

TOM CHAPIN

TOM CHAPIN “At The Turning Point” - Track Notes

Track 1. **At The Turning Point (4:23)** by Si Kahn & Tom Chapin

This is the only song written for this recording and this occasion: a song celebrating both the place and the metaphor. The place: small clubs like *The Turning Point* are where so many of us, the troubadours/music soldiers/road warriors, first performed, found our voices, learned our craft. The metaphor: in a sense every song, every concert, every day is a turning point, whether we recognize it or not. And sometimes, if we're lucky, the most specific lyric turns out to be the most universal.

Guitar, bass, piano and male vocal harmonies.

Track 2. **Pass The Music On (4:09)** by Si Kahn & Tom Chapin

Years ago I told Si Kahn the story of how the Chapin Brothers heard the recording of *The Weavers At Carnegie Hall* and decided that “we could do that!” We were not alone: a whole generation of folk singers and folk groups like Tom Paxton and Peter, Paul & Mary were similarly inspired. Here is the song that emerged.

Guitar, bass, piano and male vocal harmonies.

Track 3. **A Bridge To Somewhere (3:24)** by John Forster & Tom Chapin

This song came from hearing another one of those “bridge to nowhere” stories of Federal funds being misspent by some Congressman or Senator. John and I decided to build a song about possibility.

Guitar, bass, piano and male vocal harmonies.

Track 4. **Ladies Of The Line (3:01)** by Tom Chapin

I wrote this in the summer of 1974 in the Island of Rhodes. I was there filming the 4th year of my Sunday morning ABC-TV Children's Show, *Make A Wish*. Spending evenings with my not-yet-wife Bonnie in that beautiful ancient harbor brought these lyrics to mind. Jessica grew up hearing me sing this, and now sings it to (and with) her daughter Myra Jean. Now I get to sing it with Abigail, Lily and Jessica.

Guitar, bass, piano and vocal harmonies by The Chapin Sisters.

Track 5. **This Pretty Planet II (3:03)** by John Forster & Tom Chapin

John and I wrote a “round for the round earth,” *This Pretty Planet*, for my first Family recording, *Family Tree*, back in 1988. A few years later we revisited the song, creating a gospel version in $\frac{3}{4}$ time with some added words.

Gospel piano, bass and guitar, male vocal harmonies and The Chapin Sisters (Abigail lead).

Track 6. **Song Of The Earth (4:02)** by Michael Mark, John Forster & Tom Chapin

This was written for the CD, *This Pretty Planet*, and I have always loved the poetry, melody and sentiment. It ends with an African proverb that I love, “Treat the Earth well. It was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children.”

Guitar, bass, piano and male vocal harmonies.

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Track 7. **Our Mothers Built This City (3:41)** by Si Kahn & Tom Chapin

I was one of 6 boys. My late oldest brother James, the brilliant historian, always told stories and imparted knowledge to his often obtuse younger brothers. And he once said about our hometown, NYC, “It’s amazing that our parents and grandparents built this city, and now we can barely maintain it.” We wrote this after I told Si that story.

Guitar, bass, piano and male vocal harmonies.

Track 8. **Ellis Island (5:20)** by Michael Mark & Tom Chapin

Michael and I both happened to visit the Ellis Island Museum in New York harbor with our families the same week. When we started talking about the experience we began this story song, which has become very powerful in this particular political moment.

Guitar, bass, piano and male vocal harmonies.

Track 9. **My Town Is A Salad Bowl (4:20)** by John Forster & Tom Chapin

John and I were attempting to write an “America, the great melting pot” song for *In My Hometown*. It was going nowhere until John said, “Maybe we’re using the wrong metaphor. How about a salad bowl?” I said “You mean we’re all vegetables?” He said “Yeah.” I said “Cool.”

Guitar, bass, piano and male vocal harmonies (with strong audience sing-along).

Track 10. **Blow Away The Blues (4:10)** by Peter Noah, sung by Michael Mark

This is a signature tune that Michael has been singing since I met him in 1981. His college friend Peter Noah wrote it, and I get to relax and play guitar.

Guitar, bass and piano (Michael Mark solo voice).

Track 11. **When You Let Your Baby Down (3:18)** by Tom Chapin

I always played guitar on this bluesy ballad, until one day I heard Pete Seeger on a record playing blues banjo and thought, “Hmmm, maybe I could try that.”

5 string banjo, bass, piano and male vocal harmonies.

Track 12. **Touch Someone (3:44)** written and sung by Jon Cobert

Jon sings his lovely piano-based song and I get to play my favorite guitar solo.

Piano, bass and guitar and male vocal harmonies (Jon Cobert solo voice).

Track 13. **Join The Jubilee (5:28)** by Tom Chapin

This is the first song that I ever wrote specifically for and on my Fladmark autoharp.

With Jon on accordion and Mike on bass. Autoharp, bass, accordion and male vocal harmonies.

Track 14. **Walk The World Now, Children (4:46)** by Michael Mark, John Forster & Tom Chapin

This started with the tune and the feel, a minor blues gospel song. And John and Michael and I found the words and the whole song in about an hour or less. It’s a great sing-along because there is one verse with minimal changes each time. So easy to learn, this is what Pete Seeger would have called a “zipper song.” Lily, Jessica and Abigail each lead a verse.

Guitar, bass, piano, male vocal harmonies, The Chapin Sisters and hand claps.

Track 15. **Together Tomorrow (3:50)** by John Forster & Tom Chapin

This is the last song that John and I wrote for *Family Tree* in 1988. It has closed many a family concert in the last 30 years, and closes this one as well.

Autoharp, accordion, concertina, Irish whistle, Jon and Michael and The Chapin Sisters vocals.