



Tom Lehrer:

Photo by Anthony Pidgeon ©

THE ELEMENTS

BY ROGER DEITZ

Spoken with a mock Russian accent ...

*"Who made me the genius I
am today,
The mathematician that
others all quote,
Who's the professor that
made me that way?
The greatest that ever got
chalk on his coat."*

— Tom Lehrer from
"Lobachevsky"

Perhaps Tom Lehrer isn't quite "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma" as Winston Churchill quipped of Russia, but Lehrer inspired more than his share of artful lore, much of which turns out to be bogus in an Elvis sighting sort of way. Was some insight to the mystery about to be revealed? At 2 PM last April 3, I heard that familiar voice, a soft-spoken "Hello Roger? Tom Lehrer." Lots of thoughts churned up from the good old days. All those classic songs and performances which many of us prized and memorized – those precious few 33s we played and replayed so as to assimilate and regurgitate each minute inflection of Tom Lehrer's brilliant comic liturgy. Lehrer exhibited impish genius in molding the American popular song form to his own acerbic theatrical image. Urbane, articulate and omnipotent in the cold war 'fifties, he was a welcome alternative to play-it-safe humorists such as Steve Allen and Tennessee Ernie Ford, providing a bard's-eye-view of a landscape populated by duck-and-cover air-raid drill instructors and John Birch Society members. In his own exquisitely rational world, Tom Lehrer lampooned bigots in "I Wanna Go Back To Dixie." He satirized cultural icons such as

“Wernher Von Braun.” Lehrer even romanticized living (and the imminent possibility of dying) with the atom bomb in “We Will All Go Together When We Go.” Armageddon with a song and a smile, Mr. Lehrer belting out ditties and tinkling the ivories as if performing in some warped, parallel universe MGM musical. He saluted urban America with “The Old Dope Peddler,” “Poisoning Pigeons In The Park” and “Pollution.” It was open season on American foreign policy with “Send The Marines.” No sacred cow escaped his barbecue grill, neither the Boy Scouts in “Be Prepared” nor the Catholic Church with “The Vatican Rag” – his most controversial song. Yes, he even turned on the folk music community with “The Irish Ballad,” “Clementine,” and “The Folk Song Army”... and rightly so. Here’s the ultimate irony: Although by most standards not a “folk singer,” the erstwhile mathematician raised the well-crafted topical song to an art form, and out folk-sang the hootenanny crowd when it came to sharp, biting satire.

Then ... Tom Lehrer vanished, and we didn’t know what to make of his hasty exit. I am reminded of the dramatic scene in the 1953 epic western *Shane* – a movie released the year of Lehrer’s first studio album and his first appearance in *Sing Out!* At the close of the film, Alan Ladd rides off into the sunset as geeky young Brandon de Wilde longingly, hauntingly pleads for his return, “*Shane, come back.*” But Shane wasn’t coming back, and neither was Lehrer. A millennium later (that’s how long it seems) we have the recently issued three-CD retrospective of Tom Lehrer’s complete opus, *The Remains Of Tom Lehrer*, released by Rhino Records. It’s all there. His rapier wit, virtuoso pianisticuffs, on-the-mark sarcastic delivery, and exquisitely irreverent lyrics and narration. Listening again, I feel a sense of loss. I could understand Alan Ladd bailing on the homesteaders. Ladd dispatched Jack Palance and the movie was over. But Mr. Lehrer, with all due respect, there were more bad guys to gun down. And mathematics, you left the allure of show biz to teach freaking mathematics? How many times must we be “treated” to Mark Russell on public television before you feel compelled to return to fill this smarmy entertainment void? Besides, who ever heard of the roar of the grease paint – the smell of the Pythagorean theorem?

In such a short “career” (15 nightclub engagements, 104 solo concerts – none since 1967, 50 or so compositions and a handful of sound recordings ... one a live version of a similar studio work, released simultaneously), Lehrer made a penetrating impact. One would be correct to observe that among his devotees, and there still are legions who grow melancholy at the mere mention of his name, he long ago obtained something akin to cult status. But before we start passing out the complimentary Kool-

Aid (offered to show Lehrer’s vitriolic influence on my own breezy writing style), we must accept that what he left us was substantial. His contribution stands as a significant milestone for the folk genre ... yet, as he correctly and emphatically points out, his roots and modus operandi were anything but folk. Is Tom Lehrer a “riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma?” With all due respect to Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky, the CIA, KGB, BSA, New Math, Smut, Harvard, Atomic War, Oedipus Rex, Masochism, Bird Watchers, the Uniformed Services, the Periodic Table of Elements, the Folk Song Army, Christmas, good taste and the long sequestered Greta Garbo ... look not for intrigue. None exists. Tom Lehrer is a man who had a bit of sport, and then just wanted *to be left alone*.

