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FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL 9880

Read by:
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Conversation Pieces

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MUSIC LP

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"CONVERSATION PIECES"

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Side I, Band 1:

HARDY - LIDDELL AND SCOTT

"Well, though it seems
Beyond our dreams,"
Said Liddell to Scott,
"We've really got
To the very end
All inked and penned
Blotless and fair
Without turning a hair

This sultry summer day, A.D.
Eighteen hundred and forty-three.

"I've often, O own,
Belched many a moan
At undertaking it,
And dreamt forsaking it.
- Yes, on to Pi,
When the end loomed nigh,

And friends said: 'You've as good as done,'
I almost wished we'd not begun.
Even now, if people only knew
My sinkings, as we slowly drew
Along through Kappa, Lambda, Mu,
They'd be concerned at my misgiving,
And how I mused on a College living
Right down to Sigma
But feared a stigma
If I succumbed, and left old Donegan
For weary freshmens' eyes to con again:
And how I often, often wondered
What could have led me to have blundered
So far away from sound theology
To dialects and etymology;
Words, accents, not to be breathed by men
Of any country ever again!"

"My heart most failed,
Indeed quite quailed,"
Said Scott to Liddell,
"Long e'er the middle. ...
'Twas one wet dawn
When, slippers on,
And a cold in the head anew,
Gazing at Delta
I turned and felt a
Wish for bed anew,
And to let supersedings
Of Passow's readings
In dialects go.

"That German has read
More than we!, I said,
Yea, several times did I feel so!...

Oh that first morning, smiling bland,
With sheets of foolscap, quills in hand

To write and
Followed by fifteen-hundred pages,
What nerve was ours
So to back our powers,
Assure that we should reach
While there was breath left in our bodies!"

Liddell replied: "Well, that's past now;
The job's done, thank God, anyhow."

"And yet it's now,"
Considered Scott,
"For we've to get
Subscribers yet
We must remember-
Yes, by September."

"Oh Lord, dismiss that! We'll succeed.
Dinner is my immediate need.
I feel as hollow as a fiddle
Working so many hours," said Liddell.

Side I, Band 2:

de la MARE - OLD SHELLOVER

"Come!" said Old Shellover.

"What?" says Creep.

"The horny old Gardener's fast asleep;
The fat cock thrush
To his nest has gone,
And the dew shines bright,
In the rising Moon;

Old Sally Worm from her hole doth peep;

"Come," said Old Shellover.

"Aye!" said Creep.

Side I, Band 3a.

MARLOWE-THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO
HIS LOVE

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
On woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my Love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.

Side I, Band 3b:

RALEIGH - THE NYMPH'S REPLY TO THE
SHEPHERD

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy Love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

Side I, Band 4:

HARDY - TO THE MOON

"What have you looked at, Moon,
In your time,
Now long past your prime?"
"O, I have looked at, often looked at
Sweet, sublime
Sore things, shudderful, night and moon
In my time."

"What have you mused on, Moon,
In your day,
So aloof, so far away?"

"O, I have mused on, often mused on
Growth, decay,
Nations alive, dead, mad, aswoon,
In my day!"

"Have you much wondered, Moon,
On your rounds,
Self-wrapt, beyond Earth's bounds?"

"Yea, I have wondered, often wondered
At the sounds
Reaching me of the human tune
On my rounds."

"What do you think of it, Moon,

As you go?

Is Life much, or no?"
"O, I think of it, often think of it
As a show
God ought surely to shut up soon,
As I go."

Side I, Band 5:

HUNT - DIALOGUE BETWEEN A MAN AND
A FISH

MAN

"You strange, astonished looking, angelfaced,
Dreary mouthed, gaping wretches of the sea,
Gulping salt water everlastingly,
Cold blooded, though with red your blood be
graced,

And mute, though dwellers in the roaring waste;
And you, all shapes beside, that fishy be, -
Some round, some flat, some long, all devilry,
Legless, unloving, infamously chaste: -

O scaly, slippery, wet, swift, staring wights
What is't ye do? what life lead? eh, dull goggles?
How do ye vary your vile days and nights?
How pass your Sundays? Are ye still but joggles
In ceaseless wash. Still nought but gapes, and
bites,
And drinks, and stares, diversified with boggles?"

