob Dylan, but Phil and Dylan seemed to have a love/hate relationship. There was that famous incident where Dylan threw Phil out of a car and screamed at him, 'You're nothing but a journalist, Ochs!'

SO: That's because Phil had the nerve to say he didn't like the song that Dylan had just written. He said it wasn't as good as his other stuff.

MM: But Phil still saw himself as a singer-activist, didn't he? He didn't separate the two, do you think?

SO: Oh yeah, he was very political. He would give up paying gigs to go to a rally.

MM: Jerry Rubin tells of the time when he gave up a commercial gig and flew out west to perform at . . .

SO: . . . that was for the Free Speech thing at Berkeley.

MM: Can we go to his relationship with people like Rubin and Abbie Hoffman and that whole Yippie movement?

SO: He was one of the founders of the Yippies with them— he was actually at the press conference they called at the Americana Hotel [New York] to announce the formation of the Yippies, the Youth International Party.

MM: And there's a lot of stuff in Phil's FBI file about that.

SO: I'm sure there is, I'm sure there is.

MM: In '68, at the Chicago Democratic Convention, a whole lot of anti-war activists gathered – Phil was part of the group that organised that.

SO: Oh yes, very much so, and he was very disappointed at the small number of people there. They wanted hundreds of thousands there but people stayed away because they were afraid, and as it turned out they were right because it was a police riot, the Chicago police

were absolutely horrible. And Mayor Daley, he certainly wasn't going to do anything to hold the police back.

MM: And of course that led to the famous Chicago Eight Conspiracy Trial. The pig, nominating the pig for President. . .

SO: Yes, Pigasus.

MM: . . . tell us about Phil's involvement with nominating the pig for President of the Untied States.

SO: Well, he bought . . . there are two stories on that. He had a story and Abbie had one. Evidently they bought two pigs. The first one wasn't good enough.

MM: Wasn't ugly enough or something.

SO: Wasn't ugly enough [laughs]. Street theatre was just what it was.

MM: Powerful theatre. Seriously, the Chicago, as you call it, police riots had a profound effect on Phil.

SO: Very much. I would say that that was the point when he started to go downhill. It was very difficult especially when Nixon got elected twice. It was very difficult because we were such idealists back then and we honestly thought that through the system we could actually change things. First we had Eugene McCarthy speaking out against the war and then Robert Kennedy came up on the sidelines. And I really think that had Robert Kennedy won it would have made a big difference, but of course he got shot. And it was really a slap in the face, it was Humphrey and Nixon running politics as usual, nothing was different, and this was after months of really thinking that we were going to get a candidate in there who was against the

war and who was going to stop the war, and win on that issue, and that we as activists could really make it happen.

MM: Phil's sang his song, *Crucifixion*, for Robert Kennedy on a plane. Do you know the story?

SO: Yes, I do. He went down to DC with Jack Newfield, who was a writer for the *New York Post*, which in those days was a good paper. And they actually sat in the Senate chamber when Robert Kennedy stood up and gave his first speech saying that the war was wrong and that his brother had been wrong.

MM: And Robert Kennedy had changed his own position on the war. . .

SO: Yes, so it was a very momentous day, and it just happened that they were on the same shuttle flying back to New York that evening and that's when Jack Newfield said to Phil, 'Sing Robert your *Crucifixion* song', and Phil said, 'Well, I don't have a guitar'. And Newfield said, 'Sing it anyhow'. So sitting in the back of a shuttle to New York he sang *Crucifixion* to Robert Kennedy who part way through the song realised it was about his brother. And it was a very emotional moment and I'm sure it was a very proud moment for Phil.

MM: It's an extraordinarily complex song because it operates on so many levels, not just JFK.

SO: I know, it's Jesus and Martin . . . when Martin Luther King was assassinated Phil and Richie Havens had a gig at Westbury Theatre ([NY] and they were debating whether to cancel the concert. Martin Luther King was murdered on Tuesday and they were playing that Saturday. And they debated whether to cancel the concert or just go ahead and go on with it. And they decided to go on with it and Phil sang *Crucifixion* that night and dedicated it to Martin Luther King. Again it was very powerful.

MM: After '68, during the Nixon years, what did Phil do?

SO: Not much, I think he did more travelling than anything else. He travelled all over. He travelled down to South America. That was another hard thing, he met Victor Jara, quite by accident. He went down to Chile, he and Jerry Rubin and Stew Albert.

MM: It's an extraordinary story, because of all people to run into!

SO: Yes, he ran into Victor Jara in the street and either Victor was holding a guitar or Phil, I don't remember, but anyhow they started talking to each other and Victor took Phil and whoever was with him into the mines to play for the miners and Phil played *I Ain't Marchin Anymore* and Victor translated for the miners that was quite an experience – he really liked him – so, when Victor Jara was murdered in the stadium by Pinochet's thugs, Phil was just devastated by that.

