Odetta – The Tin Angel (1954)

01 - John Henry 02 - Old Cotton Fields At Home 03 - The Frozen Logger 04 - Run, Come See Jerusalem 05 - Old Blue 06 - Water Boy 07 - Santy Ana 08 - I Was Born About 10,000 Years Ago / The Biggest Thing 09 - The Car-Car Song 10 - No More Cane On The Brazos 11 - Pay Day At Coal Creek 12 - I've Been 'Buked And I've Been Scorned 13 - Rock Island Line 14 - Another Man Don' Gone 15 - Children Go Where I Send Thee 16 - I Know Where I'm Going 17 - He's Got The Whole World In His Hands 18 - Timber 19 - Wade In The Waters
Musicians: Odetta - Guitar, Performer, Vocals Larry Mohr - Banjo, Vocals

Although the 1993 CD version of this album is credited to Odetta and titled The Tin Angel, it's actually a reissue of a Fantasy LP credited to Odetta & Larry, which bore the slightly different title The Tin Angel Presents Odetta & Larry. That original LP had 13 tracks recorded in 1953 and 1954, some of them live at the Tin Angel club in San Francisco, with Larry Mohr contributing some banjo and harmony and lead vocals, though Odetta was the more prominent presence. This source of confusion duly noted, this is pretty much an Odetta album in most respects, as she takes a considerably larger part of the vocal duties on a set of traditional folk material including such standards as "John Henry," "Rock Island Line," and "Old Cotton Fields at Home," as well as some blues and spirituals, plus a good version of Woody Guthrie's "The Car-Car Song." Odetta's stirring vocal style is pretty fully formed on this, the first group of her recordings in wide distribution, as is her ability to emit bluesy grunts, as you can hear on "John Henry." Mohr's vocals (he takes unaccompanied lead on "Old Blue") and banjo are comparatively bland, but they're not much of a distraction from Odetta, who's definitely the main feature. The 1993 CD reissue adds six tracks, including some very popular folk revival tunes in "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," "Wade in the Water," and "Another Man Done Gone."
--- Richie Unterberger, Rovi

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