MY HOME TOWN

Here are a few biographical facts: Thomas Andrew Lehrer was born on April 9, 1928 in Manhattan, just a piano’s throw from the neon lights of Times Square and within earshot of the exciting music emanating from Broadway’s legitimate theater houses. Growing up, Lehrer says, he was “ethnically, but not religiously” Jewish. He recalls, “More to do with the delicatessen than the synagogue. My brother and I went to Sunday school, but we had Christmas Trees, and ‘God’ was primarily an expletive, usually preceded by ‘oh’ or ‘my’ or both.” He recounts that his father was a successful necktie manufacturer, whom he characterizes as a “pioneer and legend in his industry.” His father started out with very little money,



(Left) Tom, the clean-cut kid with the bow tie and the big smile performed from 1953 through about 1967, with two years of service in the U.S. Army from '55 to '57. (Below) He wrote and performed songs for a 1967 industrial film for Dodge which was shown to car dealers. The Grand Canyon shot is genuine. Lehrer later recalled, “Note the seat belt. I was taking no chances.”



as did countless immigrants, climbed the ladder of success due in part to his combination of “business sense and excellent taste” and “his ability to tend to all aspects of his business.” These are traits imparted to the younger Mr. Lehrer – although his “excellent taste” occasionally eluded the odd music critic. Tom Lehrer was truly master of the diverse aspects of songwriting, performing, accompaniment, patter and comic-timing, that facilitate making a performer a success.

Musically, young Tom was at first enamored of Gilbert and Sullivan. He recalls, “We had an album of highlights from Gilbert and Sullivan that I played constantly, an album of 78s, of course, which meant that you had to constantly lift the needle up and put it back down again.” Lehrer says he was “immersed” in the popular music of the day, particularly “novelty” songs like “Mairzy Doats” as well as “Gershwin and Kern and the rest.” And humor? There were plenty of comedy broadcasts on the radio. His favorite program was the quirky comedy of “Vic And Slade.” Lehrer also remembers thinking the Ritz Brothers were the funniest thing he had ever seen. He recalls, “I used to love that stuff. When you see their old movies now, it doesn’t really work, whereas The Marx Brothers, who I also liked, keep rolling along, still holding up form. A lot of Abbott and Costello is funny – not all of it. I went to the movies a lot. Probably one double feature a week. All the kids did. I liked most movies, especially musicals.” But Lehrer was most influenced by Broadway. As a boy, he attended summer camp with Stephen Sondheim, a man who would someday exert the kind of major impact on the American musical theater that Lehrer wielded on topical songs and political humor. Musicals impressed Tom. “We lived in New York, and my parents liked musicals too, and so I saw a lot of them.” The Danny Kaye influence is audible in songs such as “Lobachevsky” and “The Elements.” In 1941, Kaye opened on Broadway in *Let’s Face It*, with songs by Cole Porter and Sylvia Fine. Lehrer says he saw the show “many times” and when Columbia released an album of four 10-inch 78s, Tom purchased the set and played it repeatedly, picking out some of the songs on the piano. “Of course I took piano lessons in those days, like a lot of kids.” He says he didn’t really like classical music, practicing the “absolute minimum. Then I would start picking out popular tunes that I’d heard or found on



