

Mp3 Gordon Bok - Gatherings



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Gordon Bok's collection of traditional and contemporary music for guitar, harp and voice 15 MP3 Songs

FOLK: Traditional Folk, FOLK: Gentle Details: Gordon Bok Gordon Bok grew up around the boatyards of Camden, Maine, and sailed on the lovely old schooners that hail from that port. As he sailed, he sang: songs and ballads of the sea and the schooners and the fishes and fishermen. Later he sang of mythical sea folk, seals and selkies who came to him in dreams and legends. At a time when folk music was experiencing a great revival, he was a leader in preserving, collecting, creating and sharing a wide variety of rich and intensely beautiful songs of both land and sea. His mastery of 6- and 12-string guitars and his well-known trademark, the 'cellamba, added to his already well-developed vocal expression to create an unmistakable style that has carried him through decades of being one of our most cherished folk artists. He has made more than a score of albums, and many other musicians, including Archie Fisher, Liam Clancy and Tommy Makem, have recorded his songs. In addition, his music has been used in films and published in folk music anthologies, including Rise Up Singing and his own collection, Time and The Flying Snow. "You use what you got. You're influenced by who you grew up with, where you live, your own vocabulary." Gordon grew up in a musical home and started playing guitar when he was nine. After high school, he worked on boats and collected sea songs. During the winter, he worked as a carpenter and teacher in Philadelphia where he discovered a thriving folk music scene and began performing. Dissatisfied with the images generally portrayed of people who work on the water, he began to write songs based in the experiences of those he knew, real people whose language was honest, whose feelings were credible. These early works, songs like "Bay of Fundy", began to get attention, as did his rich voice and fluid guitar work. Paul Stookey, of the folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary, produced Gordon's first album for Verve. "I didn't know the word cante-fable until Sandy Paton told me it was what I was

doing. But it's not important to know what you're doing. You just have to give yourself room to do it."

Dreams have always been a source of inspiration for Gordon, just as traditional legends and ballads. Working with a mythic tale drawn from a series of dreams, he started writing in a new style of story and song. He heard the music as a part of the story - as integral as the lyrics. This work would eventually become "Seal Djiril's Hymn", followed by several more of these cante-fables, including "Peter Kagan and The Wind" and "Another Land Made of Water". "Nick [Apollonio] is the only luthier I know who can build the sound of compassion into an instrument with steel strings on it." Just as Gordon might invent a musical structure to suit his needs, he has also designed and built instruments to supply the sounds he couldn't find elsewhere. When he couldn't get the pitch and timbre he wanted from a pennywhistle or recorder, he invented his own Bok-whistle. Over twenty-odd years, he and instrument maker, singer and songwriter Nick Apollonio have designed and built guitars, lauds and viols, including a twelve-string guitar specially suited to the gentle expression and intricacies of Gordon's ballad-singing. "It's delightful to sing to a bunch of people and realize you're all talking about the same thing, and it's not about the performer. It's about the music." In addition to performing in concert halls, coffeehouses and festivals throughout the U.S., Canada, Great Britain and Scandinavia, Gordon has taught choral singing and song writing at summer music camps and other gatherings. He has organized choral groups in his own community and gladly shares his knowledge with others wishing to do the same. A superb storyteller, he often introduces songs in concert with a bit of their origin and history. Besides his countless solo appearances, Gordon has toured for nearly thirty years with the trio, Bok, Muir and Trickett, and in recent years with his wife, harper Carol Rohl. He has also been known to perform with Anne Dodson and Matt Szostak, Cindy Kallet, Bob Zentz, Margaret MacArthur and other well-known folk artists. He has appeared in concert with the Paul Winter Consort and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and has been heard on NPR's A Prairie Home Companion. He has served both as Artist-in Residence and faculty member of the College of the Atlantic. Although he never graduated from college, he received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the Maine Maritime Academy in 1997. Some Reviews: "Gordon Bok is timeless. Seafarer, songwriter extraordinaire, excellent instrumentalist, and "painter" of moods, he takes his audiences over the bay and out to sea, through a labyrinth of emotions from joy to fear, and awe at the immense wonderment of the world we live in." Plowshares (San Francisco Folk Music Center) "Free of even a hint of self-infatuation, the concert was devoted to songs rooted in history or sparked by the imagination. For

decades now, Bok has been writing and collecting songs inspired by life in Maine and the Maritime Provinces, so it wasn't surprising to hear well-crafted tales of loggers and river drives and battles between American natives and settlers. A superb storyteller . . ." Mike Joyce, The Washington Post "The poet laureate of those who go down to the sea in ships." Time Magazine "There is something deeply rooted, ancient and timeless to his songs, yet he is an utter original. From the instruments he plays to the myths he explores, the music is indelibly his own." Scott Alarik (from an interview in Sing Out! - "The Folk Song Magazine") "One of the most moving performers I have ever seen, Bok expresses the core of his experience with his full deep voice and masterful guitar playing." The Village Voice "Gordon Bok is the Cornell Folk Song Club's most requested performer. For the last quarter century, he has defined the new folk tradition and set the standard. His music includes old, borrowed and new, all steeped in deep-rooted folk music. No one can match Gordon's sonorous voice and masterfully understated instrumentation." Folkstuff "Gordon is one of those performers who creates a magic circle of light around himself and draws the entire audience into it. If you have only heard his sound once, you can spot it from that time on. He is soothing and thrilling, intense and thoroughly relaxed, shy and completely winning, a special person and an ordinary man." Woods Hole Folk Music Society "If the sea had a voice with which to sing, it would be the voice of Gordon Bok." The Brunswick Times-Record "For me, he's the Bard . . . he has true depth and nobility: a musical genius." Paul Sullivan

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