

4

*Dyer-Bennet
records*

Richard Dyer-Bennet

TENOR accompanying himself on the classic Spanish guitar

A May Day carol The rising of the moon The Kerry recruit Searching for lambs The bonnets of bonnie Dundee
The Spanish lady in Dublin City The three ra'ens Song of reproach Jag vill gå vall The three tailors The swagman
The foggy, foggy dew The fox Drill, ye tarriers, drill!

Complete lyrics to all songs on this record included inside jacket

a long playing record on high fidelity

photos by Clemens Kalischer



Richard Dyer-Bennet 4

A note on this recording

During this summer of 1957 I intended to record enough material for two 12 inch discs. Indeed, Gordon Holt and I spent our customary hours experimenting with microphone heights and distances and finally managed to capture 28 songs on tape.

However, we were constantly contending with frogs, crickets, thunderstorms, and the audible arrival of the Berkshire Branch of the N.Y., N.H., and Hartford Railway's night train in Great Barrington. You may ask why we did not seek the soundproofed seclusion of a New York studio. The reasons are numerous and include: New York is 140 miles from my home and Great Barrington is 4; the private living room of a friend was made available at almost any time and proved to have good acoustics; our hosts refreshed us with gin and tonic at intervals, a custom not yet established so far as I know by rival studios.

To come to the point, upon close listening to the tapes we found 4 of the 28 songs marred by extraneous sounds. We also found that 14 of the songs, unmarred by the night sounds of the Berkshires, made an interesting record. In fact, my partner, Harvey Cort, believes that the selection thus pressed upon us is stronger than might otherwise have been the case. So here is our fourth release, and I trust Mr. Cort is right.

Richard Dyer-Bennet, August, 1957

Side 1 Group I

A May Day carol I learned this song from my grandmother about 30 years ago. She used to accompany me on the piano before I started playing the guitar. I call it "a" May Day carol, because there are many May Day carols. We are inclined to think of carols as belonging to Christmas, but there used to be several seasons of the year celebrated by carol singing. May Day has long been symbolic of spring, flowering, rebirth of life and love, and this song has all the freshness of the season. I confess a bowl of cream is not my first thought of a morning, even in May, but then this may also be symbolic.

The rising of the moon I learned this from the Irish actor, Ralph Cullinan, who came to America from Ireland in 1904 to play at the St. Louis World Fair. Cullinan was part of a group which included John McCormack, and may have remembered this song from the singing of that great tenor. According to legend, the phrase "the rising of the moon" was used as a pass word and rallying cry during the great rebellion.

The Kerry recruit My father remembers hearing this song by the Irish baritone Plunkett Greene at a school concert in England in the 1890s, though I did not learn it until the 1940s in New York. The song was popular among recruits in the British army shortly after the Crimean War. I added the last verse myself just as the tide began to turn in World War II and Russian military power was greatly appreciated in America. Though we are no longer so appreciative, the verse is still a good conclusion to the song.

Searching for lambs Collected in England by Cecil Sharp. The wandering quality is due to the song being in 5/4 time, with one measure of 3/4.

The bonnets of bonnie Dundee In 1638 a National Covenant was signed by many Scottish Presbyterians, agreeing to resist by force the introduction of episcopacy by Charles I. Among those who opposed the Covenanters were certain Royalists, and foremost of the Royalists was John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, 1649-1689. The tune is traditional and the words are by Sir Walter Scott.

The Spanish lady in Dublin City The origin of this is unknown to me. Perhaps it stems from a time when there was considerable traffic between Spain and Ireland. Perhaps the lady, or her father, floated ashore on a spar from the wreck of the Spanish Armada. I learned it in New York City about 15 years ago.

The three ra'ens First published in Thomas Ravenscroft's "Melismata", 1611, the song has always seemed to me to come from a much earlier period. At any rate, I have in mind a medieval tapestry when I sing it—a tapestry in which the figures move. Notice the verses about the "fallow doe, as great with young as she might go." The word "leman" in the last verse is old English for friend, companion, or possibly lover. "It sounds like a requiem for Chivalry", said a recent listener.

Side 2 Group II

Song of reproach Tune and original German words attributed to Hermann von Damen, a 13th century German Minnesinger. The English translation and guitar part are my own. I learned the song in Carmel, California, in 1939, from a man whose family had known it for several generations—I do not mean to imply they had passed it down orally since the 13th century; probably some one came across it in manuscript a few generations ago.