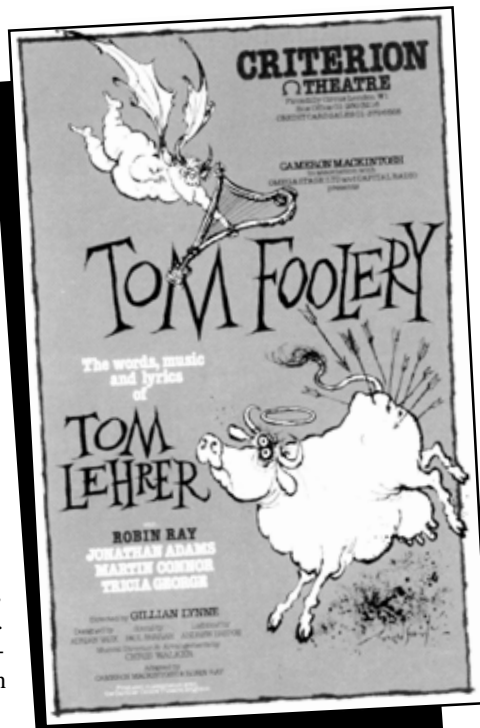
(Left) Lehrer at a 1967 performance in Copenhagen. (Below) A poster for the 1980 London production of *Tomfoolery* conceived and produced by Cameron Mackintosh, who later produced *Cats*.

sheet music, and my parents caught on.” They relented and his mother scouted around until she located a rare popular music piano teacher.

FIGHT FIERCELY, HARVARD

Yet, it was mathematics and the Ivy League that would ultimately land Tom Lehrer in the middle of a “music career.” He was good with “logic puzzles” and figuring out the answers to math problems, “even as a little kid.” Lehrer skipped a couple of grades in grammar school and attended Horace Mann High School and a prep school in Connecticut called Loomis. Tom’s parents divorced when he was 14. At the age of 15 he was accepted to Harvard, “thanks to skipping those grades. At that time it wasn’t such a big deal,” he reflects, “This was because of what we called ‘The War’ ... WWII. Everybody over eighteen was drafted. So, many of us were young. They were very happy to get any warm body that would pay tuition.” Choosing a major was a bit of a trial. In high school he had done well in pretty much every subject. He eventually gravitated toward mathematics. “I was good at a number of the sciences, but the labs were just too onerous, I couldn’t deal with that, and math was wonderful ... I was through with my work by noon.” Lehrer was at Harvard two years when he wrote “Fight Fiercely, Harvard” a song that eventually made him a local hero. He notes that as a young undergraduate, he didn’t write and sing to be accepted. “Oh, no. I mostly thought these songs weren’t of interest to anyone! I wrote ‘Fight Fiercely, Harvard’ in 1945. That’s the earli-

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est song on any of my records. The others were written a little later. I wrote a lot of songs for special occasions ... silly songs, songs about math, and so on, but nothing else that would be recordable until 1948."

By then the long-playing record was introduced. One LP might contain as much music as six or more 78-rpm records. Recording, pressing and shipping could be done at a much more reasonable cost, and Lehrer soon became one of the first singer-songwriters to successfully exploit a self-created sound recording. "My first public performance was in 1952, at a Boston nightclub called Alpini's Rendezvous in Kenmore Square. With me as bait, the owner was hoping to lure the Harvard crowd from across the Charles River to patronize the place. He started me at \$15 a night, and I would play intermission piano as well. I got a few \$5 raises, and when I finally got up to \$30 a night, he said that was too much, so I quit." But by then Tom had written a dozen songs he felt were "keepers," enough to fill one small, 10-inch LP. After checking out the two studios he found in the Boston yellow pages, and rejecting the first because "they were rude," Lehrer settled on the second. On January 22, 1953 Tom went into a studio and recorded *Songs By Tom Lehrer*, a little gem that ran 22 minutes. "It took me only about an hour to record it. I had performed all the songs many times, so most of them required only one take. No splicing was needed, and by the end of the hour we had a complete edited tape." Lehrer continues, "I went into the studio for \$15. There was a piano and a microphone. Today, there is a producer and board with buttons and lights and everything. Today it costs thousands of dollars just to do a single. I never could have afforded to do that album today. It's a whole different world out there."

