

English Folk Songs

sung by AUDREY COPPARD
guitar accompaniment



curtis

M
1740
C785
E58
1956

MUSIC LP

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6917

ENGLISH FOLK SONGS

HARES ON THE MOUNTAIN
JOHNNY TODD
DIED OF LOVE
I WILL GIVE MY LOVE AN APPLE
THE NIGHTINGALE
THE TREES ARE GETTING HIGH
STREET CRIES
I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING
THE FIREMAN'S SONG
POLLY VAUGHAN
BITTER WITHY
SCARBOROUGH FAIR

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

Library of Congress Card Catalogue No. R 56-98

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701 Seventh Ave., New York City

Distributed by Folkways Scholastic Records,
906 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6917

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FP 917

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SIDE I

HARES ON THE MOUNTAIN

Found in the south of England and collected first at the beginning of this century, this song can be roughly dated as early 19th century.

If all the young men were like hares on
the mountain
Then all the pretty girls would take guns
and go hunting -
Pilly-toodely, toodely, ly-li toclay.

If all the young men were like rushes
a-growing
Then all the pretty girls would take
scythes and go mowing -
Pilly-toodely etc.

If all the young men were like ducks in
the water
Then all the pretty girls would dive in and
swim after -
Pilly-toodely etc.

But all the young men are like dew on the
corn
At night they are with you, in the morning
they're gone -
Pilly-toodely etc.

JOHNNY TODD

Lancashire, 19th Century. This is a children's skipping-song from Liverpool.

Johnny Todd, he took a notion
For to cross the sea once more;
But he left his true love behind him
Weeping by the Liverpool shore.

For a week she wept forsoresly
Tore her hair and wrung her hands;
'til she met with another sailor
Walking by the Liverpool sands.

Mrs. Coppard is twenty-three; five years ago she first became interested in folk music when she "discovered Appalachian Mountain songs via jazz and the blues. The collecting of folk material then became a passionate hobby, but feeling how relevant to a nation's culture its folk music is, I now concentrate on my native songs and ballads."

Audrey's father, mother, grandparents and relations are all classical musicians. Although she is not a professional singer, she had sung in clubs in London and given a number of concerts. These last were organized by A.L.Lloyd and Ewan Mac Coll, to whom she is indebted for introducing her to several of the songs in this collection. She is accompanied by Lesley Davison, guitar, an American girl living in London, who has, herself, a large repertoire of folk songs from both America and Europe.

The songs in this album are from widely scattered counties in England, and differ in age and content. The titles include a carol (Bitter Withy), a love song (Died of Love), a children's game song (Johnny Todd), two riddle songs (Scarborough Fair and I Will Give My Love an Apple), and three ballads (Polly Vaughan, The Trees Are Getting High, The Nightingale). Recorded also are London 'street cries.'

"Why fair maid are you a-weeping
For your Johnny gone to sea?
If you will marry me,
I will true and constant be."

"I will buy you sheets and blankets,
I will buy you a wedding ring,
I will buy you a golden cradle
For to rock our baby in."

Johnny Todd came home from sailing,
Sailing on the foreign tide,
But he found that his fair and false one
Was another sailor's bride.

All you men who go a-sailing
For to fight the foreign foe,
Do not leave your love like Johnny,
Marry her before you go.

DIED OF LOVE

North Lincolnshire. "This is the stock from
which many fragments, including the modern
"Tavern in the Town," have been made and
treated as separate songs. The traditional
tune, sung here, bears a strong resemblance
to the Agincourt song (14th Century)."

A brisk young man came courting me,
He stole my heart and my liberty.
He stole my heart with a free good will,
He has it now and he'll keep it still.

There is a flow'r I've heard men say,
Would ease my heart by night and day.
I wish to God that flow'r I could find
To ease my soul and my troubling mind.

I wish, I wish my babe was born,
A-sitting on his daddy's knee,
And me oh God was dead and gone
And the green grass growing over me.

Dig me my grave both wide and deep,
Put marble slabs at my head and feet.
Upon my breast put a turtle-white dove
To show the whole world that I died of love.

I WILL GIVE MY LOVE AN APPLE

Dorset, (15th Century?). The tune used here
is probably of Celtic origin. The riddle song
has always been a most popular form of folk
song, and the "cherry" verses appear in many
versions of songs in England and in America.
They can be traced back to a ballad of the
15th Century.

I will give my love an apple without any
core,

I will give my love a house without any
door,

I will give my love a palace wherein she
may be

And she may unlock it without any key.

