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Dyer-Bennet
records

Richard Dyer-Bennet

TENOR accompanying himself on the classic Spanish guitar

The Agincourt song
Come live with me
Come away, Death
I care not for these ladies
Flow, my tears
All in a garden green
Henry Martin
All mein Gedanken
Die bekehrte Schäferin
Kränzelkraut
Jagdabenteuer
Warnung
Le brave marin
Aminte

**Complete lyrics to all songs
included inside jacket**

**a long playing record
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Richard Dyer-Bennet 8

Side 1

The Agincourt song In 1415 the English, under Henry V, defeated the French at Agincourt. "England thanks God for the victory!", said Henry, and ordered that all celebration honor God and not the King. However, according to legend, a crowd greeted Henry upon his return to England, and an unknown minstrel sang a song in which both God and Henry were duly praised. I sing it here unaccompanied, as it was probably sung that day.

Come live with me The first verse of this song is from a poem called "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love", and the second verse from a poem called "The Nymph's Reply". Thomas Percy, in his "Reliques of English Poetry" (1765), attributes the poems to Christopher Marlow and Sir Walter Raleigh respectively, and cites as his authority Isaac Walton, "a writer of some credit, who has inserted them both in his 'Compleat Angler'." Both poems are sometimes included in Shakespeare's "Book of Sonnets", but, as Percy says, "as he (Shakespeare) took no care of his own compositions, so was he utterly regardless of what spurious things were fathered upon him". The tune is traditional, and the guitar setting my own.

Come away, Death! The words of this song are from Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night". The tune was written by Dr. Thomas Arne, 1710-1778. The accompaniment is my own, as Arne's keyboard setting does not adapt well to the guitar.

I care not for these ladies Words and music by Thomas Campion, 1567-1620, poet, player of the lute, composer of songs and masks, and theoretician. By altering the guitar's bass E string to D, the original lute accompaniment can be correctly rendered except for one doubled note in the final chord. After finishing the recording I discovered an error, too late to correct: the top note of the guitar part at a certain point in each verse is played as a C natural — it should be a C sharp. It is musically acceptable as played, but it is an error I may as well admit before some sharp-eared lutenist calls it to my attention.

Flow, my tears John Dowland, 1562-1626, reputedly the finest lutenist of his day and one of the finest singers. We can enjoy him now only as a composer, and surely he belongs among England's greatest. He did not attempt as much as did Byrd and Purcell, but his best songs have a flawless combination of lyric freshness and meticulous craftsmanship. "Flow, my tears", also known as "Lacrimae", is one of Dowland's masterpieces. I found it compelling on first hearing, yet found that further listening revealed poetic and musical intricacies not apparent at first; and it was only when I began to study the voice and lute parts together that full admiration came. The complete song is the thing, of course, but after initial enjoyment it will be well worthwhile to read the poetry separately and then listen to the melody illumine the words, and finally, hear how the three voices of the lute part complement words and melody. The supreme pleasure, as with our response to all great art, comes with the ability to comprehend simultaneously the parts and the whole and at the same time leave the mind free to soar uniquely and privately. How difficult to describe that divided and yet harmonious state, known to all who are fortunate in their response to art!

Again, by lowering the guitar's bass E string to D, Dowland's lute accompaniment can be played as written. The text is anonymous — perhaps by Campion.

All in a garden green An anonymous Elizabethan song, brought to my attention some 12 years ago by John Ward. The accompaniment is my own.

Henry Martin I learned this ballad 17 years ago from a backstage visitor after a performance. It is vaguely in my memory that my visitor's source was one of the English collections edited by S. Baring Gould. The ballad may stem from an Elizabethan original, "Sir Andrew Barton", which was based on the following bit of history. A Scottish sea-officer, "having suffered by

sea from the Portuguese", (as quoted from "Guthrie's Peerage" by Thomas Percy), obtained commissions from James IV of Scotland to send two ships, under his two sons, to make reprisals. The sons not only tackled the Portuguese, but also interrupted English shipping. In spite of complaints from English merchants, the English king, Henry VIII, was loath to raise the issue with the Scottish crown at this politically unfavorable moment. The Earl of Surrey then undertook, with Henry's reluctant permission, to furnish two ships, under his two sons, to run down the Scottish pirates. In the ensuing battle, Sir Andrew Barton, (one of the Scottish captains), was killed, and the two Scottish ships and crews brought into the Thames. King James demanded satisfaction for Barton's death and the loss of the Scottish ships. This added to tensions which led to the Battle of Flodden Field, in 1513, which cost James his life. The last two verses of the ballad are my own addition.