Jag vill gå vall A Swedish shepherd song, which I learned from my teacher, Gertrude Wheeler Beckman, in 1935. The whistling was not a part of the song as I learned it, though surely it is not an incongruous addition.

The three tailors This is a German folk tune, and the text I sing is my own free translation of a German text by K. Herlossohn. I got the song from Sven Scholander in Stockholm in 1935. (See my notes on R.D.-B. #1 for information about Scholander).

Group III

The swagman I learned this from a girl in San Jose, California, in 1936. She had learned it from a San Francisco newspaper man who had learned it in Australia. I have since learned that it was written by one "Banjo" Patterson, an entertainer in the gold mining camps of Australia a half-century ago. It was the unofficial song of the Australian troops in World Wars I and II, though they sang it as a marching song rather than as a narrative ballad. It is my own idea to sing the chorus in waltz time, and if Patterson did not write it so, he should have.

The foggy, foggy dew I do not know the origin of this, though I seem to remember hearing that it was Irish originally, and was called "The Weaver". At any rate, it is well known in America among college students. As a matter of fact, I first heard it from my fraternity brothers at the University of California in 1932. We used to think of it as a humorous and somewhat daring song. I had to grow considerably older and wiser before recognizing it for what it is, namely a sober and evocative song. When I sing it to an audience I can tolerate a wistful and reminiscent smile on a listener's face, but a laugh is definitely out of bounds.

The fox An American version of a song known in the British Isles for at least a century and a half. According to the "Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes", edited by Iona and Peter Opie, one verse only was published in "Gammer Gurton's Garland", 1810, and Sir Walter Scott mentions the song in a memorandum from around 1826.

Drill, ye tarriers, drill! I believe this song comes from a time in the 19th century when numbers of Irishmen, fleeing the potato famine, came to America and found work as railroad builders. The word "tarrier" means one who delays, but I have heard an alternative and more pleasing definition of the word as used in this song. The railroad work gangs may well have had terrier dogs as mascots; and the colloquial Irish pronunciation of "terrier" would be "tarrier".

Concluding note

I would like to call your attention to the scope and variety of material on this record. There is music from England, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Germany, Australia and America; and the time span is 13th to 20th century. What do these songs have in common? I do not have an answer, yet I feel a certain unity. Perhaps the unity exists only in the singer's mind, to be given a fleeting but recurring reality during the act of singing. Songs lie dormant in book, manuscript and memory, until they are sung. A recording can capture these moments of life and prolong them indefinitely. This is the chief satisfaction for me in making records.

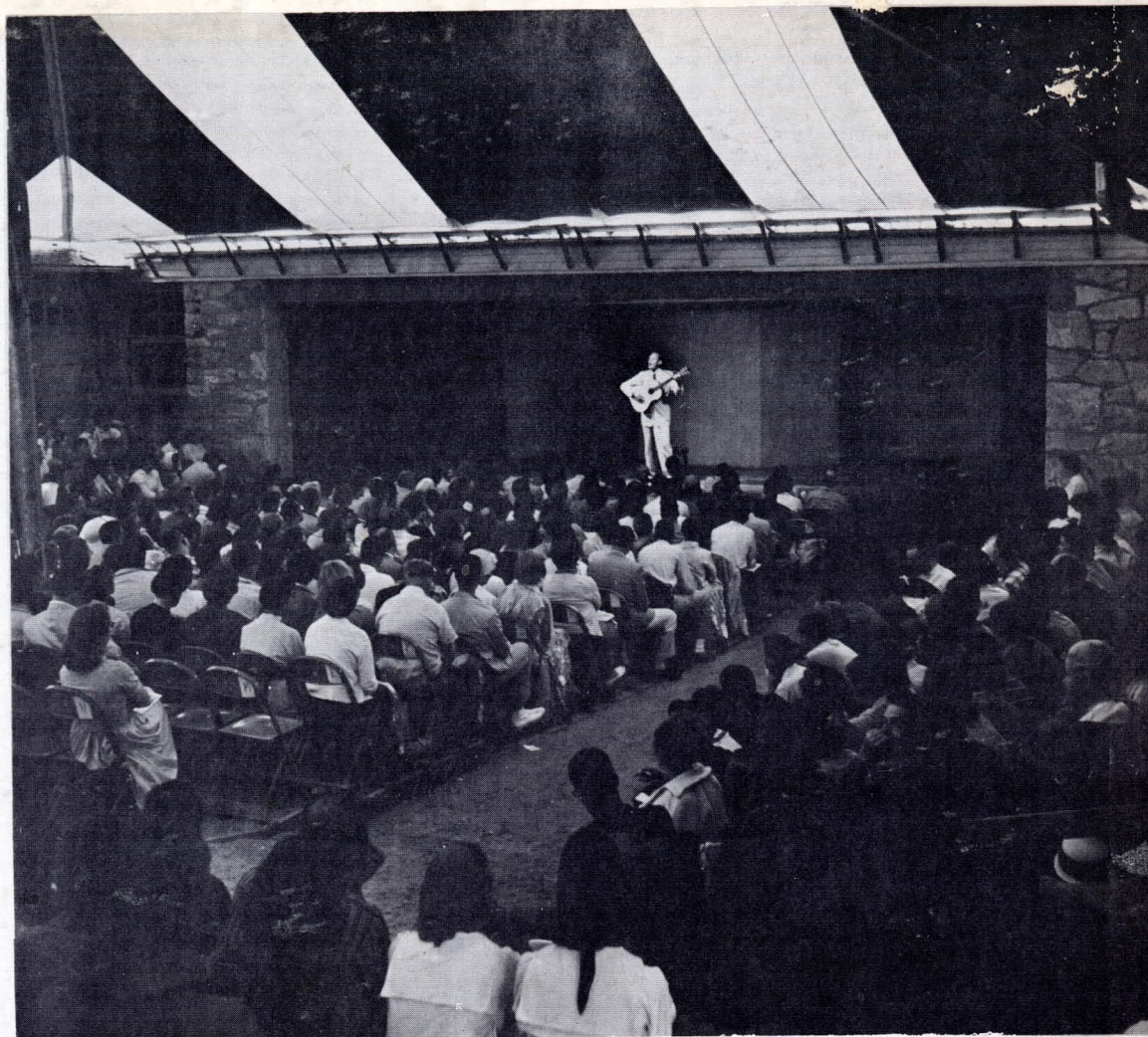
The guitar used on this recording was made for me by Manuel Velazquez of New York City. It is new, and I have not yet tamed it, but its quality is apparent. R.D.-B.

