

Len Chandler at KRLA

Len Chandler Sings the News

By Bill Yaryan

staff singer-poet," first wrote made-to-order verse when, as a sixth-grade stu-dent in Akron, Ohio, he penned a love letter for a friend at the bargain basement price of 25 cents.

"It worked, loo," remembers Len, the first resident singer hired[;]byia radio station in 20 years, "He married the girl in the twelfth grade."

KRLA, situated in a bungalow next to the Huntington-Speraton Hotel, hasn't been the same since Len's songs, as well as numorous based on the day's events, bewell as humorous skits came a part of the station's newscasts a month ago.

Chandler, 33, was an initiafor and guiding light of the topical song movement which grew out of the folk music revival in the early 1960s, and which included such othersinger-poets as Bob Dylan, Tom Paxton and Phil Ochs.

All have been called "children of Woody," after the songwriter of the Depression, Woody Guthrie, because their at first, were concerned primarily with social injustice. Woody wrote about the role of Wall Street and the dust storms in driving farmers from their lands and putting people out of work. Chan-dier, Paxton, Dylan and Ochs, during the civil rights movenient, wrote about the casualties of racism. While their lyrics were often packed with emotion, their melodies, like Guthrie's, were always simple, based on the blues or country folk music and accompanied on a guitar.

While the songs of Paxton, Dylan and Ochs have since become more personal and complex, Chandler has remained primarily in the topicall bag, though his charming children's song, "Beans in my Ears," shows that he's equally adept with light lyrics.

Chandler's songs always do more than tell a story; at best, they provide flashes of illuminating insight.

"I prefer to look at the microcosm and comment on the

macrocosm," he explains.
Chandler's father was a saxophone and clarinet player in bands backing Billy Eckstine and Lona Horne, and his mother encouraged him to attend chamber musical recitals as a boy in Akron, He took up the oboe and french horn, and eventually got a master's degree in music education at

In New York Chandler heard tolk music for the first fime. Walter "Whitey" Lehrman, a friend from Ak-ron, played him records by Guthrie, Leadbelly and Big Bill Broonzy. Down in Greenwich Village's Washington Square he listened to the Sunday lolk singers and met Dave Van Ronk.

He was the first person I ever heard finger-pick a gui-tar," Chandler says. "I hocked my banjo-mandolin and bought a Stella guitar for

Len Chandler, KRLA's learn the guitar, Van Ronk met Chandler in Mississippi sang for the children at St. where he was filming a docu-Barnabas House where Chanmentary, "What Shall the Harvest Be," which eventualdler was a counselor. "In the beginning I went ly included three of his songs. He told Chandler about his ideas for a subjective, crea-

through a period of frying to be Leadbelly." Chandler said, 'a black sharecropper instead of a kid from Akron. Singing at the Gaslight Cafe

n Macdougal Street, where Peter, Paul and Mary, and other singers got their start, Chandler concentrated on traditional material. But being a classically-trained composer who had also written music for musical comedies and plays in school, it was not long before he began to write his own songs.

"The first topical song I ever wrote was called 'Bus Driver,' about an accident in Greely, Colorado, where 20 kids were killed. I saw the story in the newspaper and wrote the song that same day, singing it that night at the Gaslight. When I finished the audience was silent. It took a few minutes before they responded, not because didn't like it but because they were moved."

Chandler continued to comment on the daily news with song (he has two LPs of topical and non-topical songs on Columbia) but what was happening in the South didn't really hit home until 1963 when he went to Atlanta to attend a conference on freedom songs and Negro music.

According to his friend, Julius Lester: "Since that time he has increasingly used his talents, not for his aggrandizement, but for the "movement,' He is one of those alltoo-few name singers who appear at benefits for small organizations, where he won't even get any publicity for anpearing, not to mention money. He'll spend his own money to go five hundred miles away to sing for the Poor People's Corporation of Mississippi or the Freedom Democratic Party. For almost two years he lurned his apartment into a hotel for SNCC workers laking much needed vacations from the battlefield."

KRLA newsman Lew Irwin

Local Actor In 'Tartuffe'

The featured role of Valere in Moliere's comedy "Tartuffe" opening a two week engagement at the Huntington Hartferd Theatre Monday evening will be played by Pasadenan Mark Bramball, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dexier Bramhall, Burleigh Drive.