The resourceful undergraduate then became a cottage industry – or perhaps the correct term should be "college industry." Lehrer felt he could sell 300 albums, so he ordered 400 reasoning he'd break even on the 300 and still have "a little profit left over to order some more." At first, Tom delivered the albums to local stores himself ... the wholesale price being \$3 with the shops near Harvard selling the album for \$3.50. He recalls, "The first pressing had my home address on it. Later I got a post office box address and a few part time assistants. I also raised the price to \$3.95, which was then the going rate for 10-inch LPs." The record quickly became a hit within the locale of Harvard. As students carried the albums home on breaks and played them for their friends, word spread. Orders started coming in from around the country. "Mostly college towns at first," noted

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— Tom Lehrer

Lehrer. "I could tell from the postal zones. This was before zip codes. For example, Chicago 37 was the University of Chicago. Today almost everyone I know seems to have their own CD. To sell one today, the way I did, would be impossible. And today, if you sell 100,000 copies, you are a flop, when to me, that took me years to do. It's the longest it ever took to get a gold record (certified by the RIAA) – 31 years for *That Was The Year That Was*. The early ones I can't get certified because I was my own label. The first record sold by itself. I didn't push it, I didn't advertise it, and I didn't play it on the radio. The word just spread. You couldn't do that today."

IT MAKES A FELLOW PROUD TO BE A SOLDIER

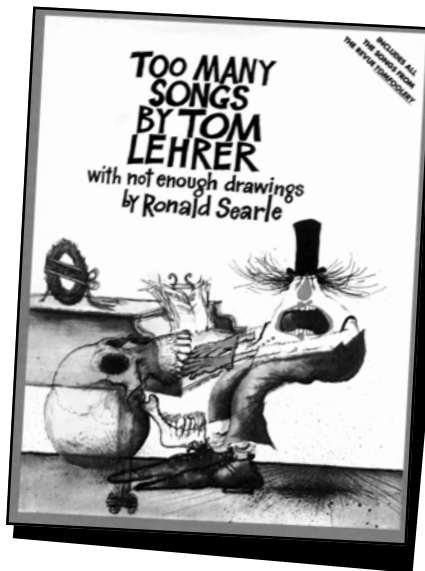
The core of Tom Lehrer's performing period dates from 1953 and lasted through about 1967 – with two years of pleasant diversion in the U.S. Army from January 1955 to January 1957. "Believe it or not, I enjoyed the Army" he confesses. "Earlier I had dodged the draft by getting a job that would defer me until I could get all this record business settled." When Tom returned to Cambridge in 1957, his album sales were stronger than ever. Rather than going back to teaching, he headed for the concert hall. There was an important gig at the Blue Angel in the spring of 1957. Then, because he didn't yet have enough material for an entire long concert evening, he accepted a split bill to perform with Odetta at the Hunter College auditorium. More shows followed these, five in 1957 and 16 in 1958, including concerts at Orchestra Hall in Chicago and Carnegie Hall in New York City. Lehrer observes, "I never did it full time – even when I did it full time. There wasn't a college concert circuit then. That's before the Kingston Trio broke the mold. The only musical humorists doing concerts were Victor Borge and Anna Russell."

As to Lehrer's view of his own performer persona, he observes, "I wanted people to say 'weren't those *songs* funny,' not 'wasn't *he* funny.' That's not modesty. I just sat there at the piano ... dead pan, sang the songs, delivered the lines. I acted a little of course. I was really demonstrating the *songs*. I never wanted to be a funny person – I didn't fall off the piano or make faces. I wasn't trying to be ingratiating. My attitude was, 'How could you people be so *sick* as to *like* these songs.' Remember – I was the clean-cut kid with the bow tie and the big smile, so I could get away with it. Basically, *I'm* not saying these songs are funny – *you're* the one who is laughing!" I ask Lehrer his opinion of contemporary piano-based political humorist Mark Russell, someone who, at least superficially appears to be carrying the mantle. "Well, let's just pass on that one," is Lehrer's response, in mock maternal tone, chiding "If

you can't say something nice about somebody ..."

As to the reality of live performing, Tom admits, "I didn't like looking at the audience. I always made it a point that the light should be shining in my eyes, because it was very distracting to have someone in the front row stop smiling. I'd start directing the show towards him. The faces I didn't see looked very intelligent though." Tom says that by 1959 his mind began to wander during performances (34 in all that year, including 10 in England), he was even having a bit of trouble with his oft sung "Fight Fiercely, Harvard" at a Town Hall concert. "The performance had been on automatic pilot, and I had been thinking about what I was going to have for dinner afterwards or something like that, so I thought, 'OK, the time has come.'" At the age of 31 he made a decision to call a halt to touring and returned to Harvard Graduate school. He did accept a few bookings that were too good to refuse that took him into 1960 – a scant 33 concerts on a tour of Australia and New Zealand, and would appear here and there up until 1967.