MM: I think it was in 1974, wasn't it, that Phil organised the concert, on the anniversary of the coup

SO: Yes, it was to help Chilean refugees. By that time Phil had started into a pattern. He was manic depressive, and every Spring he would just go nuts, with total energy, working eighteen hours a day working on whatever it was. One year it was the Allende thing to raise money for the Chileans. Another year it was the *War Is Over* Concert in Central Park. What he was trying to do the last year and it fell apart, he still had that manic energy, was to try to get Frank Sinatra to do a series of concerts and raise all kinds of money for the anti-war movement or whatever movement was on and I guess he had spoken to Colonel Parker, Elvis's manager, and he had him convinced that he had something going. Really, totally bizarre, because Phil, he was off

the wall. He was crazy. That was the summer of '75. His manic stage just went over the top. He was totally out of control.

MM: Tell us about the John Butler Train idea.

SO: This was a character that he made up. He called himself by this name. I don't understand. I mean, it was obviously a part of the mental illness.

MM: Undiagnosed at that point?

SO: Well, it was obvious that something was wrong. My father was manic depressive so we knew the symptoms, knew what it was. And Phil just started calling himself John Train and saying that John Train had murdered Phil Ochs. It was very upsetting because it was so bizarre. What happens with manic depression, you have long, long periods of depression, quiet, and then all of a sudden you get these rises where you just go out of control and you just start doing absurd things, with total manic energy where you just don't stop and hardly sleep. And then when you come down from that you crash back down to when you are just quiet. And the whole summer of '75 he was doing all kinds of crazy things and I don't know where he went. I got a call at the end of 1975 from Phil saying could he come and stay for a couple of days. And I said sure and that went into a few months until he killed himself and the whole time he was with us he was quiet. He wasn't interested in doing anything. I had a friend whose brother booked a small club in Manhattan and he asked Phil if he wanted to do a gig there and he said, 'No I don't think I can do it, I don't have any new material.' I said 'people are happy to hear your old stuff' and he said, 'No, can't do it.' Sis Cunningham got him an offer to do a festival in Europe. He turned that down. He turned everything down.

MM: Was the depression related to 'writer's block'?

SO: No, he hadn't been writing but he said he didn't know what to write about. I said, 'Write about the way you feel,' but he said, 'Nah, not gonna do it'.

MM: He had been very badly injured in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in '73.

SO: Yes, he was mugged and they choked him and they hurt his vocal chords and he lost his top three notes of his range and that really, really upset him.

MM: And he never got that back?

SO: Nope. So in combination from coming down from the manic, having lost his voice, not writing, there were so many factors at work.

MM: What about the FBI, the phone taps?

SO: I don't think that would have bothered him. I think that would have made him feel important; you know, important enough that they were coming after you, looking at you.

MM: Some say that that was one of the things that affected him.

SO: I don't think so – I don't think that bothered him.

MM: It was purely the illness?

SO: It was definitely the illness and also he was drinking a lot. Not when he was with me he didn't have a drop because I don't keep alcohol in the house, so he never had a drop when he was with me, not in the last few months, but before that he was drinking pretty heavily.

MM: Someone described Phil as being close both politically and artistically to Woody Guthrie. He visited Woody, didn't he?

SO: Yes, he did in high school but Woody was pretty far gone by that time.

MM: It must have been important to him to make the connection. I didn't realise that *One More Parade* was written so early, it was actually '60 or '61 when he wrote that, even before the Vietnam War. After his overtly political albums, he recorded *Pleasures of the Harbour*. That was different, wasn't it?

SO: That was the fourth album. Very different because he had orchestration...

MM: . . . and thematically and lyric wise . . .

SO: Right, it wasn't really political.

MM: What prompted him to change tack like that?

SO: I guess everybody else was doing that – going with groups and that . . .

MM: Had he moved out to California by that stage?

SO: Yes.

MM: He was disappointed that it never got the critical acclaim at the time that it deserved.

SO: Well, out of all of his LPs, *Pleasures of the Harbour* was the best seller.

MM: Recorded on A&M.

SO: Yes, it was his first A&M album.

MM: Tell us about the gold lame suit.

SO: I hated that, that was crap, sorry, that was really awful.

MM: What was he trying to do?

SO: Well, he had this thing that if he could get Che Guevara's mind into Elvis Presley's head, than Elvis would become political and this would really affect millions of people and would really help the cause of the anti-war people, so I guess he decided that if Elvis wouldn't do it he would become Elvis. [Laughs] The whole thing was so silly.

MM: It's almost as if, as it was after Chicago, in despair, he was frantically trying something new.

