

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 32321 STEREO

The Parlour Piano: American Popular Songs of the 1800's

Sung by Dorothy Mesney & Myron McPherson at the piano



COUPLE ON BICYCLE, 1886

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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**The Parlour Piano:
American
Popular Songs of the 1800's**

*Sung by Dorothy Mesney
& Myron McPherson at the piano*

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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Sung by Dorothy Mesney & Myron McPherson at the piano



BIOGRAPHY OF DOROTHY MESNEY

Born in Brooklyn, Dorothy Mesney's education includes a B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College, post graduate studies at the Juilliard School of Music, Queens College, and Columbia University. Her in-depth research in the field of American music, and in Renaissance music, has resulted in programs and performances on television, radio, and recordings. She has appeared on the "Joe Franklin Show," "Pat McCann Show," "To Tell The Truth," WNYC Radio, WRIV Radio, WLIR Radio, and on Cable TV's "Lee Pittsburg Show."

Dorothy Mesney has performed in leading concert halls, museums, historical societies, schools and colleges. Recent appearances include Carnegie Recital Hall, New York Historical Society, Brooklyn Museum, Library and Museum of The Performing Arts auditorium in Lincoln Center, the New York Cultural Center, South Street Seaport, and in the series "American Landmark Festival." Dorothy Mesney is founder of "THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE," a group of musicians dedicated to performing American music of all periods, which presented special programs during the Bicentennial. She is co-founder, with Marjorie Kern, of "THE ELIZABETHAN EXPERIENCE" which was one of the stellar attractions of the Renaissance Festival of The Arts in Sterling Forest Gardens at Tuxedo, New York. She is listed in the "International Who's Who of Music," "The Interna-

tional Who's Who of Women," "Who's Who of American Women," and "Notable Americans 1978."

In a recent review in the New York Times, Raymond Erikson commented that Dorothy Mesney's performance was "interesting and well-handled in verbal description and singing." The Music Journal described it as a "meaningful historical program." Of her recent album for Folkways, "PATCHWORK & POWDERHORN," Songs of the American Revolutionary Era, FH-5278, the Listening Post said, "Mesney has collected songs that provide real insight into the popular culture of the Revolutionary period . . . 'PATCHWORK & POWDERHORN' is a *must* for those building either a Bicentennial collection or a solid collection of American folksongs."

BIOGRAPHY OF MYRON MCPHERSON

Myron McPherson received his musical training in Southern California with Lillian Steuber and Gwendolyn Koldofsky. He has toured as accompanist of the Roger Wagner Chorale, is founder of The Tycho Ensemble, a multi-media presentation, is pianist of the Juilliard Ensemble and the Miraflores Trio.

He is a specialist in contemporary music and has performed over 100 new works by today's leading composers. He plays the entire piano & chamber music of Schoenberg, Wilhem, and Messiaen. Mr. McPherson has been associated with the Juilliard School since 1969 as a vocal and instrumental coach.



INTRODUCTION NOTES

Dorothy Mesney, with Myron McPherson at the piano, not only revives, but relives, an era in American popular music that has fallen largely into limbo. Each song has something to tell about an almost forgotten generation. . . middle class America of the years 1820-1850. To paraphrase a familiar quotation, Mesney says, "By their songs ye shall know them." By listening to what they have to say, one will learn that what concerned the minds and hearts of the people who helped to build America in the first half of the 19th century is very much the same as what concerns us today—expressed in the idiom of their time. These are the songs that middle class America sang with passion and pathos around the pianos in their parlours, and loved to hear sung in their music halls.

These songs are our musical ancestors. What they have to say, and the ways that they say it, may sometimes seem, by turn, touchingly beautiful or amusingly grotesque. They are, nevertheless, a part of our musical heritage; and, as such, they deserve to be recognized. There is a snobbery in American musical circles that would prefer to ignore this section of our musical ancestry. Unless a piece of music is pure Art or pure Folk, they do not consider it worth recognizing. Many are ashamed to perform them; others simply refuse. This is like denying your ancestors unless they have had "polish" or "breeding."

These songs were chosen with the same loving interest and fascination with which an antiques collector would choose something very special for his or her collection. Each has a special charm and personality of its own; and, together, they re-create an era in American life and music whose own special charm and "personality" will probably never again be duplicated on this, or any other, planet.

My special thanks to Myron McPherson for his creative insight, his artistic imagination, his perceptive understanding, his sensibility and great musical versatility, without which this album might never have been brought into being.

Dorothy Mesney

Dorothy Mesney, mezzo soprano
Myron McPherson, piano

Popular songs of the Early 19th Century (1820-1850)

SIDE I

OH BELIEVE ME, IF ALL THOSE ENDEARING YOUNG CHARMS Thos. Moore

1.
Believe me, if all those endearing young charms
That I gaze on so fondly today
Were to fade by tomorrow and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy gifts, fading away,
Thou wouldst still be adored
As this moment thou art;
Let thy loveliness fade, as it will;
And around the dear ruin,
Each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdently still.