FISH

"Amazing monster! that for aught I know,
With the first sight of thee didst make our race
Forever stare! O flat and shocking face,
Grimly divided from the breast below!

Thou that on dry land horribly dost go
With a split body and most ridiculous pace,
Prong after Prong, disgracer of all grace;
Long-useless-finned, haired, upright, unwet, slow!

O breather of unbreathable, sword-sharp air,
How canst exist? How bear thyself, thou dry
And dreary sloth? What particle canst share
Of the only blessed life, the watery?
I sometimes see of ye an actual pair
Go by! linked fin by fin! most odiously."

Side I, Band 6:

HOUSEMAN - THE DESERTER

"What sound awakened me, I wonder,
For now 'tis dumb."
"Wheels on the road, most like, or thunder:
Lie down; 'twas not the drum."

Toil at sea and two in haven
And trouble far:
Fly crow, away, and follow, raven
And all that croaks for war.

"Hark, I heard the bugle crying,
And where am I?
My friends are up and dressed and dying,
And I will dress and die."

"Oh love is rare and trouble plenty
And carrion cheap,
And daylight dear at four-and-twenty:
Lie down again and sleep."

"Reach me my belt and leave your prattle:
Your hour is gone;
But my day is the day of battle,
And that comes dawning on.

"They mow the field of man in season:
Farewell, my fair,
And call it truth or call it treason,
Farewell the vows that were."

"Ay, false heart, forsake me lightly;
'Tis like the brave.
They find no bed to joy in rightly
Before they find the grave.

Their love is for their own undoing,
And east and west
They scour about the world a-wooning
The bullet to their breast.

"Said away the ocean over,
Oh, sail away,
And lie there with your leaden lover
Forever and a day."

Side I, Band 7:

AUDEN O WHAT IS THAT SOUND?

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear
Down in the valley drumming, drumming?
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear
Over the distance brightly, brightly?
Only the sun on their weapons, dear,
As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear;
What are they doing this morning, this
morning?
Only the usual maneuvers, dear,
Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there;
Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?
Perhaps a change in the orders, dear;
Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care;
Haven't they reined their horses, their
horses?
Why they are none of them wounded, dear,
None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want, with white hair;
Is it the parson, is it, is it?
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer who lives so near,
It must be the farmer, so cunning, cunning;
They have passed the farm already, dear,
And now they are running.

O where are you going? stay with me here.
Were the vows you swore me deceiving,
deceiving?
No I promised to love you, dear,
But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,
O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;
Their boots are heavy on the floor
And their eyes are burning.

Side I, Band 8:

HOUSEMAN - WHEN SMOKE STOOD UP FROM
LUDLOW

When smoke stood up from Ludlow,
And mist blew off from Teme,
And blithe afield to ploughing
Against the morning beam
I strode beside my team,

The blackbird in the coppice
Looked out to see me stride,
And hearkened as I whistled
The trampling team beside,
And fluted and replied:

"Lie down, lie down, young yeoman;
What use to rise and rise?
Rise man a thousand mornings
Yet down at last he lies,
And then the man is wise."

I heard the tune he sang me
And spied his yellow bill;
I picked a stone and aimed it
And threw it with a will;
Then the bird was still.

Then my soul within me
Took up the blackbird's strain,
And still beside the horses
Along the dewy lane
It sang the song again:

"Lie down, lie down, young yeoman;
The sun moves always west;
The road one treads to labour
Will lead one home to rest,
And that will be the best."

Side I, Band 9:

THE UNQUIET GRAVE

"The wind doth blow today, my love,
And a few small drops of rain;
I never had but one true love,
In cold grave she was lain.

"I'll do as much for my true love
As any young man may;
I'll sit and mourn all at her grave
For a twelvemonth and a day."

The twelvemonth and a day being up
The dead began to speak;
"Oh who sits weeping on my grave
And will not let me sleep?"

"'Tis I, my love, sits on your grave,
And will not let you sleep;
For I crave one kiss of your clay-cold lips,
And that is all I seek."