SO: I don't know. I thought the whole thing was silly.

MM: What about the *Gunfight at Carnegie Hall* recording?

SO: Well, that was two concerts and the first one sold out so they booked a second concert and the first concert people were booing him because they didn't like what he was doing. They came to hear Phil's songs and he was singing *Give My Love to Rose* and stuff like that. He was like Johnny Cash.

MM: And he had a band on stage too.

SO: So he had a band on stage, it was electric, it was bizarre. And after the first concert was over we went with him to a little tea shop around the corner, the next block over, and some fans found him there. And they came in and were really annoyed. They wanted their money

back. And he said, 'How about if I get you into the second show for free?' And they said, 'All right.' And he told them to go around to the box office and of course the box office didn't listen to them. So they came back again and they said the box office wouldn't let them in. And at this point Phil had had a couple to drink and he went around and tried to talk to the people in the box office. They closed the window and he put his fist through the window, cut his thumb really badly. The whole thing was bizarre. At the second show the union had a time limit –it had to be done by 11 or whatever time so they shut down the lights and the sound. And he's standing on the stage yelling 'give us the power', meaning electric power but then it became a different meaning. Evidently the second audience was a little bit more with him than the first audience. I never got it. I went home. After we had our tea, I left. I wasn't interested in seeing another show like that.

MM: Was this part of his illness? Was he writing them?

SO: I don't know. I doubt if he was writing then.

MM: Because there was a time when he couldn't seem to develop new songs.

SO: He wasn't writing then. The last things that he really wrote were for his *Rehearsals for Retirement* album, which he wrote right after Chicago. And all of those songs are downers. They're all . . . *Doesn't Lenny Live Here Anymore?* Stuff like that. *Rehearsals for Retirement*. They're all very down songs. I think he explained that that album had a theme that basically was the death of America.

MM: He regarded himself as a patriot didn't he?

SO: Oh yeah.

- MM: How did he define patriotism, particularly when you look at the America today with the flags everywhere?
- SO: See the thing is, we have the mindless patriots: 'my country right or wrong', 'love it or leave it' but you had the other kinds of patriots, like Phil, like most of us are, who realise it is a great country but it has flaws and you work to correct the flaws and the injustices that exist here that need to be fixed. And this is what he saw, he saw the side of it of the little man, the person who wasn't being represented, and you need to help the union people, help the poor people.
- MM: He wasn't averse to being critical of the Left, of the Labor movement. I'm thinking of his song, *Links in the Chain*.
- SO: Because he saw the Labor movement as racist, which it was. You could only get into the union if your uncle was in the union or your father. And the black people had uncles and fathers not in the union, couldn't get in.
- MM: Talking about his songs, what are the songs that keep recurring on the Song Nights, the ones that keep coming up, the evergreens that people keep coming back to.
- SO: Whenever I do a show and I invite to join the seven regulars, it's 'Can I sing *There But for Fortune?*' That's usually the first choice. Can I do *Changes*? What about, *When I'm Gone*, or *I Ain't Marchin?*, but these are all taken.
- MM: *There But For Fortune* was a big hit for Joan Baez and other people have covered it since. That was a real commercial success.

- SO: Peter, Paul & Mary recorded that actually too, later on.
- MM: So, those songs, *Changes*, *When I'm Gone* . . .
- SO: *There But for Fortune*, *Ain't Marching Anymore*, *Power and Glory*, *What's That I Hear*. And then of course the one that I keep telling people to learn, *Chords of Fame*.
- MM: From his ironically titled *Greatest Hits*?
- SO: I believe it was *Greatest Hits*, which actually was, I think, one of his best albums although it wasn't really greatest hits. It was kind of a joke title in that they were all brand new songs. Some of his best songs are on there, I think *Jim Dean of Indiana* is on there, *No More Songs* I think is on there. That's a beautiful song.
- MM: That's got such a melody.
- SO: Haunting melody and very sad.
- MM: What's it saying?
- SO: It's saying 'I'm done'. But the thing that's really odd is that *When I'm Gone* is saying goodbye but you know that he sang *When I'm Gone* as the encore of one of his Carnegie Hall concerts back in the mid '60s.
- MM: So that's one of his earlier songs. It's really a song promoting activism, isn't it?
- SO: It most certainly is. That song has had more influence on more people. I've had people call me, one woman in particular, who was writing a book, and at one point she considered committing suicide and she thought about that song and it stopped her. And she wanted

permission to use the words in the song because it was so pivotal in her life. And there are so many people who had that song at their funerals, or they request that when they die they want it sung, and it is really such a powerful song.

MM: What about *Changes*?

