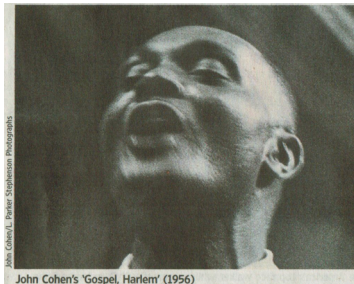


THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.  
**WSJ**

**WEEKEND**

Saturday/Sunday, February 25 -26, 2012



**John Cohen:**  
**Early Work, 1954-1957**

◆ **L. Parker Stephenson**  
**Photographs**  
764 Madison Ave.  
(212) 517-8700  
Through March 17

John Cohen is a musician, a founding member of the New Lost City Ramblers and a collector of folk music in Appalachia and elsewhere. His love of music and of the people who make it is evident in the pictures at Stephenson. There are seven photographs of black gospel singers in Harlem and East New York, close-ups that emphasize the deep emotion of those caught up in religious fervor. In "Harlem" (1954), two men with their eyes shut harmonize before a microphone. The woman in "East New York" (1956) is shot from a low angle so all we see of her face is her open mouth. Mr. Cohen photographed "Roscoe Holcomb's Hands" (1959) with the palms of the folk singer and banjo player turned up, revealing creases from a life of farming and mining. It was Mr. Cohen who coined the term "high, lonesome sound" to characterize Mr. Holcomb's music.

From Mr. Cohen's time studying at Yale are three moody pictures all titled "Elm

City Gym, New Haven" (1955), portraits of young, athletic men dreaming of careers boxing. In one, a fighter with a towel draped over his head leans on the ropes, closely watching the activity in the ring. And in one of two pictures titled "Gypsies, Oak Street, New Haven" (1955), Mr. Cohen caught a young woman with a couple of giggly children; she is exotic, dark-haired and beautiful, and she looks at the photographer with scorn.