Mark attended Pasadena Polytechnic School and later studied acting as a Fulbright scholar at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts.

He is now a member of the American Conservatory Theatre, based in San Francisco. The ACT is sending two of its brightest productions to Los Angeles, "Tartufe" and Dylan Thomas' "Under Milk-wood" (July 15-27), Bramhall In addition to helping him appears in both plays.

Stars Forgotten By Vernon Scott

Older

It was Long John Silver in ''Treasure Island'' who raised his crutch and railed at the enemy: "Them that die'll be

the lucky ones!"

The rascally mutineer of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic might well have applied his warning to today's motion picture stars.

There are fewer dispiriting sights than yesterday's idols. You and I go about our work in anonymity. The hot shot insurance salesman retires contentedly to fish. The are welder may end up with a chicken ranch, the bus driver at a retirement community playing shuffleboard.

But you and I, the sales-man, welder and bus driver were never beloved by hundreds of millions of persons in our lifetimes.

Our faces are unfamiliar except to a handful of friends and acquaintances.

But consider the movie and television stars.

What happens when they outlive their stardom? Some gracefully accept retirement, xamples: Irene Dunne, Claudette Colbert, Jimmy Cagney. They are the exceptions.

Others become drunks, drug addicts, suicides, mental cases or public spectacles.

One leading man of a de-cade ago is under constant care of a male nurse, a hope-less alcoholic. He's unable to work or function as a human being, His face is used up.

One of the leading glamor girls of World War II waits at home for the telephone to ring, hoping it's her agent or even a man asking for a date

Still another once great beauty roams from country to country, continent to continent, in a relentless escane from herself. At least among foreigners she is spared the pity evident on faces that once worshipped her as a sex goddess.

news format and two

years later, when the idea fi-

nally bure fruit, he called him

in New York and invited him

to be KRLA's singer-poet, a

position the union couldn't

even find in its book (they

settled on calling him a disc

Two days after arriving in

was home when I heard

returned to the station

Pasadena, Chandler was handed his biggest challenge.

that Kennedy had been shot," he explained, "and I immedi-

and began writing a song."
The result, "Circle Game,"

"Let us grieve for all men

That sweeps through this land

Some vote with the ballot

And a hate vote from either is

This foul type of turnabout knows no fair play;

The hate circle's order is ter-

And mourning each morning

After the funeral, he wrote:

"Long lines of mourners, long

Long lines at the teletype

Long lines at the ballot box,

Of another lonesome train

Tucked away at a corner

desk in the KRLA bungalow,

plugs in his ears to drown out

the noise, Chandler types

away at his old Remington

portable, getting up every now and then to look at the

teletype copy or to plunk out

think I couldn't write in the

morning. But I've found I'm

deadline oriented. The pres-

"Woody Guthrie would have

really dug this, being able to

write songs about your reactions to what your head is subjected to, and then to per-

form them for a large audi-

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ence right away.'

sure really helps me create.

a tune on his guitar. "I get here at 7 a.m.," he explained. "And I used to

lines, the long, long

spelling out the pain,

casting votes in vain;

track

lines of the slain,

for the deaths of each day...."

ror and slaughter

like a death motorcade:

some vote with the bullet,

as deadly as plague. . . .

wrongs that we've dou-bled will soon be quadru-

who are felled by the vio-

is superb:

lence

A headline reports the death of a one-time star as "accidental overdose" of drugs. The story comes from a friend or a family doctor, sometimes a member of the family. But it is stretching the Such deaths among stars are rarely accidental.

Those stars who see the end of their careers sometimes prolong their public lives through surgery.

Face lifts are commonplace among both male and female performers. Hair transplants rejuvenate the receding hair-line. Cosmetic surgery will hide the wrinkles and crows feet for perhaps another two or three years.

The tragedy lies not in the fact that the fading star faces economic disaster, but that he cannot reconcile himself to becoming a has-been. Yet it is as inescapable as death itself. Every generation has its "now" people, its "today"

Oldtimers must be nushed aside to make room for the Warren Beattys, The Beatles, Julie Andrews, Sean Conneries. Mia Farrows and Faye Dunaways.

It is they who draw the shricks of the crowd at a premiere while a Lana Turner or Ray Milland may slip past un-

Television is a temporary escape hatch for the ex-movie star. He or she - one a prince or princess of celluloid announces a new video series adding that the slow pace of movies or lack of challenge has opened new vistas on the small tube They fail, however, to face

the facts,

Movie stars turn to television as a last resort. The work is harder, the hours longer, the kow-towing diminished, the pay less.