SO: *Changes* was written in Canada, that was the first song he wrote outside of the USA, and I think it probably was written in reaction to his marriage breaking up. And there's a humorous story about that because when you go up to Toronto just about everybody you meet says to you, 'I was with Phil when he was writing *Changes*.' And one of the performers wrote me a note and said, 'You know with all the people who said they were with Phil when he wrote *Changes*, I don't know how the hell he was able to concentrate.' But then I spoke to a DJ up there who had a show a long time on the Canadian broadcasting system, I think he was called Joe Lewis, and he said that actually what happened, he explained, was that when Phil was up there he said when he was going to be on his radio show, when he was hanging on waiting for a line that's when he started writing his songs, at the radio station, and then continued on at different places. So many of those people who say they were there, they could have been but not all at once.

MM: It seems a perfect marriage of melody and lyrics – a beautiful song. What was Phil's favourite?

SO: Whatever it was that was most recent. That's true of most songwriters. They love their new stuff.

MM: *Crucifixion*, he regarded that as his masterpiece.

SO: That was a masterpiece.

MM: When you look at some of the old footage, those tapes, *I Ain't Marching Anymore*, that was the anthem.

SO: That was the anthem, he sang that everywhere. There's more footage of him singing that than of any other song.

MM: OK. *Love Me I'm a Liberal*, in the memorial concert, I've noticed they have left out the verse about Pete Seeger – they replaced that verse.

SO: Who did?

MM: Oscar Brand, I think.

SO: [Laughs] Oscar Brand is in love with Oscar Brand.

MM: He added new words. But I was hoping he'd sing the original, *I go to all the Pete Seeger concerts / He sure gets me singing those songs*, because Pete was in the same concert.

SO: Yes. That's only Oscar Brand who did that. But anyhow, Phil was invited to one of the big marches in Washington, protest marches during the Vietnam War, and he got up to play *Love Me I'm a Liberal*. The next person scheduled to speak was I F Stone who ran a wonderful newspaper, *IF Stone Weekly*, and I F Stone was so incensed by that song, I don't know what he had planned to say originally but all he did was rank out that song and say, 'How dare you put down the liberals! They are on our side.' And he went on and on. He was just flaming.

MM: A case of being too close to the bone, was it?

SO: I don't know but it was really funny to see him go off like that.

MM: In a sense was Phil, himself, more in the liberal tradition than the radical tradition?

SO: I have interviews with him here and there. And if you listen to the interviews, sometimes I think he goes off the deep end on a lot of things. He got carried away and it's funny. I remember at one point when he was hanging out with Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, a lot. They would all get together, and their partners, and talk about the coming revolution. And I said to him one day, 'Phil, get in the car and drive out to Long Island. There's no revolution coming. You guys sit in your ivory tower, you don't have a clue what the rest of the world is like. It's not the way you're imagining it. All your friends are rah rah this and rah rah that. The common everyday people, they're talking about their lives, they couldn't care less.' And that was the problem.

MM: *Draft Dodger Rag*, a real favourite. Recorded by Pete Seeger and Fred Hellerman among others.

SO: Well, it's a great song because it's poking fun at everything. But I used to sing it and would preface it by saying, it doesn't matter whether you are against the draft dodgers or with them, you can either laugh at them or you can laugh with them.

MM: One that I found particularly powerful is *Here's To The State of Mississippi*, which I don't think is covered much now.

SO: Katy Moffatt has it on the compilation CD [*What's That I Hear?: The Songs of Phil Ochs*]. David Roth has been singing it now at our concerts, and it's very interesting because we just had an incident this year [2003] with Trent Lott. They had some kind of party for one of the old racist senators and Trent Lott said, 'Well, if you'd listened to him, we wouldn't be in the mess we

are in now.’ So all of a sudden *Here’s To The State of Mississippi* became relevant again, because that’s where he’s from, from Mississippi.

MM: It’s a song that perhaps doesn’t travel through time as well as some of the others.

SO: Well, they just change it. Somebody sang *Here’s To The State of Richard Nixon*, someone sang *Here’s To The State of Ronald Reagan*.

MM: And Phil did update it during Watergate, didn’t he.

SO: Yeah.

MM: *Outside of a Small Circle of Friends* – that was a hit.

SO: That was put out as a single and was actually a hit in California and some idiot decided that they had to censor it!

MM: Which part was censored? The reference to marijuana?

SO: Smoking marijuana – so they beeped out marijuana – I mean, come on! That added to the surprise instead of taking away from it. Because that was based on an incident that happened in New York City, in Queens. A woman named Catherine Genovese was coming home from work and walking past a lot of apartment houses. And some guy was stalking her with a knife. And he went after her and she screamed and this must have gone on for half an hour before he killed her and lots of people looked out of their windows and didn’t do anything about it. I can understand not going down and taking the chance of being stabbed, but nobody called the cops, nobody did anything. They watched, like they were all watching television. And this poor woman had half an hour of terror before she was finally killed and

39 people admitted to being witnesses to this and didn't do anything. It started with a very serious incident but then he makes fun of, satirises, the way society just looks the other way.

