

MINSTRELSY

“More dulcimers came out of those hills than ever went into them...” And so it has been that the handful of people out of a thousand, and the hundred thousand out of a nation step away from the things they know, clinging only to a whispered promise in some half-remembered dream of themselves—something to be found in another valley or over another mountain. These are the minstrels.

Historically, they’ve permeated the fabric of mankind and woven it into a greater humanity. They took the thoughts, the events of one place and painted these stories for people of still somewhere else. Their tools were conversation, song, dance, music, and perhaps some laughter gathered at the expense of a joke on themselves. They have had many names and have worn many faces.

The twentieth century has brought us the perils and illusions of newer, faster communications, but now we have created new isolations, new xanadus, with different valleys, other mountains, and a new people with old eyes. Music, for some the liberator of the very personal spirit, has now become a race, a competition. The Musician has become an institutionalized, marketed commodity that is spoon-fed and fostered by a carefully watched electronic cult.

There is always a place to sleep, some food to eat, and sometimes even a little money for people whose lives bring peace.

AN APOLOGY AND A POEM

Here starts our apology: in as many cases as possible we have shifted the burden of teaching onto you, knowing that a book of this kind ultimately serves more as an information source and an encouragement than as a methodical teaching system. We’ve left out learning songs because we believe if you first learn