Should the series succeed it may prolong a career for years. If it fails, generally all is lost, save perhaps the demeaning stock company.

Long John Silver knew

were worse things than death. ************

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Dinah Shore Keeps Busy

Dianah Shore a coloratura? "Well, hardly," the colorful entertainer set the record straight with a laugh, "Just because I plan to sing with some line symphony orchestras this summer doesn't mean I'm about to hit the scales. I'm not at all like that mountain climber who has to scale Mt. Everest just because it's there. I'm more the terra firma kind. I'll stick to what I know.'

And what Dinah knows is quite considerable-chiefly that a girl has to move perpetually to keep up with the changing world. Accordingly she's stepping into new pastures, having long since conquered the recording, television and night club fields.

"I'm going to start the concerts at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville on June 25." she points out. "The last time I was there was when our learn at Hume Fogg High School in Nashville traveled there and I went along as cheer-leader. But I hope nobody looks up those

It was that cheer-leading chore, in fact, that kayoed Di-nah's career as an operatic soprano. "My siging teacher tired to make me a Lily Pons for a couple of weeks, then handed me an ultimatum: It would have to be either cheerleading or singing. One would have to go. She couldn't compete with the foggy quality I was getting in my voice. So I picked cheer-leading," she recalls.

Dinah is also heading for the beautiful new Performing

Arts Center at Saratoga Springs in New York on June 27. I ought to get in a little tennis and golf while up there in those glorious surroundings," she said wistfully.

On June 29, she'll be at Clowes Memorial Hall in Indianapolis and then will fly for an affair of the heart in Chicago. There, on July 1, she'll give a benefit performance with her ahalia Jackson for underprivileged children

"That marvelous lady is doing such fine work for so many people. I feel privileged to be asked to appear with Mahalia," she said with feeling.

Appearances with the Washington National Sysmphony in Columbia, Maryland. on July 3, and with the Cleveland Symphony on July 5 and li, conclude the first phase of the summer concerts. That doesn't seem to leave much time for leisure, but Dinah makes out.

"I flew to Birmingham recently to play golf for charity," she said. "And guess who else was there? Julious Boros, Billy Casper and many top pros like that. I had a chance to take some lessons, and it really helped. I managed to hit that ball an average of 240 yards! I ouit right there while I was ahead. I've never lost a lesson" she laughed,

Always on some sort of a new kick, the singer has been concentrating recently on needlepoint: "The way I'm going I'll cover every piece of furniture in the house.

What about TV—is she still a holdout? "Not really," she states, "and III point to my record. After all, I did a couple of Ed Sullivan guest shots and I did a million spots for Rowan and Martin's 'Laugh-In." Oh, and I made my talk show debut recently, appearing on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, I thought I might talk too much. You know, I'm a Southern girl and I never use one word when a thousand will do. We received such good response on our only special last season, the Nashville Sound that I'd like to do a lew more. Also, I'm going to do the Lucy Show next fall. I'd hardly say I was off TV. Don't you Dinah could make Averell Harriman and Ho Chi Minh

musical shows are currently drawing large crowds of enthusiastic theatregoers to the Music Center for what many have voiced as one of the finest seasons of summertime theatre entertainment in the history of the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera.

Angela Lansbury in her ori-ginal Broadway role of "Auntie Mame," in the musical version of the famous stage play, "Mame" joyously romps through situation after situation in her hectic free-wheel-ing social whirl to educate her young nephew Patric Dennis in the ways of the world, at the Pavilion of The Music Center.

Across the Music Center Plaza, the Alimanson Theatre continues to pack 'em in at ''Cabaret," the musical blockbuster about the pleasure loving Berliners in the jazzy era of 1929-30,

Signe Hasso, Leo Fuchs and Melissa Hart head a large cast that features Robert Salvio. Gene Rupert, David Rounds, and Catherine Gaffigan.

In a manner of speaking both "Mame" and "Cabarel" represent Broadway moved to Los Angeles In preparation as the final

event of the current Civic Light Opera season is "Rosastarring Jean Fenn, Cyril Ritchard, and Hans Conried with the Wiere Brothers, scheduled to open Sept. 3 in the Pavilion



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