MM: Another song, *Is There Anybody Here . . .*

SO: Oh, I love that one. Sonia [Rutstein] does it.

MM: It was written during the Vietnam time but could have been written now.

SO: Tom Prasada-Rao has just recorded it on his CD.

MM: With Sonia, it's almost her signature tune.

SO: I know! When Gene Shay had his fortieth anniversary celebration in Philadelphia, for 40 years on the radio, that's the song he asked her to sing. Her version of it is so powerful.

MM: Everyone has a favourite Phil song but the strength is that no two people have the same favourite song.

SO: Which is nice. When you read the book *Fahrenheit 451* at the end of the book each person has memorised a novel or Shakespearean play and they walk around reciting it so they don't forget it, each of the performers on the *Phil Ochs Songs Nights* represent a song to me.

MM: What happened to some of the people that Phil travelled with over the years?

SO: It's a shame how many of them are gone now. Dave van Ronk passed away this past year. Tom Paxton is still around and still performing. David Ifshin, the one he went to South America with, actually got up into the Clinton administration, was pretty high up, and he dropped dead. David Blue dropped dead of a heart attack running around Central Park and

he was fairly young when that happened. So many of them are gone. And Jerry and Abbie, of course, are gone.

MM: Abbie took his own life.

SO: And Jerry hit by a car.

MM: The conspiracy theorists say . . .

SO: That Jerry was hit on purpose? I doubt it. I really doubt it.

MM: *Flower Lady* is a beautiful song.

SO: There was a flower lady in *The Village*.

MM: He recorded *Kansas City Bomber* . . .

SO: I LOVE that song! It's just a plain old rock song but the reason I love it . . . and it was kind of a sad thing for him too when he was in Australia. As a matter of fact, they were making a movie about the roller derby and somebody said to him that if you write a theme song for the movie, it'll be in the movie. So he worked on it and sent it back from Australia.

MM: He recorded it with a 'fifties style rock and roll band which was very big in Australia at the time called *Daddy Cool*.

SO: Yeah. And he sent it back and he was so sure that it was going to be in the movie but then they changed their mind and had something else and that was a real slap in the face for him. I loved it. I thought it was really well written for what it was. Another interesting thing was when he was in Africa he went into a studio and fronted an African band with two songs. I

thought that he wrote them both but somebody told me recently she thinks one of them might be a traditional song and one was in Swahili and was in Lingala and he put out a 45 of these two songs back to back, before Paul Simon got the idea, he was the forerunner, but people don't know this.

MM: *Celia...*

SO: *Celia* is a beautiful song and based on a true story. Phil would walk around carrying newspapers and magazines. He read the story in a magazine and created a song about it. He wrote about a reporter who married this Philippine woman and they wouldn't let her leave with him and it was just terrible. But the most interesting one was *William Worthy*. William Worthy was an African American reporter with the Baltimore Sun and he decided he wanted to see Cuba for himself and not go with second-hand stories and he went down to Cuba and on the way back . . .

MM: Are we talking not long after the Cuban revolution?

SO: Right, in the early '60s. Worthy came back and was arrested, arrested basically for coming home without a passport. And there was a big case and they were going to throw him in jail. Phil heard about it and he thought it was the most bizarre thing he had ever heard and he sat down and wrote this song about William Worthy:

*William Worthy isn't worthy to enter our door*

*Went down to Cuba, he's not American anymore*

*But somehow it is strange to hear the State Department say*

*You are living in the free world, in the free world you must stay*

It's a very funny song and what happened was the song caught on and he sang it at all his concerts on college campuses and word got out about this bizarre case. And because of the publicity generated by the song he actually got off because there was enough publicity, enough people complaining about this absurd trial. I actually have a video of him because at one of the Song Nights in Boston, unbeknownst to me, I didn't set it up, someone got up on stage and sang *William Worthy* and when they were through singing the song *William Worthy* walked out on stage and he had about a five minute standing ovation, people stood up and cheered and then he went on to explain, I have a video of this, all about the case and how important Phil's song was and that it really did make a difference. It basically freed him.

MM: It must be a songwriter's dream to write a song where you actually see some tangible effect at the end.

SO: Yeah, that's right. That's really a special song, one that I always consider special. Actually Pete Seeger recorded it, that was *Lou Marsh*. I love that song - I think the chorus is so magnificent.

MM: That's set in New York. . .

SO: . . . set in New York, about a social worker who was trying to break up a gang fight and he got killed.

