Rev. Gary Davis & Pink Anderson - Gospel, Blues and Street Songs (1961)



1. John Henry - 5:25 2. Every Day In The Week - 3:30 3. The Ship Titanic - 3:15 4. Greasy Greens - 2:56 5. Wreck Of The Old 97 - 3:27 6. I've Got Mine - 3:06 7. He's In The Jailhouse Now - 3:43 8. Blow, Gabriel - 2:15 9. Twelve Gates To The City - 3:23 10. Samson And Delilah - 3:53 11. Oh Lord, Search My Heart - 3:04 12. Get Right Church - 3:04 13. You Got To Go Down - 2:40 14. Keep Your Lamp Trimmed And Burning - 2:36 15. There Was A Time That I Was Blind - 2:37 Reverend Gary Davis - vocals, guitar (8-15) Pink Anderson - vocals, guitar (1-7) Jumbo Lewis - washboard (2)

Prior to the advent of the long-playing medium (read: LPs and/or CDs), the two collections presented here were available in separate packages. Stylistically, the works of both artists remain compelling evidence of the once fertile regional Piedmont Blues scene. In its late 19th and early 20th century heyday, the distinct folk-based music was a common presence throughout the Carolinas, stretching into Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee. Tracks one through seven feature Pink Anderson (guitar/vocals) accompanying himself on vocals and guitar. Not only are his most notable songs given striking renderings, but also Anderson's utterly unique instrumentation is captured to great effect. What stands as most exemplary is the delivery, executed in a half-picking/half-sliding style, rumoured to have been accomplished by using a jack knife blade to bend and manipulate the strings. The derivation of the traditional "John Henry" examines this technique in perhaps the greatest detail. However, the robust tone -- from his trademark and inimitable well-worn Martin guitar -- is likewise capable of a more piercing precision as heard on "Every Day in the Week" and "Wreck of the Old 97." There are some prime examples of Anderson plying his sly wit and goodtime humor during "He's in the Jailhouse Now" and "I Got Mine." They also display otherwise lighthearted observations of the strictly enforced segregated communities in lyrics such as "I remember last election/The white folks was (sic) in action/Trying to get themselves a President...." Perhaps this was an attempt to redirect any anti-Caucasian sentiment, as Anderson's tale recounts a black man who is "in the jailhouse now" for attempting to vote "not once, but twice." Keen-eared listeners may even pick up on brief verbal inflections and asides thrown in between the lines, further adding to any surreptitiously racial implications. --- Lindsay Planer, Rovi

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