2.
It is not while beauty and youth are thine own
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervor and faith of a soul can be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear!
Oh! The heart that has truly loved,
Never forgets!
But as truly loves on to the close;
As the sunflower turns on her god, when he sets,
The same look that she gave when he rose.

IF YOU'VE ONLY GOT A MOUSTACHE Stephen Foster

1.
Now all of you poor single men
Don't ever give up in despair,
For there always is hope while there's life
To conquer the hearts of the fair.
No matter what may be your age,
You always may cut a fine dash,
And will suit all the girls to a hair,
If you've only got a moustache!
A moustache! A moustache!
If you've only got a moustache!

2.
Your head may be thick as a block,
Or empty as any football,
Oh! Your eyes may be green as the grass,
Your heart just as hard as a wall.
Yet, take the advice that I give,
You'll soon win affection and cash,
And will be all the rage with the girls,
If you'll only get a moustache!
A moustache! A moustache!
If you'll only get a moustache!

THE WASHING DAY P. Norami

1.
My Kate she is a bony wife
And very free from evil,
Except upon a washing day,
And then she is the devil!
The very kittens on the hearth,
They will not even play!
Away they jump, with many a thump,
All on a washing day!

Chorus:
For it's thump, thump, scold, scold,
Thump, thump away!
The devil a bit of comfort's there
All on a washing day!

2.
The sky with clouds was overcast,
The rain began to fall,
My wife, she beat the children,
And raised a pretty squall!
She bade me with a scolding look
To get out of the way!
The devil a bit of comfort's there
All on a washing day!

Chorus:

3.
I asked a friend to come and dine,
"Come, come!" says I, "Odd's buds!
I'll no denial take! You shall,
though Kate is in the suds!"
But what he had to dine upon,
In faith I shall not say,
But I'll wager he'll not come again
Upon a washing day!

Chorus:

THE WATCHMAN

Thomas Moore
arr. P.K. Moran

1.
Good night, good night, my dearest,
How fast the moments fly!
'Tis time to part thou hearest
That hateful watchman's cry . . .
That hateful watchman's cry . . .
That hateful watchman's cry . . .
"Past twelve o'clock!" good night!
Good night!

2.
Yet stay a moment longer—
Alas! why is it so?
The wish to stay grows stronger,
The more 'tis time to go . . .
The more 'tis time to go . . .
The more 'tis time to go . . .
"Past one o'clock!" good night!
Good night!

3.
Now wrap thy cloak about thee—
The hours must sure go wrong—
For when they're past without thee,
They're ho! ten times as long!
They're oh! ten times as long!
They're oh! ten times as long!
"Past two o'clock!" good night!
Good night!

4.
Again that dreadful warning!
Had ever time such flight?
And, see the sky—'tis morning!
So now, indeed, good night!
So now, indeed, good night!
So now, indeed, good night!
"Past three o'clock!" good night!
Good night!

HE WAS SUCH A NICE YOUNG MAN M.T.A. Beckett lyrics by W.R. Aldridge

1.
If pity dwell within your breast,
Some sympathy pray spare,
of Love that breaks young Ladies rest,
Indeed I've had my share,
His form is ever in my sight,
Forget I never can;
I'm haunted by Him day and night,
He was such a nice young Man.

2.
'Twas at a Ball held in the West,
On me He first did glance,
So gently He my fingers prest
And asked me out to dance.
I blushed and whispered, no, no, no.
Then smiling dropped my fan,
For how could I refuse to dance,
He was such a nice young Man!

3.
Next morning dressed and breakfast done,
Heart beating with desire,
The Hall door Bell was loudly rung
Enough to break the wire!
I thought I should have died with fright,
Up come our Servant Ann,
"A gentleman, Miss, waits below.
He is! such a nice young man!"

4.
Almost had sunk 'twixt hope and fear
I wish'd I was afar,
Guess my surprise Him now to hear
Conversing with Mamma,
Such language elegant he used
Her Heart He did trepan,
She said She no objection had
He was such a nice young Man.

5.
From House He scarce was out of sight
Whence from the lower rooms,
A Servant Maid came in a fright
And cried, "He's stole the spoons!"
"Ah, fetch him back Mamma!" she cried.
Off went our footman Dan
Who brought him back—we found the Spoons
Yes! Upon the nice young Man.

6.
A caution Ladies give I must,
The Moral I well know.
'Tis never the appearance trust
Of any dashing Beau,
For this is what I should have done
When to notice He began.
But who'd have thought he was a thief,
He was such a nice young Man!