MM: Jeannie Lewis sings that.

SO: She does. Oh, I love it. You know, human interest stories as you call them.

MM: What would Phil make of George W Bush?

SO: Oh dear, he'd be writing day and night.

MM: Are songwriters writing about the absurdity in America now?

SO: Yeah. Well John McCutcheon has a whole album, *Hail to the Chief* and it's very funny, very anti-government songs, making fun of all aspects of it.

MM: And that other CD, *Hail to the Thief*.

SO: That's a compilation of a lot of people, a lot of good stuff has been written. You've heard Amy Martin's *It's All About Oil*. The tradition lives on.

MM: After Phil died, what was the reaction of people close to him, particularly those fellow singers and songwriters?

SO: We were all shocked. A lot of them felt guilt that they hadn't been there more for him. But I can understand why they weren't. Because in the end, as I said earlier, he was so manic, he was crazy, and was very difficult to be around. And I can understand them keeping him at arm's distance. I had to keep him at arm's distance because when he was crazy that summer he threatened. . . I had some money, I had taken care of his daughter. I had taken her in for a year and my brother Michael had given me some money for emergencies which of course I didn't touch. I opened a bank account for her. And Phil went off the deep end, he called up and he wanted that money. He knew it existed and he wanted the money, and he threatened me and said if I didn't give him the money he would kidnap my son, David. He was crazy, absolutely crazy. And then Michael thought maybe we should talk about putting him in the hospital and Phil got wind of that and he called Michael and said, 'If you commit me, I'll kill you. He meant it. It was no joke. And he was crazy enough to do it. So, he was just impossible

to be around, impossible to deal with and so I can understand why people would come and then go away. Van Ronk came and went away. And so did Paxton. He saw me. I guess he meant to get together with him but never got around to it. The only one who ever did was Jerry Rubin but that was after Phil had crashed. I told you the story the other day about how Phil was down and out and Jerry wanted to send him to his psychologist friend in California and offered to go with him. He would have gone had Phil said OK. He was there for Phil. He was the only one. Michael didn't come to visit.

MM: What's happening to all his material now? His estate?

SO: His daughter has it.

MM: There was talk of there being a docu-drama and talk of a movie wasn't there?

SO: Michael has been talking of a movie since I can remember, with Sean Penn, who in the beginning was too young and now he's too old. I don't know what the hold-up is but for some reason it's just not happening and I don't get involved with that. I do the song rights and make sure the songs are heard, that's my department.

MM: And they are being heard.

SO: Yes! We did it in Sydney and you did it at the Woodford Folk Festival and the songs are still being heard and I am very proud of my track record on that. We're done three mid-west tours, we've been out to California, we're going down to Florida this year.

MM: His songs are still being recorded, aren't they?

SO: By a lot of people. The most wonderful examples are Kim and Reggie Harris who are dynamite musicians. When I first met them they didn't know any of Phil's songs. And they we were doing Song Nights and they wanted to become a part of them. So I gave them an old Joe and Eddie album and they learned *What's That I Hear*. The way Joe and Eddie did it was very different from how anybody else had ever done it. And they sang that the first time they did a Song Night and then they just kept writing more and more songs and they got to the point where they put out their first CD, and what was the title? *In the Heat of the Summer* because that was one of Phil's songs and was the title song on the album. So Phil's affecting people who had never even heard his music and taking them to the other extreme where one of his songs is the title song on the album. And on their most recent album they put *Changes* on it. This is to me success.

And another one, in 1999, through the Folk Alliance, we did a big thing at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, a big tribute to Phil. We did an all day seminar, we had workshops during the day, and in the evening we had a big concert which had a whole slew of names.

MM: Who was there?

SO: Judy Collins, Eric Andersen, Tom Paxton, Janis Ian, a lot of big names, Judy Henske who was an old friend from the 'sixties, another friend from way back. But the point I want to make was that Judy Collins had recorded *In the Heat of the Summer* back in the 'sixties and by coming to this tribute of Phil's and singing again there it reminded her that the song was out there and she did a new recording the following year, *Live at Wolftrap*, and did *In the Heat of the Summer* again. That was the power of having participated and now she's re-recorded the song.

MM: There's Billy Bragg's *I Dreamed I Saw Phil Ochs*, too. Did Dylan ever reconcile with anybody after Phil's death, at all?

SO: Nope, not a word.

MM: And yet they were so often compared and, I suppose, contrasted.

SO: Well, when we did the big benefit, the memorial concert, Michael insisted that we invite him and I said, 'I don't want him there.' We argued and he went ahead and invited him. And to me it was so rotten, he never responded, never sent a condolence card, never phoned, nothing. Just totally blew it off. I have no respect for him.

