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LET'S GO II

THE STUDENT GUIDE TO ADVENTURE

1968

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°°Marcel Sautier, #12, 20th century prints of quality, as well as some scarce 19th century items. M. Sautier has books illustrated by leading artists, as well as the largest selection of books bound by Bonnet, the Picasso of French 20th century bookbinders.

Galerie Seder, #25, is a routine gallery for 20th century prints and contemporaries. Chagalls and Picassos from books for \$8, and exhibition posters for a few dollars. Good for budget collecting.

Galerie de la Hune, 170 Blvd. St. Germain, 6°, beside the Café aux Deux Magots, was famous as recently as five years ago, but today it is overpriced and does not consistently sell first-rate works. However, you should always check out the cartons of prints upstairs; there is usually one scarce or interesting item which is underpriced. Over the years, important prints have turned up here at bargain prices. Don't buy the contemporary prints you see here; you can usually find them cheaper elsewhere.

°René Bréheret, 9 quai Malaquais, 6°, at the corner of the rue Bonaparte. This is a large gallery for 20th century prints and contemporaries. Everyone should browse, but investigate the rue de Seine galleries before you buy here—the same work may be less expensive there. Picasso, Braque, Chagall, Miro, etc. Posters. The quality is uneven.

Antiquities, #21, Indian and Persian miniatures, Japanese scrolls, coins, Greek pots, plates—all are here in a veritable grab-bag. A small, dusty shop.

°°Galerie R. G. Michel, 17 quai Saint Michel, in sight of Notre Dame, is excellent for high quality, old master prints, 20th century masters, and inexpensive works by lesser-known names. While this gallery seems to cater mostly to Americans, its quality is very high—it is 100% reliable.

°Gosselin, 25 quai des Grands Augustins, 6°, for French 19th century drawings and watercolors, small paintings, and Italian drawings. Inexpensive and very good.

°°°Les Deux Iles: Maîtres et Inconnus, 1 quai aux Fleurs, 4°, around the corner from the back of Notre Dame and opposite the 19th century footbridge from the Île de la Cité to the Île St. Louis. A superb gallery, one of the best in Paris. It has French drawings, pastels, watercolors, and paintings from the Romantic period to the Post-Impressionists and a few contemporaries. The quality is excellent, the selection large, and the prices reasonable. Top recommendation for everyone. You can even buy something for a few dollars.

THE MODERN TROUBADOUR:

STREETSSINGING IN EUROPE ON NO DOLLARS A DAY

*I was out on St. Michel,
Singing to the crowd.
I wasn't hurting nobody there;
I wasn't even singing loud.
But the police come and took me away,
It was all a little game.
Because here I am on the streets again,
Singing just the same.*

So you find yourself in Paris with no money, no luggage, nothing but a knapsack and an old battered guitar. You decide that you'll sing your way back to Indianapolis, collecting money in the streets the way all those other bearded people you've seen do. Well, before you sit down in front of Notre Dame with guitar in hand and an upturned hat by your feet, take a minute to read this guide. Perhaps you will avoid being arrested and having to sing to the *flics* for your freedom. This article offers suggestions on how to survive on your singing and playing. If you don't feel quite ready to make your debut, you might enjoy reading about people who do survive as troubadours.

A streetsinger is a beggar. He is not unlike the "starving art school beggar" who chalks pictures of the Virgin on sidewalks and asks for contributions. The streetsinger is also a hustler, making people feel that they *owe* a contribution simply because they pass within earshot. Like the hustler, too, the streetsinger may have honestly nothing to offer (no voice, no musical sense, no ability) and still manage to support himself on little more than six strings and some fingerpicks. Like the hustler, he is subject to arrest. The rules of streetsinging, therefore, have very little to do with music and quite a lot to do with running. The brief rules below begin with the music and progress to the running.

(1) *Always keep playing.* How many songs do you know well enough to dare to sing in public? Four? Then sing them one after the other and don't stop. Do not pause to tune, or talk, or think of new songs unless you have a large and captivated audience. You probably won't, so don't let the limit on your singing be the crowd's attention, but

rather your own creeping boredom. It might be wise to join another musician, even if you have just met him on the street, to let yourself rest occasionally. (I once joined a harmonica player on a streetcorner in Paris; I played my banjo on and off, and he just kept on blowing, paying no attention to me.)

(2) *You must have a kitty-girl.* Or a kitty-boy, if you can't find a kitty-girl. It doesn't matter what size or shape she is so long as she is demanding when she passes the hat. The kitty-girl approaches the average by-stander who has just joined the crowd to see if there was a stabbing or purse-snatching and who can't even hear the music; within minutes she will succeed in unloading half (or more) of his change. Sitting with a tin cup and no kitty-girl only works if you're blind; and then you don't need the guitar.

(3) *You must have a guard.* If you are playing with a group of people—which is the most fun, anyway—or if you are making enough noise, police will arrive sooner or later. Your guard must be alert to their coming, so that you can shoulder your instruments and quickly disappear.

(4) *Choose your location carefully.* If a policeman tells you to move on from your street corner, don't just go down the street. Avoid main streets, wide avenues, store fronts. Choose side streets, where tourists can come, with clear access points where your guard can stand. Steps of public buildings are all right as long as you have room for a hasty exit. By far the best spots are theater and movie lines, where people are captive and slightly bored, hoping to avoid conversational responsibility towards their companions. In some quarters it is possible to speak with café owners and get permission to stroll around tables. Residents may pay you to stop blocking their view of passing American tourists; passing American tourists—who are always the best source of money—may pay you because they think they must.