Tom had also recorded a live (second) album on two consecutive evenings in March 1959 in Sanders Theater at Harvard. Lehrer wasn't certain live was the way to go, since *Songs By Tom Lehrer* had done so well and maybe his fans



The success of the play *Tomfoolery*, which opened in London in 1980 led to the publication the following year of a songbook called *Too Many Songs By Tom Lehrer*, containing 34 of his songs.

wouldn't warm to the new sound, the different effect of Tom on stage. So, as only he might do, on July, 8, 1959, he remade all eleven of the new songs in a studio version ... and unlike the bare bones first album, enlisted the best engineers and state-of-the-art sound equipment at RCA Victor Studios in New York City. Give the public what they want, even if they aren't sure that's what they wanted. Fans could choose the studio album,

More Of Tom Lehrer (that looked like the first album except for the blue cover rather than red, and a new 12-inch format), or the live version, *An Evening Wasted With Tom Lehrer*, with introductions and audience reaction, take your pick for \$4.95. Of course, most purchasers had to have both. And you could even buy newfangled stereo versions for a dollar more. Tom's "farewell concerts" were at London's Royal Festival Hall, and lastly, on July 2, 1960 at the Empress Theater in Glasgow. A reprise of sorts was the artist's association with the television program *That Was The Week That Was*

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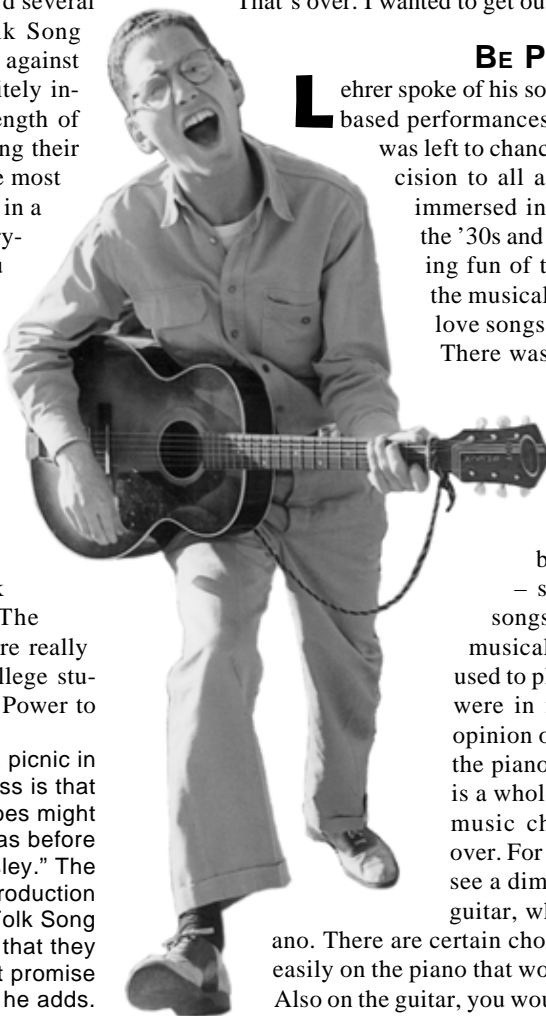
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that aired in 1964. They used a fair number of the topical songs he submitted, although he did not perform them on the air. Another album, *That Was The Year That Was* got recorded in 1965. There followed isolated television and concert appearances thereafter, tweaking and reissuing of albums and various other ramifications, even a review of his material instigated by the noted producer Cameron Mackintosh called *Tomfoolery*, which opened in London in 1980. The success of the play led to the publication the following year of a songbook called *Too Many Songs By Tom Lehrer*, containing 34 of his songs. Much more history is covered in the excellent liner notes, "Too Many Facts About Tom Lehrer," written by Barry Hansen (aka Dr. Demento) in the nifty book supplied with the new Rhino box set. You also get all of the recordings, including three tracks unique to this collection – "Selling Out," "(I'm Spending) Hanukkah In Santa Monica," and "Trees," as well as children's material written and performed for PBS's *The Electric Company*, plus the complete lyrics to all songs.