MM: So the last real contact was at the Chile benefit concert?

SO: Yes, that was it, and they were all drunk that night. That was the most disgusting exhibition I have ever witnessed. I was so embarrassed. They'd been drinking backstage. They had jugs on stage. I mean they were there to do a benefit for people whose lives were in danger and other people who have died and they get up there like a bunch of drunken fools. That to me was sacrilegious, I was very angry that night. To me it spoiled what it was all about.

MM: Phil had so much trouble getting that concert together, didn't he? And Dylan was the last name to be added.

SO: It's a shame that they had to do the star-fucking thing which is what it ended up being. People came because Dylan was there. It was awful. It wasn't a social conscious thing – it was a 'go see Bobby Dylan thing'. I hated that concert.

MM: What's your favourite song? It's an unfair question. I have about 400 in my top 5.

SO: It changes. I go from one to another. I like so many of them. Right now, *Chords of Fame, No More Songs*.

MM: Why *Chords of Fame*?

SO: Because that's a good song. That could so easily be a pop hit if someone would pick it up and record it.

MM: There's been a country version.

SO: Yeah, I like the way Melanie does it – she does it so differently and gives it a very thoughtful rendition. And Mary Gauthier. I don't know if you have heard of Mary Gauthier. She's a really interesting feminist artist who, when we did the Song Night in Nashville in February, I invited her to be in it because she lives there now and she just took it and made it her own song. [Laughs] All her songs are 'slit-your-wrists' songs and she did a 'slit-your-wrist' version. And it was wild, it really was so different. And then you have the other extreme like the way Phil recorded it with the honky tonk piano, and upbeat. But if you listen to the words, that's a sad song about a person who was famous.

MM: Who do you think he was talking about?

SO: Anybody. I don't think it was a particular person. Anybody who gets up there and gets too famous.

MM: There's that line about the troubadour . . .

SO: *God help the troubadour who tries to be a star*. I love the song, the melody, the words. I love *No More Songs*. I love *When I'm Gone*. It is an incredible song. Another one I love which is

not viably commercial because it is seven minutes long and that's *The Party*. That has some of the most, as a poem, I mean it has some of the most beautiful things in there. He just describes different people at a society party. And the whole thing was, *The fire-breathing Rebels arrive at the party early / Their khaki coats are hung in the closet near the fur*, and it's making fun of how they'd invite, this would happen in the 'sixties', the Black Panthers to a social party because it was trendy. It was bizarre. I love the lines about the wallflower, *The wallflower is waiting, she hides behind composure / She'd love to dance and prays that no one asks her*. Just the picture of these people.

MM: The B-side of *Love Me, I'm a Liberal*.

SO: [Laughs] That would be an interesting combination.

MM: What's another song that you particularly like?

SO: Oh, one that I really love is *The Thresher* and it did make a bit of a comeback recently when the Russian submarine went down and never came back. And *The Scorpion Departs* – that's another beautiful melody. Both of these are about nuclear subs that went down and the melodies are just beautiful. *She'll always run silent, she'll always run deep, though the ocean has no pity, and the waves they never sleep*. I love that one.

MM: That's *The Thresher*.

SO: Yeah.

MM: That's on the first album, *All the News That's Fit to Sing*.

SO: Yeah, the first album.

MM: Phil must have had an ear for poetry. In *The Highwayman*, by Alfred Noyes, he actually changes it.

SO: In *The Highwayman* he actually left out several verses and he combined some verses. [Laughs] This is a little 'tidier' than the original but he certainly left out one verse he shouldn't have and that was the one about Tim the ostler listening in the barn but it's beautiful and the melody is just so perfect for the poem.

MM: *The Bells* is one of my favourites, the adaption of the Edgar Allen Poe poem. You mentioned to me a story about Phil going out to look for a guitar, towards the end.

SO: Yeah, because when he came to me he had nothing. He had a truck, a van but in it he had just junk, nothing of value.

MM: He'd lost it all?

SO: Yeah he lost it all, lost his guitars, and at one point, when he was living with me, he got sick of playing my nylon string one. So he decided he wanted to buy a guitar. So we went into Manhattan and a bunch of guitar stores on 48<sup>th</sup> Street. But anyhow we went to Manny's and a couple of other stores and he was very fussy and couldn't find a specific guitar. He always played a Gibson. I don't know the model numbers. He was looking for a particular Gibson and couldn't find it. And he spent a whole day looking.

MM: So he must have wanted to play the instrument, to start writing or singing again?

SO: For maybe a very brief comeback. We had a piano at my home. He'd sit there and play *Jim Dean of Indiana* over and over again, which is also on the Greatest Hits album.

MM: Another American icon who died young.