"You crave one kiss of my clay-cold lips;
But my breath smells earthy strong;
If you have one kiss of my clay-cold lips
Your time will not be long."

'Tis down in yonder garden green,
Love, where we used to walk
The finest flower that ere was seen
Is withered to a stalk.

The stalk is withered dry, my love,
So will our hearts decay;
So make yourself content, my love,
Till God calls you away."

Side I, Band 10:

CAVAFY - WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS

"What are we waiting for, all crowded in the forum?"
"The Barbarians are to arrive today."

"Within the Senate-house why is there such inaction?
The Senators making no laws, what are they sitting
there for?"

"Because the Barbarians arrive today.
What laws now should the Senators be making?
When the Barbarians come, they'll make the laws."

"Why did our Emperor get up so early in the morning?
And at the greatest city gate why is he sitting there
now,
Upon his throne, officially. Why is he wearing his
crown?"

"Because the Barbarians arrive today.
The emperor is waiting to receive
Their leader. And in fact he has prepared
To give him an address. On it he has
Written him down all sorts of names and titles."

"Why have our two consuls gone out, both of them
and the Praetors
Today with their red togas on, with their embroidered
togas?"

"Why are they wearing bracelets and all those
amethysts too,
And all those rings on their fingers with splendid
flashing emeralds?"

Why should they be carrying today their precious
walking sticks,
With silver knobs and golden tops so wonderfully
carved?"

"Because the Barbarians will arrive today;
Things of this sort dazzle the Barbarians."

"And why are the fine orators not come here as usual
To get their speeches off, to say what they have to
say?"

"Because the Barbarians will be here today;
And they are bored with eloquence and speechmaking."

"Why should this uneasiness began all of a sudden.
And confusion. How serious people's faces have
become.

Why are all the streets and squares emptying so
quickly,
And every body turning home again so full of thought?"

"Because night has fallen, and the Barbarians have
not come

And some people have arrived from the frontier.
They said there are no Barbarians anymore.

And now what will become of us without Barbarians -
Those people were some sort of a solution."

Side II, Band 1:

GRAVES - WELSH INCIDENT

'But that was nothing to what things came out
From the sea-caves of Criccieth yonder.'
'What were they? Mermaids? dragons? ghosts?'
'Nothing at all of any things like that.'
'What were they, then?'

'All sorts of queer things,
Things never seen or heard or written about,
Very strange, un-Welsh, utterly peculiar
Things. Oh, solid enough they seemed to touch,
Had anyone dared it. Marvellous creation,
All various shapes and sizes and no sizes,
All new, each perfectly unlike his neighbor,
Though all came moving slowly out together.'
'Describe just one of them.'

'I am unable.'
'What were their colours?'
'Mostly nameless colours,
Colours you'd like to see; but one was puce
Or perhaps more like crimson, but not purplish.
Some had no colour.'

'Tell me, had they legs?'
'Not a leg nor foot among them that I saw.'
'But did these things come out in any order?
What o' clock was it? What was the day of the week?
Who else was present? How was the weather?'
'I was coming to that. It was half-past three
On Easter Tuesday last. The sun was shining.
The Harlech Silver Band played Marchog Jesu
On thirty-seven shimmering instruments.
Collecting for Carnarvon's (Fever) Hospital Fund.
The populations of Pwlheli, Criccieth,
Portmadoc, Borth, Tremadoc, Penrhyndeudraeth,
Were all assembled. Criccieth's mayor addressed
them

First in good Welsh and then in fluent English,
Twisting his fingers in his chain of office,
Welcoming the things. They came out on the sand,
Not keeping time to the band, moving seaward
Silently at a snail's pace. But at last
The most odd, indescribable thing of all
Which hardly one man there could see for wonder
Did something recognizably a something.'

'Well, what?'

'It made a noise.'

'A frightening noise?'

'No, no.'

'A musical noise? A noise of scuffling?'

'No, but a very loud, respectable noise -
Like groaning to oneself on Sunday morning
In Chapel, close before the second psalm.'

'What did the mayor do?'