THE FOLK SONG ARMY

As to his association with the folk crowd way back when, Lehrer says he never thought of himself as a folk singer, and points out that the folkies really never claimed him as their own, either. "I don't think they did. I heard several objections to my song called 'The Folk Song Army,' although that song was not really against folk music. 'The Irish Ballad' was definitely intended to make fun of folk songs, the length of them. In those days the people would bring their guitars to the party and whoever knew the most verses won ... and if you could sing along in a foreign language – a song such as 'Everybody Loves Saturday Night' – oh boy, you were really the hit. So, this was a self-defense. But 'The Folk Song Army' was more against the folksingers who were taking themselves so seriously – the age of Aquarius ... and everything's going to change because we're singing. They would talk about the 'people,' always the 'people,' when they were really talking about fellow college students. It's the way we used to sing union songs, not mockingly, but certainly tongue in cheek ('There once was a union maid ...') The 'people' that went to hear Joan Baez were really not the *people*, I think they were the college students. There was always that talk about 'Power to

Tom says of this photo, taken at a picnic in Rockport, Massachusetts, "My best guess is that this was taken in 1952. (The saddle shoes might provide a clue.) In any event it was before anyone had ever heard of Elvis Presley." The guitar was donated to the New York production of *Tomfoolery* in 1981 for use in the "Folk Song Army" number, "... on one condition: that they promise *never* to return it to me. That promise was kept." he adds.



the People.' In fact, 'the people' elected Ronald Reagan ... screw 'the people,' I say."

Lehrer was not in a shell politically. He performed benefits first for Eugene McCarthy, then switched and signed on to do the California fundraising for Bobby Kennedy ("McCarthy was such a jerk"), and worked for McGovern. "The Democratic Party asked me if I wanted to be a commentator on the side. I said only if you change the theme song to 'Send In The Clowns.' When McGovern came to town, they called and asked if I wanted to meet him. I answered, 'No. I'll either meet him or work for him – but not both.'" Lehrer adds, "I worked for a lot of losing candidates and hapless causes. Only one candidate I ever worked for won, that's Father Drinan who ran for congress in Massachusetts. That scared me. I thought, 'Wait a minute, something is going wrong here. So, at these rallies, SNCC or any of those, I would meet Phil Ochs and Peter, Paul and Mary. To shake hands and say 'Hello,' but not to hang out with them ... we didn't play the same places. Occasionally, I was on the bill with a folksinger, such as Ian and Sylvia, but mostly it was pop singers. I was familiar with them, they with me. I met Judy Collins ... but not to swap songs. That was another difference between them and me. You'd do a concert and go to a party afterwards, and they'd sing *more* songs at this party. I felt I did my part. That's over. I wanted to get out."

BE PREPARED

Lehrer spoke of his songwriting process and the piano based performances of his songs. He said nothing was left to chance, as there is mathematical precision to all aspects of the package. "I was immersed in popular songs of the time, of the '30s and '40s. I was writing songs, making fun of the attitudes of those songs, in the musical style of the songs themselves; love songs, folk songs, marches, football.

There was never any intention to spread the word. I am embarrassed that so much of it is a-a-b-a, where you switch to the sub-dominant and the bridge, it's just the same cliché. On the other hand, I was supposed to be making fun of those clichés – so I guess it's okay. The later songs were a little more imaginative musically. It's all those songs that I used to play on the piano, and the chords were in my fingers." I ask Lehrer his opinion of writing and performing from the piano versus the guitar. "The guitar is a whole different world. I notice how music changed when the guitar took over. For one thing the chords. You don't see a diminished 7th chord much on the guitar, which is very popular on the piano. There are certain chords that your fingers would hit easily on the piano that would be hard to do on the guitar. Also on the guitar, you would pick out a riff – strum some-

thing and sing along to it as opposed to playing the melody. So the songs become different. I gave a lot of thought to how I used the piano. It was always much easier. I tried to play the guitar, when everybody had to. I learned a few chords so I could sing a folk song once in a while. I did the 'The Irish Ballad' to shut everybody up. I like the idea that the notes were all in a row on a keyboard, where in a guitar, they hop all over the place.