My head is the apple without any core,
My mind is the house without any door,
My heart is the palace wherein she may be
And she may unlock it without any key.

I will give my love a cherry without any
stone,

I will give my love a chicken without any
bone,

I will give my love a ring not a rent to be
seen

I will give my love a baby with no crying.

How can there be a cherry without any stone?
How can there be a chicken without any bone?
How can there be a ring not a rent to be seen?
How can there be a baby with no crying?

Now a cherry when it's blooming there's
never no stone,

And a chicken in the womb, there's never no
bone,

And a ring when it's rolling not a rent to be
seen,

And when they're childmaking there's no
crying.

THE NIGHTINGALE

Somerset, 19th Century. This ballad is a mingling of folk song and art form. Although the story sounds extremely factual, no shipwreck of a boat named The Nightingale on the 14th November can be traced.

This version was collected from glove-makers in Somerset, singing at their work.

My love was a poor farmer's son
When first my tender heart he won,
His love to me he did reveal,
I little thought of The Nightingale.

My cruel father made it so
That he from me was forced to go,
The press-gang came, and did not fail
To press my love on The Nightingale.

The fourteenth of November last,
The wind it blew a bitter blast,
The ship, she carried too much sail -
To the bottom went The Nightingale.

The very night my love was lost,
Appeared to me a deathly ghost
With hair erect and visage pale,
Your lover's lost on The Nightingale.

My father's house I will forsake,
My way by lonesome roads I'll take,
And in the woods I will bewail,
My lover lost on The Nightingale.

THE TREES ARE GETTING HIGH

Surrey. It is difficult to give a date for this tune, as so many versions exist all over the British Isles. It is thought by some authorities to be the most beautiful English folk song, although the Welsh, Irish and Scottish versions are close rivals. The story is believed to be a true one, as in so many folk ballads, and is traceable to the Young Urquhart of Craigstone, who died in 1634.

O, the trees are getting high, and the
leaves are growing green,
The time has gone and passed my love that
you and I have seen.
'twas on a winter's evening as I sat all
alone,
There I spied a bonnie boy, young but
growing.

It's "mother, dear mother, you've done to
me much wrong,
You've married me to a bonnie boy, his age
it is so young,
His age is only twelve, myself scarcely
thirteen,"
Saying your bonnie boy is young, but he's
growing.

It's "Daughter, dear daughter, I've done to
ye no wrong,
I've married ye to a bonnie boy, he is
some rich lord's son,
A lady he will make you if a lady you'll be
made,"
Saying, "Your bonnie boy is young but he's
growing."

It's, "Mother, dear mother, and if it pleases
you,
We'll send him to the college, for another
year or two,
And all around his arm, we'll tie a ribbon
blue,
And that will be a token that he's married."

At the age of thirteen he was a married man,
And at the age of fourteen, the father of a son,
And at the age of fifteen, his grave was
growing green,
And that put an end to his growing.

SIDE II

STREET CRIES

London. Collected at the end of the 19th Century.

Street cries were numerous in the big cities of England until the turn of the century. Probably the form did not change from one century to the next, being learned from master or father by the son and apprentice. It will be remembered that Addison wrote an essay, decrying the immense cacophony made by street cries in his time.

It should be noted that the "young lambs" for sale are in fact toy lambs. The "lavender" cry is still heard in London. The singer learned the version and technique of singing from an old Gypsy woman. Sung in the open air, these cries carry for hundreds of yards, and can sound most beautiful.

Won't you buy my sweet lavender
Fifteen branches a penny

Primroses, primroses
Who'll buy my primroses?

Young lambs to sell
Young lambs to sell

I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING

This is a Hebridean song of great popularity all over the British Isles. This is my own arrangement of the song. The words are probably older than the tune, and can be dated early 17th Century.

I know where I'm going
And who's going with me;
I know who I love
But the devil knows who I'll marry.

I'll have stockings of silk
Shoes of bright green leather;
Comb to buckle my hair
And a ring for every finger.

Feather beds are soft
Painted rooms are bonnie;
I would leave them all
Just to be with my love Johnny.

Some say he's black
But I say he's bonnie;
Fairest of them all
Is my handsome, winsome Johnny.

I know where I'm going
And who's going with me;
I know who I love
But the devil knows who I'll marry.

THE FIREMAN'S SONG

Although this cannot really be classed as a folk song, having been written by Ewan MacColl during the big folk song revival recently, the tune has all the simplicity of a traditional folk air.