'I was coming to that.'

Side II, Band 2:

FLECKER SANTORIN
(A Legend of The Aegean)

"Who are you, sea lady,
And where in the seas are we?
I have too long been steering
By the flashes in your eyes
Why drops the moonlight through my heart,
And why so quietly
Go the great engines of my boat
As if their souls were free?"
"Oh ask me not, bold sailor;
Is not your ship a magic ship
That sails without a sail:
Are not these isles the Isles of Greece
And dust upon the sea?
But answer me three questions
And give me answers thee.
What is your ship?" "A British."
"And where may Britain be?"
"Oh it lies north, dear lady;
"It is a small country."
"Yet you will know my lover
Though you live far away:
And you will whisper where he has gone,
That lily boy to look upon
And whiter than the spray."
"How should I know your lover,
Lady of the sea?"
"Alexander, Alexander,
The King of the World was he!"
"Weep not for him, dear lady,
But come aboard my ship
So many years ago he died,
He's dead as dead can be."
"Oh base and brutal sailor
To lie this lie to me.
His mother was the foam-foot
Star-sparkling Aphrodite;
His father was Adonis
Who lives away in Lebanon,
In stony Lebanon, where blooms
His red anemone.
But where is Alexander,
The soldier Alexander
My golden love of olden days
The King of the world and me?"

She sank into the moonlight
And the sea was only sea.

Side II, Band 3:

KEATS - LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

'I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.'

'I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful - a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

'I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

'I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

'She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said -
"I love thee true!"

'She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

'And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd - Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

'I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried - "La Belle Dame Sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

'I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

'And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.'

Side II, Band 4: HARDY THE RUINED MAID

"O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!
Who would have supposed I should meet you in
Town?

And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?" -
"O didn't you know I'd been ruined?" said she.

- "You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
Tired of digging potatoes and spudding up docks;
And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers
three!" -

"Yes: that's how we dress when we're ruined," said
she.

- "At home in the barton you said 'thee' and 'thou',
And 'thik oon,' and 'theas oon,' and 't'other,' but
now

Your talking quite fits 'ee for high comp-ny!" -
"Some polish is gained with one's ruin," said she.

- "Your hands were like paws then, your face blue
and bleak,
But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek,
And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!" -
"We never do work when we're ruined," said she.

- "You used to call home life a hag-ridden dream
And you'd sigh and you'd sock; but at present you
seem
To know not of megrims or melancho-ly!" -
"True. One's pretty lively when ruined," said she.

- "I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,
And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!" -
"My dear - a raw country girl, such as you be
Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined," said
she.

Side II, Band 5:

TESSIMOND - TALK IN THE NIGHT (AND)
MIDDLE AGED CONVERSATION

"Why are you sighing?"

"For all the voyages I did not make
Because the boat was small, might leak,
might take
The wrong course, and the compass might
be broken,
And I might have awoken
In some strange sea and heard
Strange birds crying."

"Why are you weeping?"

"For all the unknown friends or lovers
passed
Because I watched the ground or walked too
fast
Or simply did not see
Or tuned aside for tea
For fear an old wound stirred
From its sleeping."

Side II, Band 5b:

"Are you sad to think how often
You have let all wisdom go
For a crimson mouth and rounded
Thighs, eyes you drawned in?" "No."

"Do you find this level country
Where the winds more gently blow,
Better than the summit raptures
And the deep-sea sorrows?" "No."

Side II, Band 6:

HAWKER - A RAPTURE ON THE CORNISH HILLS

"I stood at the foot of Rocky Carradon -
The massive monuments of a vast religion,
Piled by the strength of unknown hands, were
there
The everlasting hills, around, afar.
Uplifted their huge fronts, the natural altars
Reared by the Earth to its surrounding God.
I heard a Voice, as the sound of many waters: -
"What do'st thou here, Elihah?" And I said
"What doth he here, Man that is born of woman?"
The clouds may haunt these mountains; the fierce
storm
Coiled in his caverned lair - that wild torrent
Leaps from a native land: but Man! O Lord!

What doth he here?"
"Didst thou not fear the stranger Voice?"

the Bard
I could not, at the foot of Rocky Carradon.

