

7

Dyer-Bennet  
records

# Beethoven Scottish and Irish songs

TENOR Richard Dyer-Bennet

PIANO Natasha Magg

VIOLIN Urico Rossi

CELLO Fritz Magg

A long playing record on high fidelity Complete lyrics to all songs on this record included inside jacket

**this is a STEREOPHONIC RECORDING**

*A note on Beethoven's Scottish and Irish Songs, and on this recording*

Although these unusual songs do not merit inclusion with Beethoven's greatest works, they have a modest charm of their own and certainly merit a contemporary hearing. I have performed them with four different trios at one time or another, and in each case the music was a fresh and pleasant surprise to the musicians involved as well as to the listeners. Because they are virtually unknown to musicians and to audiences, an historical note is indicated.

George Thomson, (1757-1851), was a Scottish office clerk with a hobby of collecting Scottish folk-songs. He believed the traditional words could be improved upon, and that accompaniments should be written by the finest available composers. By various use of cajolery, appeals to national pride, and money, he was able to engage a number of distinguished poets and musicians in his enterprise. Among these were Scott, Burns, Haydn, and Beethoven. At Burns' suggestion he enlarged his venture to include Irish and Welsh songs.

The Beethoven settings were published in three volumes, two of Irish airs, in 1814 and 1816, and one of Scottish in 1818. In these original publications Thomson simplified some of Beethoven's harmonies, omitted sections of the 'cello and violin parts, and changed tempo indications. In the Breitkopf and Härtel edition of Beethoven's works, the original full score was printed, and it is the full score we use in this recording.

Performance of these songs presents certain difficulties. For one thing, Beethoven set the tunes without knowing what the words meant in some cases and without any texts, understood or not, in others. When Thomson felt the setting did not match the words, he commissioned new words to be written. In the case of a musical poet, this can be satisfactory; in several instances I fear the poets concerned were not very musical, for the prosody is awkward. Furthermore, the vocal line is sometimes doubled by violin or 'cello as well as by piano. I suspect this was a deliberate aid to the amateur singer who could not be trusted to hold her part unassisted. I say "her" part advisedly, for I also suspect the vocalists Thomson had in mind were the musical young ladies of the day. Now, a soprano voice would lift the melody an octave and give it some chance to soar above the other instruments, but the male voice has some difficulty projecting words through the surrounding pitches of piano, violin and 'cello.

In this recording, we did not forget that the music is song and the text of some importance; we also tried to keep in mind that it is not song with accompaniment, but rather song in quartet form, with text and vocal line together constituting the first violin part.

As to whether the music remains folk song or has become Beethoven, what does it matter? The question is a thorny one for reviewers, catalog compilers, and program planners in those final bastions of good music in this electronic century—the FM radio stations, bless their hearts. Whatever they are, the songs have life, charm and even beauty, and in the instrumental interludes and codas you may hear now and again the unmistakable touch of the German master.

*Richard Dyer-Bennet, September, 1958*

Left to right: Richard Dyer-Bennet, Fritz Magg, Natasha Magg, Urico Rossi.



**Other albums in this series:**

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

includes

The lonesome valley Off in the still 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

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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

**Side I**

'Faithfu' Johnie Scottish air with words by "Mrs. Grant."

On the massacre of Glencoe Scottish air with words by Sir Walter Scott.

Bonnie laddie, highland laddie Scottish air with words by James Hogg.

Sunset Scottish air with words by Sir Walter Scott.

The lovely lass of Inverness Scottish air with words by Robert Burns.

The pulse of an Irishman Irish air ("St. Patrick's Day") with words by Alexander Boswell.

**Side II**

Once more I hail thee Irish air with words by Robert Burns.

Morning a cruel turmoiler is Irish air with words by Alexander Boswell.

The morning air plays on my face Irish air with words by Joanna Baillie.

The return to Ulster Irish air with words by Sir Walter Scott.

Oh! Who my dear Dermot Irish air with words by William Smyth.

Again, my lyre Scottish air with words by William Smyth.

Because of the dialect and poetic ornament involved, the complete lyrics have been printed on a separate sheet inside this cover.

**Biographical notes on the musicians of the trio**

**Natasha Magg, pianist:** was born in Vienna. She has had a rich musical background on both sides of her family, and from childhood on has concertized as a soloist and chamber-music player.

**Urico Rossi, violinist:** a native of Connecticut, attended Juilliard, Yale, and the Eastman School of Music. His many appearances as soloist with symphony orchestras include ones with the Rochester, New Haven, and Indianapolis Philharmonics. Mr. Rossi is first violinist of the Berkshire Quartet and is Musical Director of Music Mountain.