Side 2

All mein Gedanken The earliest record of this song is an anonymous manuscript from 1452. Both in form and content it is a true Minnelied, the work of one of the medieval German poets of love. It is a direct and simple declaration of love, of a kind not quite duplicated by the medieval French counterparts. There has apparently been a tradition of sorts along these lines in German poetry, and Heine seems a later manifestation of it. An English poet would have found it difficult to avoid a lighter touch, almost by way of a disclaimer; and a French poet would have been apt to speak with an elegance, a courtliness, that draws attention to the manner of speaking rather than to the thought itself. The gravity of the German poet's statement may not suit all subjects equally well, but when suffused with warmth and, as in this song, serving a declaration of love, it has an unmatched quality. This is not a song sung for a lady, but words spoken melodiously to a woman. There is no room for an accompaniment.

Die bekehrte Schäferin The poem is by Goethe and the melody by Friedrich Heinrich Himmel, 1749-1832. While studying law at Strassburg in 1770, Goethe began a friendship with the scholar Johann Gottfried Herder, which endured until the latter's death in 1803. Herder was deeply interested in the popular poetry of the people, and under his influence Goethe developed a like interest. In a letter to Herder of September, 1771, Goethe tells of having collected 12 folksongs in Alsace, which he considered he was lucky to get from the lips of old women whose grandchildren were singing nothing but "contemporary trash". (Nearly 200 years later collectors are saying the same thing!) The song is an example of what a supremely gifted poet can do in traditional ballad form; let us admit that many of our prized traditional ballads are good in spite of, and not because of, quite inferior poetry. I have used Himmel's original harmonic design, but have changed the figuration of the accompaniment to suit the guitar.

Kränzelkraut A folksong from Silesia, Germany.

Jagdabenteuer This song, collected in the German Rhineland in 1840, appears to be a folk version of a song, words and melody, composed by Anton Wilhelm von Zuccalmaglio in 1835. Unfortunately, there is no way, on this recording, of imitating the little hare in the last verse — a liberty I permit myself on the concert stage.

Warnung The melody is traditional, and the words are by Ernst Anschütz, 1780-1861.

Le brave marin A traditional ballad from Brittany. **Aminte** An anonymous 18th century French song, probably one of the pastoral songs so popular at the court of Marie-Antoinette. It is sometimes called "Tambourin", which would make it a dance-song. A slightly different version is to be found in the Weckerlin collection, and I am told that the great chanteuse, Yvette Guilbert, used to sing it. This version is from my Swedish mentor, Sven Scholander, 1860-1936.

— R. D-B.



A note on this recording

This is the eighth recording under my own label, and differs from the others in that there are no American songs on it. As the two sides of the recording took shape in my mind, there seemed no way of including American material. Each of the two groups has a certain unity which brooks no intrusion from the New World. On some later recording the reverse will no doubt be true.

I have taken pains with the translations, as in some cases I was dealing with superb poetry, and did not want to lose entirely the archaic, or other appealing qualities. Consequently, I have occasionally used a word or phrase in English which has not quite the literal meaning of the original French or German, but which seems to evoke the original image.

Richard Dyer-Bennet, October, 1959

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

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 balliff'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

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Willie Taylor Charlie is my darling Lilli burlero The beloved kitten
Spottled Auf Napoleons Rückzug Aus Russland 1812
The lass from the low country The swapping song
The house carpenter The lady who lovea a swine Go down, Moses

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The fox Drill, ye farriers, drill

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Songs with young people in mind

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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: DYB 7000)

Beethoven Scottish and Irish Songs

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Faithful 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

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use R.I.A.A. characteristic.
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