

STEPHEN FOSTER SONGS RICHARD DYER-BENNET DYC-BENNET RECORDS DYC-BENNET RECORDS DYC-BENNET RECORDS DYC-BENNET RECORDS
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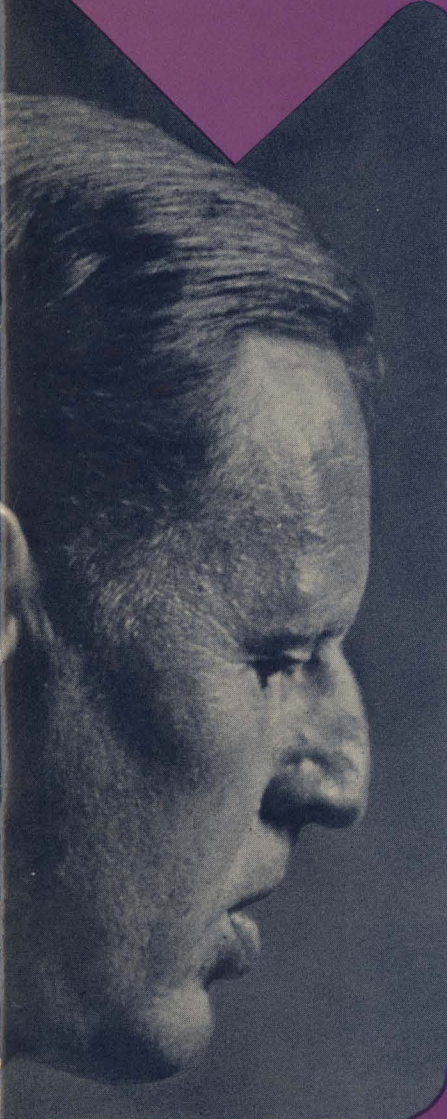
Stephen Foster

songs—from the original editions

sung by

Richard Dyer-Bennet

accompanied by Harry A. Rubinstein, piano



Linger in blissful repose
Gentle Annie
Come with thy sweet voice again
If you've only got a moustache
Jeanie with the light brown hair
For thee, love, for thee
Ah! May the red rose live alway!
Beautiful dreamer
Sweetly she sleeps, my Alice fair
There are plenty of fish in the sea
Open thy lattice, love
Come where my love lies dreaming

COMPLETE LYRICS TO ALL SONGS
INCLUDED INSIDE JACKET

Stephen Foster songs

sung by **Richard Dyer-Bennet**

Betty Rosenzweig

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER, 1826-1864

He was born in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania, a town founded by his father and now a part of Pittsburgh. An early interest in music and poetry was not encouraged, though his idle, dreamy nature clearly unfitted him for business, soldiering, or frontier politics. His general schooling was adequate and despite little or no musical training he acquired some facility on the piano, violin, flute, guitar and banjo. He also learned to sing with a voice of warmth and sweetness, and in later years performed his own songs with a pleasing baritone—though he never sang professionally.

He attended such plays and musical events as were available in his home town, and was greatly influenced by the popular black face minstrel shows of that time. Several of his early songs were given or sold for a few dollars to professional performers who made them known and were assumed to have written them. This led to publication, but with no credit or royalties going to the real composer. However, by 1850 a number of successful songs had appeared under his name, and fame, if not fortune, was on the way.

A marriage in 1850 produced one daughter but does not appear to have been otherwise fruitful. The years until 1861 were reasonably successful. There was some semblance of family life and many of the songs became world famous. Reputable firms were now his publishers and between 1849 and 1860 the royalties amounted to some \$15,000—a comfortable living for those days.

In 1861 a general decline began. Always a convivial drinker, he now became seriously addicted. Melody and verse still flowed, but with less inspiration. With few exceptions these last songs are of little interest. Money became scarce; wife and daughter could no longer depend on him for the necessities of life, and left him.

His last four years were spent largely in New York City, alone, and drinking heavily. Having drawn advances from publishers, he felt obliged to produce something in an effort to reduce this indebtedness and thus make further advances possible. Headquarters for the last days were a small saloon in back of a dilapidated grocery shop. Here he sat, drinking a special mixture of French spirits and brown sugar kept for him in a jug, eating an occasional piece of fruit or raw vegetable, and jotting down an occasional song on any kind of paper at hand.

His family and friends found him kindly and likeable all his life; and so he remained to the end, having made seemingly not a single enemy, nor any human attachment of a strength able to save him.

