## JANUARY 28, 1966

# "Citybilly" folksters Mike Seeger, City Ramblers go "bluegrass" at Gemini VI

### By STEPHEN POTTIE Gazette Staff

Last week, Gemini VI presented traditional folk singer Mike Seeger who provided a full evening's worth of entertainment even compensating for having to sleep through class next day. Mike, a member of the famous

family that includes Pete Seeger and Peggy (Seeger) MacColl, is what critic Nat Hentoof calls a "citybilly"; that is, an urban bred singer who leans towards the style of the mountain people of Tennessee, Virginia, and Appalachia.

Hillbilly or bluegass music has its roots in the old Anglo-Saxon ballads with a strong influence from negro blues.

Mike Seeger is known mainly as a member of one of the better bluegrass, groups. The New Lost City Ramblers.

He soon made the audience feel at home with a resume of his present activities. "We weren't getting work together, so we split up for a while. John Cohen (one of the three) is building a house right now. I'm doing these single jobs. Soon, we're going to Germany on tour. Funny thing. We can get work easily in Europe, but not in our home country.'

I'll never understand. Of course, Mike has no problems. His last even though he sometimes wishes that he didn't have to live it down. It's never, "You're Mike," "You're Pete's brother." It's.

Mike, however, is far from er's. The most striking thing crop of intellectual critics fre- mental "San Antonio Rose". A master of "six or seven" instruments, he demonstrated his more than sufficient. talents on the banjo, guitar, autoharp, and mouth harp.

playing is country style. It lacks my style is natural for me ... Man" the pyrotechnics of Scruggs-style three-finger picking, but makes and bluegrass singers." up for it with strong driving

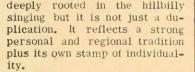
### NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS

with banjo tunes such as "Old simple instrument to play, but Joe Clark". "The Cuckoo Bird", that by no means dilutes its name gives him a head start and "Cripple Creek". Of these, interest when it is played well. his close version of "Cumberland He used it several times, such as Mountain Deer Chase" and Doe on "Carter Blues", "When First Boggs' style 'Pretty Polly" were to This Country" and "Bonaparte especially notable.

Crossing the Alps", for accon-The authentic country playing paniment, but it reached full being an understudy of his broth- brought up question that the new impact on the engrossing instru-

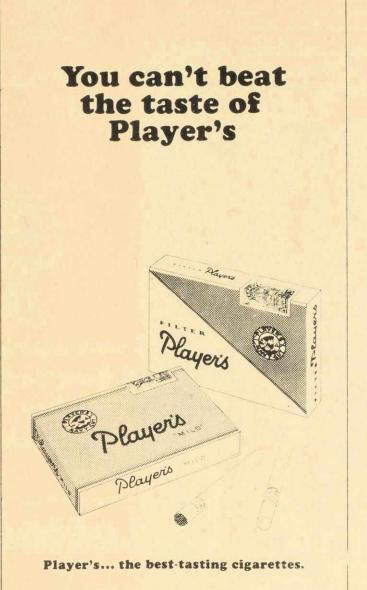
about him is his exciting and quently like to ask; is it right to Folk guitar is so often just a accomplished instrumental work. imitate music of another era. series of cliches that Mike's Mike's answer to that question is playing is, as J.T. Morley would say, "incredible". In fact, one of "I sing traditional songs simply the non-serious highlights of the because I like them. Although I evening was a hilarious satire on As with all his music, the banjo do try to achieve a certain sound, folk guitar players, 'Burglar

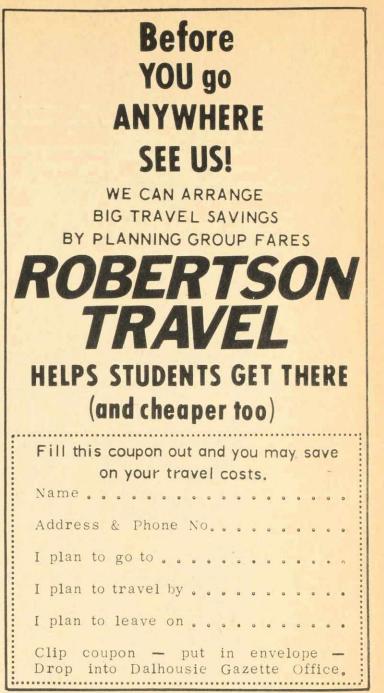
strongly influenced by country Mike's singing is perfect for the high lonesome, airy vocals The auto-harp is one of the that mark the best of the trarhythm and two-finger picking. instruments I find fascinating ditional singers. His vocal style,