**Fritz Magg, 'cellist:** is also Viennese by birth. His career has included, besides many solo appearances, the post of first cellist in both the Viennese Symphony and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestras. Mr. Magg is 'cellist of the Berkshire Quartet which is in residence during the summer at Music Mountain, Falls Village, Connecticut; and during the winter at Indiana University.

# Beethoven Scottish and Irish songs

Album design: Martin Rosenzweig

Photos by Clemens Kalischer

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

Recording engineer: J. Gordon Holt

Produced by Harvey Cort

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# Richard Dyer-Bennet 7

## Faithfu' Johnie

'When will you come again, my faithfu' Johnie,  
When will you come again?'  
"When the corn is gathered,  
And the leaves are withered,  
I will come again, my sweet and bonnie,  
I will come again."

'Then will you meet me here, my faithfu' Johnie,  
Then will you meet me here?'  
"Though the night were Hollowe'en,  
When the fearfu' sights are seen,  
I would meet thee here, my sweet and bonnie,  
I would meet thee here."

'And shall we part again, my faithfu' Johnie,  
Shall we then part again?'  
"Sae lang's my een can see, Jean,  
That face sae dear to me, Jean,  
We shall not part again, my sweet and bonnie,  
We shall not part again."

## On the massacre of Glencoe

Oh! tell me, Harper, wherefore flow  
Thy wayward notes of wail and woe  
Far down the desert of Glencoe,  
Where none may list their melody?  
Say, harp'st thou to the mists that fly,  
Or to the dunder glancing by,  
Or to the eagle,  
That from high screams chorus to thy minstrelsy.

The hand that mingled in the meal,  
At midnight drew the felon steel,  
And gave the host's kind breast to feel,  
Meed for his hospitality.  
The friendly hearth which warm'd that hand,  
At midnight arm'd it with the brand  
That bade destruction's flames expand  
Their red and fearful blazonry.

Long have my harp's best notes been gone,  
Few are its strings, and faint their tone,  
They can but sound in desert lone  
Their grey hair'd master's misery.  
Were each grey hair a minstrel string,  
Each chord should imprecations fling,  
'Till startled Scotland loud should ring,  
"Revenge for blood and treachery!"

## Bonny laddie, highland laddie

Where gat ye that siller moon,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,  
Glinting brow your belt a boon,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?  
Belted plaid and bonnet blue,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,  
Have ye been at Waterloo,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?

Weels me on your tartan trews,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,  
Tell me, tell me a' the news,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie.  
Saw ye Bony by the way,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?  
Blucher wi' his beard sae grey,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?

Or that doure and deadly Duke,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,  
Scattrin' Frenchmen wi' his look,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?  
Some say he the day may rue,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,  
Ye can tell gin this be true,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie.

Wou'd ye tell me gin ye ken,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,  
Aught o' Donald and his men,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?  
Tell me o' my kilted Clan  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,  
Gin they fought, or gin they ran,  
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?

## Sunset

The sun upon the Weirclaw hill,  
In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet;  
The westland wind is hush and still,  
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.  
Yet not the landscape to mine eye  
Bears those bright hues that once it bore;  
Tho' Ev'ning, with her richest dye,  
Flames o'er the hills on Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain,  
I see Tweed's silver current glide,  
And coldly mark the holy fane of  
Melrose rise in ruin'd pride.  
The quiet lake, the balmy air,  
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,  
Are they still such as once they were,  
Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas, the warp'd and broken board,  
How can it bear the painter's dye?  
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord,  
How to the minstrel's skill reply?  
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,  
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill;  
And Araby's or Eden's bowers,  
Were barren as this moorland hill.

#### The lovely lass of Inverness

The lovely lass of Inverness,  
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;  
For e'en and morn she cries alas!  
And ay the salt tear blinds her e'e:  
Drumossie muir, Drumossie day.  
A wae fu' day it was to me;  
For there I lost my father dear,  
My father dear and brothers three.

Their winding sheet the bloody clay,  
Their graves are growing green to see;  
And by them lies the dearest lad  
That ever blest a woman's e'e!  
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,  
A bloody man I trow thou be;  
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,  
That ne'er did wrong to thine or thee.

#### The pulse of an Irishman

The pulse of an Irishman ever beats quicker  
When war is the story, or love is the theme;  
And place him where bullets fly thicker and  
thicker,  
You'll find him all cowardice scorning.  
And tho' a ball should maim poor Darby,  
Light at the heart he rallies on,  
"Fortune is cruel,  
But Norah, my jewel,  
Is kind, and with smiling,  
All sorrow beguiling,  
Shall bid from our cabin all care to be gone  
And how they will jig it,  
And tug at the spigot,  
On Patrick's day in the morning."

