

[Ebook free] Set into Song: Ewan MacColl, Charles Parker, Peggy Seeger and the Radio Ballads

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Peter Cox

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Peter Cox : Set into Song: Ewan MacColl, Charles Parker, Peggy Seeger and the Radio Ballads before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Set into Song: Ewan MacColl, Charles Parker, Peggy Seeger and the Radio Ballads:

Peter Cox's new book "Set Into Song - Ewan MacColl, Charles Parker, Peggy Seeger and the Radio Ballads" tells the story of a remarkable collaboration, one which produced a groundbreaking series of eight hour-long radio programmes. The first, "The Ballad of John Axon", was originally broadcast on 2 July 1958, so the book is timed for its 50th anniversary. Uniquely, the programmes took the speech of working people, until then almost always voiced by actors, and allowed them to tell their own stories. They spoke them into the new 'Midget' mobile tape recorder, wherever they lived and worked - in railway yards, on fishing vessels, down pits, on bulldozers, in Traveller encampments. Their stories were woven together by Ewan MacColl with songs that he wrote specially for the programmes after listening intensely to the language and rhythms of the voices, and by the young Peggy Seeger, who designed the musical setting and directed the performers. The programmes were rehearsed and recorded under the overall direction of the visionary Birmingham radio producer Charles Parker, a pioneer of the new painstaking art of tape splicing. The book tells the story of the making of the programmes, and of the lives of their begetters - three very

different people, whose complementary talents created brilliant radio programmes which were hugely influential on subsequent documentary makers - before and after the Radio Ballad period. Begun in 1958, they were ended by the BBC in 1964, as radio lost its popularity and its money to television. In researching the book, Peter scoured the archives, but above all tracked down every living participant, from singers to jazz musicians to radio engineers, to record their memories. Names that form a roll-call of the early folk revival, such as Ian and Lorna Campbell, Bob Davenport, Ray Fisher, John Faulkner, Stan Kelly, Louis Killen, Gordon McCulloch, Jimmie McGregor, Colin Ross, Elizabeth Stewart and Dave Swarbrick - as well as Peggy Seeger herself.