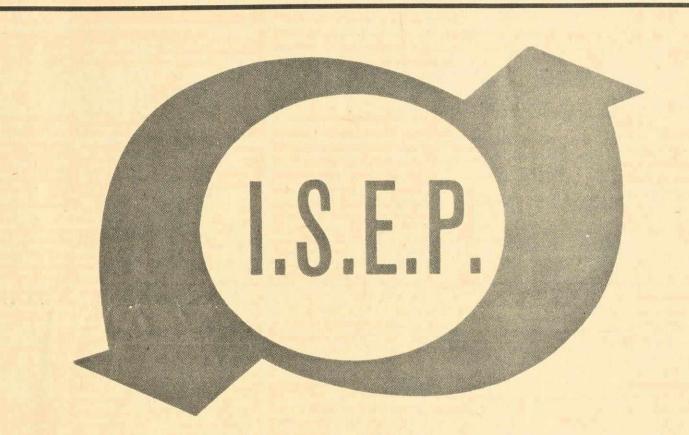


Most of Mike's repetoire comes from old recordings of the mountain and bluegrass singers. His knowledge of the singers and their songs is very extensive. References to the old backwoods musicians such as Uncle Dave Macom, Jimmie Rodgers, Elizabeth Cotton, the Dixon Brothers, and the Carter Family fill his speech as naturally as the Beatles and rock singers fill the conversation of teenagers. His vast knowledge is not limited to talk, his performance was filled with signs of his mastery of their styles. Which is one of Mike's main advantages over the old timers; they had one style that, however interesting, could wear; Mike is able to borrow freely from them while adding his own personal statement. The result is varied and consistently engaging performance.

Above all his credentials and musicianship, Mike established very close rapport with the audience after warming up in the first show. Around the end of the evening, the relationship became almost personal. I was not talking to Mike Seeger the professional folk singer, but a newfound friend who wanted to share some of his experiences and sing the songs that he felt had a lasting beauty. That was Mike Seeger.

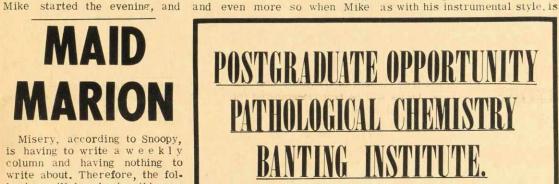








Misery, according to Snoopy, is having to write a week1 column and having nothing to write about. Therefore, the following will be about nothing so you might as well stop reading



Why they aren't appreciated each succeeding performance, played it. It is undoubtedly a

Actually nothing is a fascinating topic. It can be extended to the study of irrelevancy, trivia, philosophical meditations on the concept of zero and the sociological and psychological implications of the imponderable.

All this means exactly nothing so we're back where we started. I remember the system my best friend and I worked out in Grade 3. Through various machinations, nominations and threats of dire things, we got ourselves elected as president and secretary of the classroom Junior Red Cross Society for six years running, at which time she moved to another town and I lost interest. It was very important to us because the executive appointed blackboard cleaners every week and we'd unload that duty regularly on our "enemies" The system of parliamentary democracy, which we were supposedly being taught, was either highly successful or unsuccess. ful, depending on your viewpoint. The foregoing paragraph was wholly irrelevant which is a good thing because in being irrelevant it becomes relevant. I have just proven that you can write about nothing, successfully or unsuccessfully again according to your point of view.

I think that Halifax should be renamed "The Windy Citv" Every girl has nightmares about that big date and that special hairdo and the high wind which can ruin a carefully constructed coiffure in seconds. It is almost enough to make one decide upon the Yul Brynner look.

Winter Carnival is coming up and Compata-Match is leaping to the rescue of lads and lassies in distress. Only catch is that it costs three dollars to get in on the fun. And "mechanical" engineers are arranging it. Somehow, the term "mechanical" puts a different light on the whole affair.

I don't think there's one thing about Dal that I dislike more than the custom of posting Christmas marks so the whole world can see just what you got or didn't get. Please, Madam Registrar, must we? I mean, couldn't we get our examination papers back instead. I cannot decide whether Dal is highly advanced or definitely backward.

Well, I've managed to write an illuminating column on trivia. Maybe next week I'll get to philosophical meditations on the concept of zero.

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