



All content copyright © Roll Publishing, Inc

Visit us on the web at [www.rollmagazine.com](http://www.rollmagazine.com)



## Roll Back

by Peter Aaron

*The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem—In Person at Carnegie Hall: The Complete 1963 Concert*  
(Columbia/Legacy)

*Live 1969—Live 1969*  
(Columbia/Legacy)

*Fairport Convention/Matthews Southern Comfort—Live in Maidstone 1970*  
(Voiceprint Records)

Before the Pogues gave it a punkish update in the 1980s, Irish folk's leading exponents of export were the besweatered Clancy Brothers (Paddy and Tom, vocals; Liam, vocals and guitar) and their secret weapon, Tommy Makem (vocals, guitar, banjo, tin whistle). Besides foreshadowing Shane MacGowan and crew's Celtic-crossover sound, the Clancys and Makem were also ahead of them in bringing a particularly Irish brand of rebelliousness to the party; between the songs on this historic performance—recorded on St. Patrick's Day, naturally—are numerous wry digs at the occupying British (they sound pretty pleased to have JFK in the White House, though). The four originally emigrated to New York to pursue acting but instead found a warm home with the burgeoning folk revival, and have been named as an influence by Odetta and Bob Dylan. This slick double CD presents both sets from the rollicking '63 show and liner notes by Liam Clancy. But damn, those sweaters must've been hot up there...

Along with Dylan and Odetta, another pair who had been listening hard to Anglo-Celtic folk was Simon & Garfunkel; in the early 1960s Paul Simon had lived in England, where he'd played the coffeehouse circuit and learned "Scarborough Fair" and other native traditionals. At the time of the previously unreleased *Live 1969*, some of which was, like the above, taped at Carnegie Hall, Simon & Garfunkel were at the top of their game. Then as popular as the Beatles, the duo was dividing their time between the stage and the studio, where they were at work on 1970's *Bridge Over Troubled Water* (the moment here when that album's eternal title tune is introduced as "one of our new songs" is beyond spine-tingling). Although the two would soon after have one of their legendary falling-outs and not perform together again for another 13 years, no such animosity is audible on the 17 impeccably recorded tracks here, which include magical readings of "The Boxer," "Homeward Bound," "I Am a Rock," and, of course, "The Sound of Silence." One can only listen, stunned, and wonder why these incredible performances sat in Columbia's vaults until now.

Fairport Convention, formed in 1967 and, best known for giving the world genius singer-songwriter and guitarist Richard Thompson, modernized English folk by crossing it with the electric sounds of Jefferson Airplane and similar contemporary San Francisco acts. Lifted

(now out on DVD), *Live in Maidstone 1970* sports five songs from an outdoor festival that July, all branded with Thompson's impossibly fluid fretwork and violinist Dave Swarbrick's rapid, searing bow. Also here are two tracks by ex-Fairport guitarist Ian Matthews's band, *Matthews Southern Comfort*. Diggers of Vetiver, Six Organs of Admittance, and the rest of the recent freak-folk scene will roundly approve.—**Peter Aaron**

*Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, Simon & Garfunkel:*  
[www.legacyrecordings.com](http://www.legacyrecordings.com)

*Fairport Convention/Matthews Southern Comfort:*  
[www.voiceprint.co.uk](http://www.voiceprint.co.uk)

[\[top\]](#)



Roll magazine - [www.rollmagazine.com](http://www.rollmagazine.com)