He died in Bellevue Hospital from the ravages of excessive drinking, possible tuberculosis, and loss of blood, having fallen during the night at his lodging house and gashed his neck on a washbasin or pitcher. His personal belongings were the threadbare clothing on his body, a worn leather purse containing thirty-eight cents and a piece of paper on which he had pencilled: "Dear friends and gentle hearts."

The world was singing his songs. He was thirty-seven years old.

Richard Dyer-Bennet, September 1962

FOSTER'S SONGS

Josiah Kirby Lilly, a retired Indianapolis business man, began collecting Fosteriana in 1930. This collection is now housed in the Stephen C. Foster Memorial Building in Pittsburgh, and contains manuscripts, first editions, pictures, letters, books, magazines, recordings—anything and everything pertaining to Foster's life and music. Lilly also had reproductions made of all the first editions of Foster's compositions. Complete sets of these reproductions were made available to schools, libraries and musical groups. One of these sets is at present in the hands of Ann Luckey who teaches singing at Princeton and spends her summers in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts. I am indebted to Miss Luckey for access to these reproductions.



Harry Rubenstein and I looked through all 188 of Foster's songs. We decided against the dialect songs as being socially somewhat offensive at this moment of history—though Foster had no such intention within the context of his time. We also decided against the rather maudlin sentiment of the Civil War songs. We found ourselves drawn to the languorous airs of nostalgia, sad remembrance and idyllic love. This is his richest vein, and suggests a talent which, had he been encouraged to thoroughly develop it, might have resulted in an American Schubert. These songs, while not towering works of art, have at least the charm and distinction of small works of art, and sound gracious and pleasant in these noisy times. We chose 10 such songs, and mildly comic ones by way of contrast. In the course of this selection we noted; one, that most of Foster's best songs are settings of his own words; two, that his original piano accompaniments are better than later arrangements by other musicians.

This recording brings to completion a project suggested to me 15 years ago by Alfred Frankenstein, noted critic of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. I hope he approves of the result. I know he will not hesitate to say so if he doesn't.—R.D.-B.

Harry Rubinstein is a graduate of the Dalcroze School of Music, New York. He studied piano with Mischa Levitzki and Carlos Buhler. He has served as accompanist for Hanya Holm, Martha Graham and various modern dance groups. He founded and directed the Berkshire Children's choirs, and has performed as soloist with The New Symphony of the Hills. Nonmusical activities have included several years as plant manager

for Acoustic Research, Cambridge, Mass., makers of the famous AR speakers. At present he is music director at Windsor Mountain School, Lenox, Mass., and a staff member of the Pittsfield Community School, Pittsfield, Mass.

Side 1

Linger in blissful repose (words by Foster)
Published in 1858

Gentle Annie (words by Foster)
Published in 1856

Come with thy sweet voice again (words by Foster)
Published in 1854

If you've only got a moustache (words by George Cooper)
Published in 1864

Jeanie with the light brown hair (words by Foster)
Published in 1854

For thee, love, for thee (words by Wm. H. McCarthy)
Published in 1859

Side 2

Ah! May the red rose live away! (words by Foster)
Published in 1850

Beautiful dreamer (words by Foster)
Published in 1864

Sweetly she sleeps, my Alice fair (words by Charles G. Eastman)
Published in 1851

There are plenty of fish in the sea (words by George Cooper)
Published in 1862

Open thy lattice, love (words by George P. Morris)
Published in 1844. This was Foster's first published song.

Come where my love lies dreaming (words by Foster)
Published in 1855

This is the only song in which I have taken any liberties. As first published, the song ends with a coda taking the voice to the high A in operatic style. In listening to playback I did not like the sound of this coda, and as the form of the song is complete without it we decided to delete the passage and move straight into the closing piano chords. John Tasker Howard in his biography, "Stephen Foster, America's Troubadour," states his belief that the questionable coda was not Foster's idea but was suggested by Henry Kleber, a musician friend of Foster. This lent me courage to make the deletion.—R.D.-B.

The recording was made in June 1962 at the Temple of Music, South Mountain, Pittsfield, Mass., site of the oldest summer chamber music festival in the nation, founded by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. The hall was made available by the South Mountain Association and Mrs. Willem Willeke, Manager.

Mr. Dyer-Bennet is managed exclusively by Hurok Attractions, Inc., 730 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.

This is one of a series of recordings by Richard Dyer-Bennet, recorded under his own label. For a complete catalog listing contents of other albums, write: Dyer-Bennet Records, P. O. Box 235, Woodside 77, N. Y.

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