

# S.A. priest sings

# worldly ballads

By JOHN HARTDEGEN

**FATHER BARNEY McALEER, Roman Catholic priest, is one of the star folk-singers at the 1967 Folk Festival being held in Johannesburg this week.**

"He sings boisterous Irish ballads—some of them could even be called worldly," Mr. Ben Segal, chairman of the South African Folk Music Association, told me.

Mr. Keith Blundell, one of South Africa's leading folk singers, added: "Father McAleer is one of the discoveries of this year's festival. He has a good stage personality and a fine col-

lection of authentic Irish songs."

The singing, swinging priest is a shy, diffident man, aged 30, who grew up in Pomeroy, Northern Ireland, and came to South Africa three years ago.

At the Roman Catholic Cathedral in End Street this week, I persuaded him to stage a one-man show specially for the SUNDAY TIMES.

He sang, among others, a fine old Irish ballad about a girl who was getting desperate to find a husband. He also played Irish reels on a banjo-mandolin.

## Folk festival

This year's folk festival opened at the Troubadour, in Noord Street, Johannesburg, on Friday night and is due to continue until this Sunday.

Mr. Des Lindberg, a star folk-singer, said the South African Folk Music Association hoped to raise R7,000 from this year's festival.

The money would be used to establish a study grant in collaboration with universities, to investigate the origins of indigenous folk music in South Africa.

"Much of our home-grown folk music will disappear if we don't succeed in recording and preserving it," he said.

"The Bushmen, the Malays, the various African tribes and the Coloured people have a tremendous musical culture. We feel it would be a shame if it were to disappear.

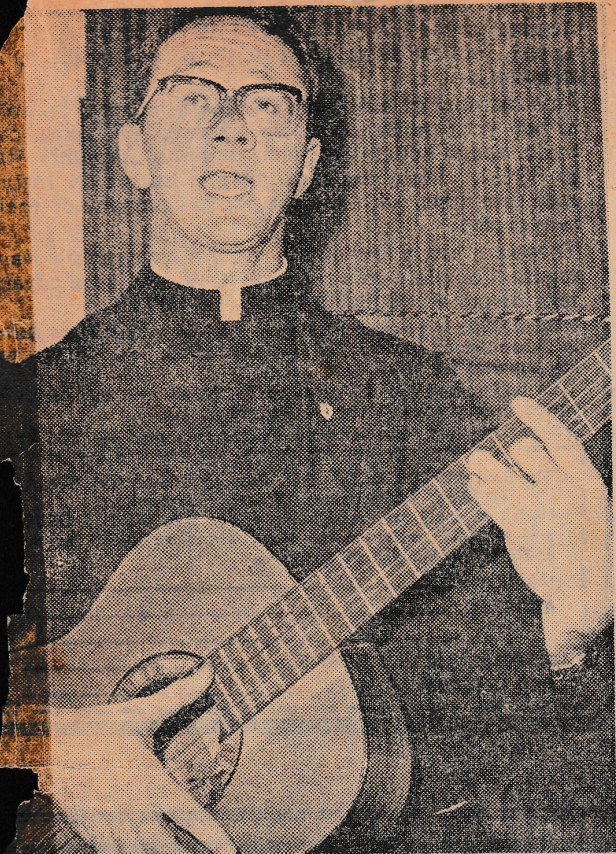
"Folk-singers in this country have done well, commercially and otherwise. We feel this is an opportunity to put something back into folk-song."

## Field research

Mr. Lindberg hopes a study grant will enable a university-trained musicologist to undertake a programme of field research to collect and analyse folk music.

The association is working closely with Hugh Tracey, who has established a library in Roodepoort and has assembled a mass of material.

The folk festival is being held in three venues simultaneously—the Troubadour, where folk music first gained a foothold in South Africa, the gymnasium behind the Troubadour, and in a disused art gallery nearby.



The singing priest, Father Barney McAleer, who is one of the "discoveries" of this year's folk festival.

**DOING IT QUIETLY**



Des Lindberg . . . he hopes this year's festival will raise R7,000 for a study grant.



"Quietly now," Keith Blundell tells his chorus of folk-singers. The picture was taken at a rehearsal.