Come all ye young maidens,
take warning from me,
Shun all engine drivers and their company,
He'll tell you he loves you and all kinds of
lies,
But the one that he loves is the train that
he drives.

I once loved a fireman, who said he loved
me,
He took me a-walking into the country,
He hugged me and kissed me and gazed in
my eyes,
And said, "You're as nice as the eight-
forty-five."

He said, "My dear Molly, just say you'll be
mine,
Just give me the signal and let's clear the
line,
My fires they are burning and the steam it
it is high,
If you don't take the brakes off I think I will
die."

I gave him this answer, saying, "Don't make
so free,
For no local fireman shall ever have me,
He'll take all your love and then when you're
in need,
He'll race away at the top of his speed."

A sailor comes home when his voyage is done,
A soldier gets weary of following the drum,
A collier will cleave to his love all his life,
But a fireman's one love is the engine,
his wife.

POLLY VAUGHAN

Norfolk. An extremely old tune, lost in folk
song history. There are numerous references
all over Europe in practically every country's
folk lore to a young girl who changes into a swan.

Come all ye young fellows who carry a gun
I'll have you come home by the light of the
sun;
For young Jimmy was a fowler, who went
fowling alone
And he shot his own true love in the ru' of
a swan.

Now home ran young Jimmy with his dog
and his gun,
Crying, "Uncle, dear uncle have you heard
what I've done?
Cursed be that old gunsmith that made my
own gun
For I've shot my own true love in the ru' of
a swan."

Then out ran old uncle with his locks hang-
ing gray,
Crying, "Jimmy, dear Jimmy don't you
run away,
Don't you leave your own country 'til the
assizes wear on.
For they never can hang you for shooting a
swan!"

Now the girls of this country are all glad to
know
That young Polly Vaughan has fallen so low,
You can gather them into a mountain, you
can plant them in a row
And her beauty shone among them like a
fountain of snow.

Now the trial wore on and young Polly did
appear
Crying, "Uncle, dear uncle let Jimmy go
clear,
For my apron was bound 'round me, and he
took me for a swan
Now my poor heart lies bleeding all on the
green ground.

BITTER WITHY

This is an Ecclesiastical ballad. The story
is taken from the Apocryphal part of the Bible.
The origin of this tune can only be traced back
as far as the 16th Century. It was handed down
from one singer to the next until it was first
printed in 1905. The tune sung here is the one
collected by Vaughan Williams from several
folk singers.

As it befell on a bright holiday
Small hail from the sky did fall
Our Savior asked his mother dear
If he might play at ball.

At ball at ball my own dear son
It's time that you were gone
But don't let me hear of any doings
At night when you return.

So up the hill and down the hill
Our sweet young Savior run
Until he met three rich young lords
Playing in the sun.

Good morn good morn good morn said
they
Good morning all said he
And which of you three rich young lords
Will play at ball with me

We are all lords' and ladies' sons
Born in the bower and hall
And you are nothing but a Jewess' child
Born in an oxen stall.

Though you're all lords' and ladies'
sons
Born in your bower and hall
I'll make you believe in your Lateran
I'm an angel above you all.

So he made him a bridge of the beams
of the sun
And over the river danced he
The rich young lords chased after him
And drowned they were all three.

Then up the hill and down the hill
Three rich young ladies run
Crying Mary mild fetch home your
child
For our's he's drowned each one.

Then Mary mild fetched home her child
And laid him across her knee
And with a bundle of withy twigs
She gave him thrashes three.

Ah bitter withy Ah bitter withy
You've caused me to smart
And the withy shall be the very first
tree
To perish at the hearth.

Oh, are ye going to Scarborough Fair,
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme,
Remember me to one who lives there,
For once he was a true love of mine.

Tell him to find him an acre of land,
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme,
Between the sea-foam and the salt-sea
strand,
Or never be a true love of mine.

Tell him to plow it with a ram's horn,
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme;
And sow it all over with a pepper-corn,
Or never be a true love of mine.

Tell him to reap it with a sickle of leather,
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme;
And tie it all up with a peacock's feather,
Or never be a true love of mine.

When he has done these things without
fail,
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme;
He can come and claim me for himself,
And then he may be a true love of mine.

SCARBOROUGH FAIR

Yorkshire. Here again, this song exists in many different versions, the name of the town being changed to fit in with the district in which it is sung. "Scarborough Fair" is a descendent of the folk song, "Seeds of Love."