Now for a more serious word about seeking jobs in clubs and bars. If you confine yourself to streetsinging you will find virtually no musical demands on your performance. In fact, most streetsingers are wildly awful. But the people who operate folk clubs or pop clubs are more critical, even if their clientele is not. Throughout Western Europe they hear the same people playing that you do at home. Do not move off the street until you hear your professional competition. Listening should always precede auditioning.

If you find yourself in an unknown town and want to find musicians, search out music stores and inquire about clubs where one can play or hear whatever sort of music you want. It is easy to tell from the window display what sorts of musical interest a store caters to. The emphasis in the following section is on folk music, but in most cases other sorts of music are not far away. Let the other streetsingers tell you the way.

Paris. Streetsingers abound here; one must be nothing short of a professional con-man to survive. The Boulevard St. Michel (mentioned in the song above) cuts through the middle of the area of Paris where streetsinging is most profitable. (The Boulevard itself, however, is not recommended; it's too easy to get arrested there.) Movie and theater lines are often long in Paris, and there are many experienced kitty-girls to guide you around. If you are seriously pursuing employment as a folksinger, there are good clubs in the area of the Place de la Contrescarpe (up the hill from either Cardinal Lemoine or Place Monge Métro stops in the Fifth arrondissement). La Contrescarpe itself usually has a succession of French Left-bank type songs (which require more than good French to follow) but has in the past had many American and English musicians. Banjo players are in demand. There are several other clubs, including workshops in classical and flamenco guitar, on Rue Descartes (which runs out of Place de la Contrescarpe). There's generally folk music at weekly hoots at the American Student Center, 261 Blvd. Raspail. Some fine musicians from all around appear at these events. A hint and a warning: speak as much French as you can, especially when introducing songs and don't get caught by the Paris cops—they are not *gentil* with shaggy-maned singers.

London. Every little English village is reputed to have a folkmusic place. Generally it's too cold for streetsinging. Furthermore, most folkmusic establishments observe the custom of open nights when anyone can play: this is the best way to introduce yourself to the public. There are too many places to list; one enjoyable club is **The Troubadour** in Earl's Court Road (the downstairs section). The proprietor, Red Sullivan, claims to hold the record for the number of times arrested for streetsinging in one month in Paris.

NOTE: Most English folk establishments observe the following rule: Americans sing American songs, Britons sing

songs from the British Isles. If you visit Ewan McColl's club in London, best avoid old English ballads.

Edinburgh. Go during the Edinburgh Festival and you might earn enough to see some movies or concerts. At this time there are countless places to play, and musicians from all around England appear willing to exchange songs. The **Stockpot** (on Hanover Street, between Queen and Thistle) might hire you to sit in the window playing to draw people in to drink.

Liverpool. In the hometown of the Beatles, open clubs are overrun with Liverpool teeny-boppers; other clubs that serve liquor are private, requiring membership. If you are there with your unamplified guitar, you may benefit from this experience: one freezing night two friends and I knocked on the door of a private rock-club called The Blue Angel. The hotels in town were expensive and we were searching for some place else to spend the night. Conferring with the doorkeeper, we convinced her that we should be admitted free in return for a half an hour of songs at intermission. That night we slept on her warm floor. Often an itinerant folk musician can play at rock clubs as a curiosity or an intermission break to rest the audience's ears.

Brussels. A fine place for folk music and streetsinging. There is considerable interest in American old-time music in Brussels due largely to the long-standing presence here of Derrol Adams, an expatriate banjoist. Adams is something of a legendary figure, a tall Canadian banjo player with a cowboy hat and one earring. If you want to play in the streets or merely exchange musical ideas with somebody, find the **Café Welcome** (in both French and Flemish) on the Petit Rue des Bouchers, near the Grand Place. You may run into some helpful Danes who will direct you exactly to a good place for making a street show, and they may join you with Old Timey music.

Amsterdam. When the weather is good, Amsterdam is a very pleasant place for streetsinging. Try any one of the student residences (in the winter) for information about clubs to visit; in the summer, ask the bartender at the Student hotel on Vondelstraat. He may direct you to a club called **H88**, Herrengracht 88, which features blues and pop and Heineken. On an early afternoon I went there to beg a job playing intermission and I met the group which had played in the club the night before. The place was almost totally destroyed; apparently the crowd had de-

stroyed the stock of beer mugs and pulverized an amplifier and two guitars à la *Blow Up*. If you play there, borrow a friend's guitar.

Stockholm. The interest in Sweden for American folk-music is tremendous. Swedish bluegrass bands aren't unheard of. Also there are many places to hear plain blues and hard rock of various spots. A suggested reference point is Gottfried Johansson Musikhandel (Music Store) on Järntorget in the Old Town. Someone there can tell you where any music of interest is to be found. It is possible to play on the streets, but it is extremely doubtful that you will collect any money. In the past, clubs often had free nights when people could play and usually share the gate if they talk with the proprietor in advance. **Storken** (near Västerbroplan) is a club on a boat where one can hear all kinds of folkmusic, even Swedish. The **Liverpool Club** is another boat featuring blues. It's on Norr Mälärstrand. A club called **Kaos** usually exchanges food for music and has had a country music band. Its address changes from time to time.

This list of suggestions is merely an outline for keeping yourself supplied with travelling money as you follow the guitar around Europe. Clearly, nothing is definite. But anyone who makes a serious effort to travel with music will find opportunities. Though it's very hard to make real money at it, one can eat and sleep well by singing and trading music and songs. In rather out-of-the-way places like Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, guitar playing could be your ticket to several days on a nearby island. But be careful; the life of the modern troubadour can be so satisfying that you may never come home.