LOVE AND DUTY

J. Paddon

1.
O might I but my Henry love,
My Mother chides severely
And tells me I must wretched prove
Because I love him dearly.
In vain she rates me o'er and o'er
With Lessons cold and endless,
It only makes me love him more,
To find him poor and friendless.

2.
And then to me my Henry says,
That true he has not riches;
But that we Love too little prize
When gold so much bewitches.
He tells me he enough can earn,

And bids me never fear it;
That scanty store will serve his turn,
If I would only share it.

3.

He tells me when the bosom's warm,
We mock the storm that's blowing;
That honest hearts can feel no harm,
Tho' hard the world is going.
He tells me, but Ah me! I fear
Lest I from duty falter,
I wish he could as soon persuade
The Mother as the Daughter.

I'M QUITE A FAMILY MAN

J. Blewitt

1.

I'm quite a family man,
At least, my house is filled with noise!
I once was rather fond of girls,
And very fond of boys.
Before I had my own,
I oft have romp'd and play'd and ran;
But 'pon my word, it's different now,
For I'm a family man!

Chorus:

I'm a family man, I'm a family man,
I'm a family, family man!

2.

When to my study I retire,
They kick against the door!
If for a half hour's sleep I try,
They're very sure to roar!
Then there's my wife!
(Plague take her life!)
She is my greatest ban!
I think that I was mad to try
And be a family man!

Chorus:

3.

As I'm a sinner, when after dinner
They come for their dessert,
The wine they spill, the fruit they steal,
And in my face throw dirt!
Thus quiet I shall never see,
Nor know of peace one span!
Alas, how did it come to pass,
That I'm a family man?

Chorus:

SIDE II

HOME, SWEET HOME

(as sung by Adelina Patti)

Henry R. Bishop

1.

'Mid Pleasures and Palaces
though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like Home!
A charm from the skies
Seems to hallow us there,
Which seek thro' the world
Is ne'er met with elsewhere!

Chorus:

Home! Home! Sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home!
There's no place like Home!

2.

An exile from Home, Splendour dazzles in vain!
Oh, give me my lowly thatched Cottage again!
The birds singing gaily,
That came at my call!
Give me them with the peace of mind
Dearer than all.

Chorus:

MAMA, MAMA, or WHY DON'T THE MEN PROPOSE?

Thos. H. Bayly

1.

Why don't the men propose, Mama?
Why don't the men propose?
Each seems just coming to the point,
And then, away he goes!
It is no fault of yours, Mama,
That everybody knows;
You fete the finest men in town,
Yet, oh, they won't propose!

Chorus:

They won't, they won't,
They won't, they won't propose!
Mama! Mama!
They won't, they won't propose!

2.

I'm sure I've done my best, Mama
To make a proper match;
For Coronets and eldest sons
I'm ever on the watch!
I've hopes that some distinguished beau
A glance upon me throws;
But though he'll dance and smile and flirt,
Alas he won't propose!

Chorus:

3.

I've tried to win by languishing
And acting like a blue;
I've bought big books and talked of them
As if I'd read them through.
But then I threw away the books;
Thought ignorance was bliss,
And felt convinced that men preferred
A simpler sort of miss.

Chorus:

4.

And what is to be done, Mama?
Oh, what is to be done?
I have no time to lose, Mama,
For I am thirty-one!
At balls I am too often left
Where spinsters sit in rows;
Why won't the men propose, Mama?
Why won't the men propose?

Chorus:

WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE

Henry Russell
and Geo. P. Morris

1.
Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it shelter'd me,
And I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand;
Thy axe shall harm it not!

2.
When but an idle boy,
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy
Here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kissed me here;
My father press'd my hand.
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand!

3.
My heartstrings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.
Old tree, the storm still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save
Thy axe shall harm it not!

THE OLD BACHELOR

Thos. H. Bayly

1.
I was just nineteen when I first fell in love,
And I scribbled a deal of rhyme,
And I talk'd to myself in a shady grove,
And I thought I was quite sublime:
I was torn from my love! 'twas a dreadful blow,
And the Lady she wiped her eye;
But I didn't die of grief, Oh dear me no,
"There'll be time enough for that." said I.
"There'll be time enough for that." said I.

2.
My next was a Lady who lov'd romance,
And wrote very splendid things;
And she said with a sneer when I ask'd her to dance,
"Sir, I ride upon a horse with wings."
There was ink on her thumb when I kissed her hand,
And she whispered, "If you should die,
I will write you an epitaph gloomy and grand."
"There'll be time enough for that." said I.
"There'll be time enough for that." said I.

3.
I left her and sported my figure and face,
At Opera, party and ball;
I met pretty girls at ev'ry place,
But I found a defect in all!
The first did not suit me I cannot tell how,
The second I cannot say why;
And the third, bless me I will not marry now,
"There'll be time enough for that." said I.
"There'll be time enough for that." said I.