Side II, Band 7:

PLOMER - BAMBOO: A BALLAD FOR TWO
VOICES

She:

However dry and windless
Cold days, hot nights may be,
Bamboo, incessant rustler
Your restless leafage utters
A sound of wind and rain:
Nobody knows the nervous
Effect it has on me -
I cannot stand the strain,
Bamboo, I cannot stand it,
Your whispering campaign!

He:

I love bamboo, your fidgets
And sudden sighs, bamboo;
Awake alone I listen
To secret susuration
Like paper scraping stone;
Stroking the inner surface
Of this old heart, bamboo,
Whisper to me alone.
Your wordless reminiscence -
And resurrect my own!

She:

Here is the explanation
Why what he loves I hate:
My husband was a sailor
Out on the China Station -
(If I had known him then!
It seems the best life offers
Is second-best and late;
Unsure of what and when
A girl may miss her chances -
What did I know of men?)

The girl he'll never talk of
And never can forget
Has always come between us;
I see her sly and slant-eyed
Haunting some furtive wood,
Slender in silk, and artful;
The moment that they met.
Her doubtful maidenhood
Pleased him beyond all reason -
She stole his heart for good.

Before I ever knew him
The dew, the down, the bloom
Were brushed away in Asia -
Hers was his startling April,
His wildfire blossoming.
The years of humdrum fondness,
The habit-forming room
Are quite another thing -
I hate her for devouring
His unrecurrent spring!

He:

Her skin was like a primrose,
In sheets of silk her feet
Slender as sleeping finches
Slept while the snow was heaping
A feather barricade
Between us and the future:
At first, so sly and sweet,
It seemed an escapade,
But we were caught together -
Love caught us while we played.

I felt her small heart racing,
Quick heart imprisoned in
Her flexile, bird-boned body,
As if another being
Conscious that it was mute
Beat desperate, beat lonely,
Against the screen of skin:
The hot moon smelt of fruit
Looming up huge to listen
To one thin bamboo flute.

And that is why I planted
A thicket of bamboo
Here in An english garden -
Waving bamboo was witness
Of all that love can be:
I live at home and listen,
And you revive, bamboo!
After a life at sea
The only overwhelming
Love ever shown to me.

She:

How I dislike the supple
Canes, and the harsh coarse leaves!
There's something so suburban
About bamboos.

He:

The waving
Bamboo recalls the sway
Of young and fertile bodies
And lifted, long, silk sleeves.

She:

Suburban, as I say.

He:

The wordless reminiscence
Is whispered night and day

She:

Now that he's dead and buried
At last, at last I'm free
To make my chosen changes
Put off when he was living;
I'm captain now and crew -
(No freedom like a widow's!) -
And who's to disagree
With what I mean to do?
Root, shoot, and stem and sucker,
I'll root out that bamboo!

His Ghost:

That's what you think, old helpmate,

But always I shall swim
Along your psyche's courses
The Frogman in your bloodstream
You never can evade;
By cutting down that sappy
Bamboo you'd injure him
Whose peace of mind you made -
You know you'll never touch it
With secateurs or spade!

His Ghost:

Bamboo, she used to hate you
But lonely now she hears
And half believes your voice is
Not yours but mine ironic
That she discovers now
A soft association
Even a source of tears
In what she once described as
"A vicious rasping sound" -
It now puts her in mind of
Her husband underground.

She:

Strange that I used to hate you,
His keepsake plant, bamboo
In solitude your sighing
Recall my old companion
And not his dreamt-of past.

His Ghost:

We phantoms have our triumphs.

She:

You're my plant now, bamboo!

His Ghost:

She understands at last.
Why I was pleased to hear you.

She:

I understand at last.

His Ghost:

Hush hush those open secrets
You'll much rehearse alone
When we are both reduced to
Potential fertilizer
For planfs like you, bamboo.

She:

Two butterflies beside you
A moment on a stone -

His Ghost:

Would not be us, bamboo!
And now long life we wish you
Long-loved, light leaved bamboo

Together:

Bamboo, Bamboo, Bamboo