For best response on high fidelity phonographs, use R.I.A.A. characteristic.

Recording Engineer: J. Gordon Holt

Produced by Harvey Cort

Dyer-Bennet Records, P.O. Box 235, Woodside 77, N. Y.



Other albums in this series:

Richard Dyer-Bennet 1 (DYB 1000) 12" LP

includes

The lonesome valley Off in the stilly night The bonnie Earl of Morey
So we'll go no more a-roving The joys of love Molly Brannigan
Down by the Sally Gardens The bold Fenian men The three fishers
Fine flowers in the valley Phyllis and her mother The vicar of Bray
Pull off your old coat Down in the valley Pedro I'm a poor boy

Richard Dyer-Bennet 2 (DYB 2000) 12" LP

includes

Cock Robin Blow the candles out Corn rigs are bonnie
The garden where the praties grow Cockleshells The beggarman
Two maidens went milking The baliff's daughter of Islington Veilée de Noël
Jan Hinnerk Woman Go Home Eggs and marrowbone The turkish Reverie

Richard Dyer-Bennet 3 (DYB 3000) 12" LP

includes

The lady's policy Dinah and Villikens Fain would I wed
Willie Taylor Charlie is my darling Lilli burlero The beloved kitten
Spottlied Auf Napoleons Rückzug Aus Russland 1812
The lass from the low country The swapping song
The house carpenter The lady who loved a swine Go down, Moses

Richard Dyer-Bennet 5 (DYB 5000) 12" LP

includes

Greensleeves Lord Randal Westryn Wynde Venezuela John Henry
Spanish is the lovin' tongue Barbara Allen The white lily The Golden Vanity
The Quaker lover The brothers I ride an old paint

Richard Dyer-Bennet 6 (DYB 6000) 12" LP

Songs with young people in mind

includes

The leprechaun The piper of Dundee Three jolly rogues of Lynn John Peel
The tailor and the mouse Come all ye Green corn Old Bangum
The hole in the bottom of the sea Buckeye Jim The little pigs
The frog went a courting Go tell Aunt Rhodie One morning in May
The three crows Bow down

Richard Dyer-Bennet 7 (DYB 7000) 12" LP (Stereo: DYBS 7000)

Beethoven Scottish and Irish Songs

includes

Faithfu' Johnie On the massacre of Glencoe The lovely lass of Inverness
Bonny laddie, highland laddie Sunset The pulse of an Irishman
Once more I hail thee Morning a cruel tormentor is The return to Ulster
The morning air plays on my face Oh! who, my dear Dermot Again, my lyre