4.
I look'd in the glass, and I thought I could trace,
A sort of a wrinkle or two;
So I made up my mind that I'd make up my face,
And come out as good as new.
To my hair I imparted a little more jet,
And I scarce could suppress a sigh,
But I cannot be quite an old Bachelor yet,
"No there's time enough for that." said I.
"No there's time enough for that." said I.

5.
I was now fifty one, yet I still did adopt
All the airs of a juvenile beau,
But somehow whenever a question I popp'd,
The girls with a laugh said "No."
I am sixty today, not a very young man,
And a bachelor doom'd to die;
So youths be advised and marry while you can,
"There's no time to be lost!" say I.
"There's no time to be lost!" say I.

THE SHIP ON FIRE

Henry Russell

The storm o'er the ocean flew furious and fast,
And the waves rose in foam at the voice of the blast;
And heavily labour'd the gale-beaten ship,
Like a stout-hearted swimmer, the spray at her lip;
And dark was the sky o'er the mariner's path,
Except when the light'ning illum'd it in wrath.

A young mother knelt in the cabin below,
And pressing her babe to her bosom of snow,
She pray'd to her God 'mid the hurricane wild,
"Oh Father, have mercy, look down on my child!"

It pass'd;—the fire whirlwind career'd on its way,
And the ship like an arrow divided the spray;
Her sails glimmer'd white in the beams of the moon,
And the wind up aloft seem'd to whistle, to whistle a tune;
And the wind up aloft seem'd to whistle, to whistle a tune.

There was joy in the ship as she furrow'd the foam,
For fond hearts within her were dreaming of home:
The young mother press'd her fond babe to her breast,
And sang a sweet song as she rocked it to rest.
And the husband sat cheerily down by her side,
And look'd with delight on the face of his bride:
"Oh, happy," said he, "when our roaming is o'er,
We'll dwell in our cottage that stands by the shore;
Already in fancy its roof I descry,
And the smoke of its hearth curling up to the sky;
Its garden so green, and its vine-cover'd wall;
The kind friends awaiting to welcome us all;
And the children that sport by the old oaken tree!"
Ah! gently the ship glided over the sea.

Hark! what was that?

Hark, hark to the shout—
FIRE!

Then a tramp and a rout,
And an uproar of voices
Arose in the air,
And the mother knelt down—
And the half-spoken prayer
That she offer'd to God

In her agony wild,
Was, "Father, have mercy!
Look down, look down on my child!"

She flew to her husband—
She clung to his side;
Oh! there was her refuge,
What e'er might betide.
Fire! fire! it was raging above and below,
And the cheeks of the sailors grew pale at the sight,
And their eyes glisten'd wild in the glare of the light.
'Twas vain o'er the ravage the waters to drip,
The pitiless flame was the lord of the ship,
And the smoke, in thick wreaths,
Mounted higher and higher:
Oh, God! it is fearful to perish by fire!

Alone with destruction—
Alone on the sea—
Great Father of mercy,
our hope is in Thee!

Sad at heart and resign'd, yet undaunted and brave,
They lower'd the boat, a mere speck on the wave.
First enter'd the mother, enfolding her child,
It knew she caress'd, it look'd upward and smil'd.
And then came the husband, and then came the crew;
At last came the captain—Oh, what could they do?

Cold, cold was the night, as they drifted away,
And mistily dawn'd o'er the pathway the day;
And they pray'd for the light, and at noon-tide about
The sun o'er the waters shone joyously out.

"Ho, a sail! ho a sail!" cried the man on the lee,
"Ho, a sail" and they turned their glad eyes o'er the sea.
"They see us! they see us! the signal is wav'd;
They bear down upon us—
They bear down upon us—
They bear down upon us—
The signal is wav'd!

Thank God, thank God, we're sav'd!"

LOVE AND DUTY

O night I but my Henry love,
My Mother chides severely,
And tells me I must wretched prove
Because I give him dearly.
In vain she raises me o'er and o'er
With lessons cold and endless,
If only makes me love him more,
To find him poor and friendless.
And then to me my Henry says,
That true he has not richer;
But that we love too little prize
When gold so much bewitches.
He tells me he enough can earn

HE WAS SUCH A NICE YOUNG MAN
M. T. A. BAKER
Drama by W. R. Aldridge
It piny dwelt within your breast,
Some sympathy gave
Of love that breaks young ladies rest,
Indeed I've had my share,
His form is ever in my sight,
Forgot I never can;
I'm haunted by him day and night,
Whispering to me now why
Why I never can
Forgot I never can
His form is ever in my sight,
Indeed I've had my share,
Of love that breaks young ladies rest,
Some sympathy gave
It piny dwelt within your breast,
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HE WAS SUCH A NICE YOUNG MAN