Blest be the land in the wide western waters,  
Sweet Erin, lov'd Erin, the pride of my song,  
Still brave be the sons, and still fair be the  
daughters  
Thy meads and thy mountains adorning!  
And tho' the eastern sun seems tardy,  
Tho' the pure light of knowledge slow,  
Night and delusion,  
And darkling confusion,  
Like mists from the river  
Shall vanish for ever,  
And true Irish hearts with warm loyalty glow;  
And proud exaltation  
Burst forth from the nation  
On Patrick's day in the morning.

#### Once more I hail thee

Once more I hail thee, thou gloomy December!  
Thy visage, so dark, and thy tempest's dread roar;  
Sad was the parting thou mak'st me remember,  
My parting with Nancy, ah! ne'er to meet more!

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,  
Until the last leaf of the summer is flown,  
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,  
Since hope is departed and comfort is gone.

Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,  
My anguish awakes at thy visage so hoar;  
Sad was the parting thou mak'st me remember,  
My parting with Nancy, ah! ne'er to meet more!

#### Morning a cruel turmoiler is

Morning a cruel turmoiler is,  
Banishing ease and repose;  
Noonday a roaster and broiler is,  
How we pant under his nose!  
Ev'ning for lover's soft measures,  
Sighing and begging a boon;  
But the blythe season for pleasures,  
Laughing lies under the moon.

Och! then you rogue Pat O'Flannaghan,  
Kegs of the whiskey we'll tilt,  
Murtoch, replenish our can again,  
Up with your heart cheering lilt!

Myrtles and vines some may prate about,  
Bawling in heathenish glee,  
Stuff I won't bother my pate about,  
Shamrock and whiskey for me!  
Faith, but I own I feel tender;  
Judy you jill, how I burn!  
If she won't smile, devil mend her!  
Both sides of chops have their turn.

Fill all your cups till they foam again,  
Bubbles must float on the brim;  
He that steels first sneaking home again,  
Daylight is too good for him!  
While we have goblets to handle,  
While we have liquor to fill;  
Mirth, and one spare inch of candle,  
Planets may wink as they will.

#### The morning air plays on my face

The morning air plays on my face,  
And through the grey mist peering,  
The soften'd silv'ry sun I trace,  
Wood, wild, and mountain cheering.  
Larks aloft are singing,  
Hares from covert springing,  
And o'er the fen the wild duck's brood,  
Their early way are winging.

Oh! ev'ry bounding step I take,  
Each hour the clock is telling,  
Bears me o'er mountain, bourne, and brake,  
Still nearer to her dwelling.  
Day is shining brighter,  
Limbs are moving lighter,  
While ev'ry thought to Nora's love  
But binds my faith the tighter.

#### The return to Ulster

Once again, but how chang'd,  
Since my wand'rings began  
I have heard the deep voice of the Lagan and  
Bann,  
And the pines of Clanbrassil resound to the roar  
That wearies the echoes of fair Tullamore.  
Alas! my poor bosom, and why shouldst thou  
burn!  
With the scenes of my youth can its raptures  
return?  
Can I live the dear life of delusion again,  
That flow'd when these echoes first mix'd with  
my strain?

But was she, too, a phantom, the maid who  
stood by.  
And listed my lay, while she turn'd from mine  
eye?

Was she, too, a vision, just glancing to view,  
Then dispers'd in the sunbeam, or melted to  
dew?

Oh! would it had been so, O would that her eye  
Had been but a star glance that shot through  
the sky,  
And her voice, that was moulded to melody's  
thrill,  
Had been but a zephyr that sigh'd and was still.

#### Oh! who, my dear Dermot

Oh! who, my dear Dermot, has dar'd to deceive  
thee,  
And what's the dishonour this gold is to buy?  
Back, back to thy tempter, or Norah shall leave  
thee,  
To hide her in woods, and in deserts to die.

Oh! look at yon lark, where the sky shines so  
brightly,  
Say why does it carol its echoing lay:  
Is't singing so gaily and mounting so lightly,  
Because it finds gold in the dawn of the day?

Oh! Dermot, thy heart is with agony swelling,  
For once it was honest, and honour its law  
An Irishman thou; and have bribes in thy  
dwelling!  
Back, back to thy tempter, go, Erin go Bragh!

#### Again my lyre

Again, my lyre, yet once again,  
With tears I wake thy thrilling strain!  
O sounds to sacred sorrow dear,  
I weep, but could forever hear!  
Ah, cease! nor more past scenes recall,  
Ye plaintive note notes! thou dying fall!  
For lost, beneath thy lov'd control  
Sweet lyre! Is my dissolving soul.

Around me airy forms appear,  
And Seraph songs are in mine ear!  
Ye Spirits blest, oh bear away  
To happier realms my humble lay!  
For still my love may deign to hear  
Those human notes, that once were dear!  
And still one angel sigh bestow on her who  
weeps,  
Who mourns below.