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Dave Marks talks to**ANNE STEVENS ...****Top single
from Dave****ALL GO
ON THE
FOLK
SCENE**

many who are aware of what is going on around them.

"As the president of the South African Folk Music

Association, it's part of my job to gather together material indigenous to this country, and underwrite the activities of the International Library of African Music at Roodepoort. This is a position that I've held on a full-time basis for the past year — I'm not really interested in singing myself.

"Too many budding musicians write about the customs and conditions of other countries, when they should be writing about their own. Even our Africans are inclined to imitate the American negro and township music is disappearing fast, which is a great pity.

"We're doing all we can to stimulate an interest in folk. SAFMA has produced several albums with a limited circulation and we've staged several shows like the recent free concert in Johannesburg. We've also been combining poetry readings

DAVE MARKS the prime fighter for the rights of South African acoustic musicians, has just produced a knockout single. It is a re-done "Fairy Gold", a song he wrote in 1967 which was taken onto the charts by Nick Taylor.

But all that remains of the original song are the words and basic melody-line. Marks has revamped the whole thing using former Freedom's Children bassman Barry Irwin, former Abstract Truth lead guitarist Kenny Henson, Kevin Kruger drums, and banjo-man, Bob Denton — and himself, of course.

Says Marks: "It's got Barry Irwin on 'cello as well. I needed this sequence, this deep 'cello sequence. Originally I asked Kenny to bow the parts on his guitar . . . you know, as low as he could go. Then Barry said he'd been taking 'cello lessons. Bring it along, I told him. And it was a knockout — long, sonorous single notes and then slashing lead breaks from Kenny."

The single was released through Teal last week.

DAVE MARKS is a very intense young man.

Sprawled in a chair in the hotel lounge he smiles uncertainly as I sit down, then his face relaxes to the more familiar, grave lines. He winces at the mention of his past — this is not quite what he had in mind for an interview. No, not his future either — not him at all if I don't mind. Well, how about folk music . . .

Dave Marks (one of the country's foremost composers with early hits like Mountains of Men and Master Jack, which he'd rather forget) becomes animated at once and sits bolt upright

Years

"Folk. You know South Africa's folk roots go about as deep as the grooves on last week's album . . .

"American country music goes back hundreds of years — jazz has been played by the negro for even longer. Every country has its traditional folk songs — except South Africa. The Americans sang as they trekked across their land — and country and western was born. Our ancestors were too busy praying.

"All we're left with is boeremusiek — which is very contrived anyway — and some of the songs of the Cape Malays. The early Calvinistic influence in this country has destroyed all our musical tradition — we have no traditional folk of our own and so have borrowed from other countries.

Folk

"We have contemporary folk — there are a lot of good composers around at the moment — but there are only English songs. I'm sure that there must be the same sort of activity among the young Afrikaans people, but

with our weekly folk meetings and it's gone over a gas.

"Politics play an important part in music too, but sometimes one cannot say what one thinks.

"Our public is very out of touch. Unless a film show is included in a programme of music, they aren't interested. Sometimes I can't help thinking that we're fighting a losing battle.

**CRY THE BELOVED
COUNTRY, CRY**

*I hear it's going well for you and all your people
I see it's going well for us and all our kind.
Me, I'm moving 'round in all the better circles
which always get me back to the ways I've left behind.*

*Back to the days when I was almost a true believer
back to the times when you almost had my soul.
You said you'd show me how to get across my people
then you tried to build a bridge with some bible that you stole . . .*

*When the winds of change have called the storm,
don't ask the thunder why!
We've had time to change it all, and we didn't even try . . .
Cry the beloved country, cry.
Cry the beloved country, cry.*

(Words and music by DAVID MARKS. Used with permission of THIRD EAR MUSIC. P-1970)