"I'm pretty much left brain, I think. The music is worked out like a puzzle ... I mean a crossword puzzle. Everything has to go in its place and I spent a lot of time agonizing over a particular note, when it comes to writing it out. It's all very logical, as opposed to painting or sculpture. I would be hopeless at that. I couldn't do that at all. I certainly tried to make it a little more interesting, in the style of the songs that I was supposed to be making fun of. I certainly tried to make it a little more interesting than just oompah, oompah." As to the ideas for a song, Lehrer stresses, "It's impossible to say. In those days I would hear a song on the radio, such as, 'I Kiss Your Hand, Madam,' and so I thought, 'what if he only had the hand?' or a song about the South, or about football. I'd hear a particular song and thought, 'What about the reality behind those songs? Do people really care if Harvard beats Yale at the big game? No. But they sing the song just as if they did.' It was easier to make fun of those things, since they were silly to begin with."

Why no more songs? Well, there are reasons. "It's hard to know where one stands now," laments Lehrer, "I was an unrepentant old fashioned liberal, and I knew exactly where I stood, I still do, but there's always a 'however' and 'on the other hand' ... Affirmative action versus quotas, feminism versus pornography, Israel versus the Arabs. It's hard to come right out and say something." I ask if there are burning issues that compel him to write a song. "Only angry," he reflects. "But not funny. I don't want them to applaud the way they do when someone does a political joke on one of these talk shows. 'Dan Quayle is dumb ... Bob Dole is old ... Bill Clinton is promiscuous' ... it's too easy.' Every now and then I can think of a one liner. It comes out angry – like Phil Ochs. I really want the audience to laugh." I mention that the patter and introductions are always on the mark. "Oh, yes," he responds, "that's an interesting thing to work out – the word order. The good comedians know how to

do that. I'm sure you've heard a person tell a very funny joke badly, because they got the words wrong. I've had that experience seeing other actors, in a review of my stuff, doing the same lines. They don't quite get it, and then you have to tell them. It involves saying the line over and over and over in various word order until it sounds right to you." And what about hearing other people do his material? "It doesn't happen often. They either do it exactly like me – so what's the point? Sometimes they do it differently. The Reverend Billy C. Wirtz has recorded 'I Hold Your Hand In Mine.' It's really good. He makes it very sick."

THAT'S MATHEMATICS

For more recent history, Tom Lehrer has assumed the role of a bi-coastal mathematician. He resides half the year in Cambridge Massachusetts (he hasn't instructed a course at MIT since 1971) and then, to avoid the harsh New England winters, gads off to Santa Cruz, where since 1972 he has taught at UC-Santa Cruz. "It's not too taxing, I have a light load" – his "load" is one class. At MIT his favorite section was "Mathematical Models in the Social Sciences," today, "Infinity" delights the non-majors. Oh yes, contrary to popular misconception, he was never sued by Wernher Von Braun. "That's a common rumor, that I was forced to retire because Werner Von Braun took all my royalties. But, it's very clear cut. You can say things about a public figure that you can't say about a private person." Another is that Lehrer received his Ph.D. "I never got my Ph.D. I wanted to be a graduate student all my life and they wanted me to be a Ph.D. The two goals were incompatible." He is also perplexed that many of the reference books misquote him. "It's so strange to me, because it's a matter of public record." Finally, was he fired from Harvard? "I've occasionally heard that I was kicked out for being a Communist, for dealing drugs, for corrupting minors, or for diverse other infractions of local decorum. Unfortunately, none of these rumors are true. The one I've heard most often is that I'm dead. That one I encouraged, hoping it would cut down on the junk mail. It didn't."

DISCOGRAPHY

All of Tom Lehrer's recordings are currently available on CD. You can get them individually:

Songs & More Songs By Tom Lehrer, 1997, Rhino #72776 (Reissuing *Songs by Tom Lehrer*, 1953, Trans-Radio #740/Lehrer #101, and *More Of Tom Lehrer*, 1959, Lehrer #102, with a couple bonus tracks.)

An Evening Wasted With Tom Lehrer, 1959, Warner/Reprise #6199 (Originally Lehrer #202)

Revised, 1960, Warner/Reprise #26203 (Originally Lehrer #201)

That Was The Year That Was, 1965, Warner/Reprise #6179

Or get the whole shebang, everything Lehrer ever wrote and recorded plus a great hard-cover booklet with notes from Dr. Demento and Lehrer, himself, complete lyrics, cool photos and more:

The Remains Of Tom Lehrer, 2000, Rhino #79831 (Three discs plus booklet.)



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Roger Deitz is a regular contributor to these pages as well as a singer, songwriter and humorist in his own right.