SO: Yeah. He always, for so many years, he always talked about suicide. I think he was fascinated with it. It wasn't an all of a sudden thing.

MM: Others say that too, I think Jerry Rubin said that it would come up in conversation and people would try to change the subject.

SO: It's funny, because when we were kids one of the most read novels by teenagers in the 1950s was a book called *Knock on any Door* by Willard Motley, and I still have my copy, and the hero of that was a city punk called Nick Romano and his motto was, 'live fast, die young and have a good looking corpse'. And I remember Phil saying at one point that he wasn't going to live to 30. I said, 'Oh, nonsense!' And then after he passed 30, I said, 'See I told you it was nonsense.' But I am pretty sure he was going with these ideas.

MM: Part of his illness?

SO: No, I think it was just an obsession. If you look through many of the great writers/poets so many of them died young. And that was part of the attraction for Phil, the romanticism.

MM: What prompts you Sonny to do the *Song Nights*?

SO: To keep the songs going – I don't want to see the songs disappear.

MM: Do you think you have succeeded?

SO: Oh I know I've succeeded! I feel real good about it. I mean, twenty years and, as I said, we are doing more and more every year and going further afield.

MM: There's a momentum now?

SO: Yeah, it's to the point now where you could call it the biggest venue in the city and say I want to do a *Phil Ochs Song Night* and they'll agree.

MM: With new audiences mixing with the old audiences.

SO: Yeah. I hate going to Manhattan but there's one club called The Bottom Line, which is the biggest folk club in Manhattan and the first time I called Alan Pepper up, I said I'd like to do a Phil Ochs song night at your place. He wasn't accessible at first. He was on another line, the usual crap. Finally I got through to him and I said, look I don't want a weekend night, I'll settle for a Thursday night at your place. I'd rather do a Thursday night. I don't want to take a gig night away from a performer. Finally he said OK. Well, we sold out the first show and the second show was half sold out. Now for a Thursday night for people to come out after 10 to see a show, that was golden. And after that he said to me anytime you want. I think we ended up doing about three of them there. And if I picked up the phone tomorrow and said I want to do another show, I know he'd say yes. We've done the Birchmere in Washington. We've done The Ark in Ann Arbor which is the biggest one there, done that twice, sold out the Freight and Salvage, San Francisco and Berkeley which is across from San Francisco. We just did Chicago School of Folk Music. Sold that out, that's the big one in Chicago. We're doing OK.

MM: Important work.

SO: I think it's important to do it. I like doing it. I have a lot of fun doing it. I'm amazed at the performers who travel great distances time and time again. They don't make very much money because we divide it. I don't take a cut. I don't take any money from this. I'm doing

this to keep the songs going – so I refuse to take any money. I divide it among the performers. And they make peanuts because we divide it seven or eight or nine ways and even if it was a nice amount to begin with it dissipates, it disappears. And yet they'll come and they'll do the shows over and over and over. They love and respect and revere Phil's music. They know it's an important thing they are doing.

MM: They love Sonny too.

SO: [Laughs] Oh yeah, I guess they've learned to love me. We get along. They respect the music and respect what they are doing and a lot of them do get gigs out of it too, as people running the places invite them back for their individual acts or somebody in the audience sees them or whatever. So they do get some perks out of it. But we have so much fun travelling.

MM: All of Phil's recordings are re-released.

SO: All of it. Everything's out on something. We've been doing several of the major festivals, Philadelphia, twice, because it was so popular. One at Clearwater.

MM: Saw that Pete Seeger did one.

SO: That was Clearwater. He and Tao did *Draft Dodger Rag* up there.

MM: Pete always sings that with someone else, that close two-part harmony?

SO: Also, he won't sing alone because he thinks his voice is gone. So we've been doing [festivals] a lot, so it's spreading! And it's neat to see that more and more of his songs are still being recorded. And to go to Australia and find out that Jeannie Lewis has recorded some of his songs – such a blast, I mean that really impressed me.

MM: Jeannie, of course, opened for Phil in Australia in his '72 tour with Ron Cobb.

SO: Right. So the songs are all over.

MM: So, not just the USA, but Australia, Great Britain. . .

SO: I got an email from somebody in Italy. I think Spain was another country. I hear from people in all different places involved with his music.

MM: In Sweden too.

SO: Yes. So at least the songs are there and that's important.

MM: Did Pete Seeger and Phil perform at different times together?

SO: I know they were both at the Newport Folk Festival.

MM: And what did Pete think of Phil?

SO: Pete was very impressed with Phil. He thought, 'Thank God there's another young radical coming up who really knows how to reach people.'

MM: And, despite the different generations, what did Phil think of Pete?

SO: He worshipped him. Pete was one of Phil's idols.

MM: Thanks Sonny for your time.

