

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 33548 STEREO

*Adam
& the
Beasts
and other songs by
Alasdair
Clayre.*



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Side One

1. A Gentle Easy-Flowing River
2. Sell Your Beauty
3. Adam and the Beasts
4. Lullaby and Come Afloat
5. Springtime Song
6. Irish Girl
7. Motorway Promoter
8. An Old Wind Blows

Side Two

1. Two Evenings
2. Ballad of London
3. Guerilla
4. Snow
5. Old Rich World's Daughter
6. Hawthorn Berries
7. Mass Production Song
8. Travelling North

Words and music by Alasdair Clayre

(c) 1976 Faber Music Ltd.

*Track 4 arrangement by John Byrt, published by
Oxford University Press*

Track 8 (c) 1976 Alasdair Clayre

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

COVER: A FIFTH CENTURY IVORY, FROM THE BARGELLO

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Adam & the Beasts

and other songs by Alasdair Clayre.

Alasdair Clayre's books include *Work and Play*, *A Fire by the Sea* and other poems, *The Window*, and *Adam and the Beasts* and other songs. For some time he has been making radio and television programmes for the BBC and for the Open University. Andrew Parrott is a young conductor and director of *Musica Reservata*. Nick Bicat composes mainly for the theatre, and has recently been working on a play and a musical with David Hare. Emma Kirkby sings with the *Jaye Consort* and the *Consort of Music*. Victoria has worked mainly in France, with Mouloudji and Michel Legrand. Roddie Skeaping is a member of the *City Waits*. George Adie is a composer and guitarist. Dave Brooks is a flute player who worked with Manfred Mann and now has his own group.

Alasdair Clayre: voice tracks except a2, 6; b4.

Emma Kirkby: voice a2, 4, 8; b3, 4.

Victoria: voice and guitar a6, b6.

Nick Bicat: bass guitar a1, b3; guitars a2, 3, 5; b5, 7, 8; clavichord a3; b1, 3; piano a5, 7; b1; drums a2, 3, 5; b1, 3, 8; hand drum a3; b7.

Andrew Parrott: clavichord a1, 3, b3, 8; recorders b7; piano a5; b4; organ b3.

George Adie: guitar b2.

Dave Brooks: harmonica b2.

Roddie Skeaping: viols a4.

Arranged by Alasdair Clayre, Andrew Parrott and Nick Bicat

Recorded by Colin Sanders

Designed by Humphrey Stone

Produced by Alasdair Clayre

All the songs except the last are published in *Adam and the Beasts* and other songs, Faber and Faber Ltd., in association with Faber Music Ltd., 38 Russell Square, London WC1.

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Arrangement by John Byrt of "Lullaby and Come Afloat", published as a song for four voices by Oxford University Press.

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Alasdair Clayre's books include *Work and Play*, *A Fire by the Sea* and other poems, *The Window* (a novel), *Adam and the Beasts* and other songs and *Nature and Industrialization* (an anthology).

Alasdair Clayre translates songs as well as writing them, and has translated Jacques Brel, Mikis Theodorakis, Brecht and other songwriters, some medieval, some modern.

He taught for a time at Oxford, and was one of the original television producers for the Open University in Britain, and he has worked as a producer and a presenter for BBC television and radio. He is currently a journalist.

The main instruments on this record are amplified clavichord with various kinds of guitar - an electric one in the first son, an acoustic guitar on the last, and many combinations in between.

The record was made at Colin Sanders's small studio in the country outside Oxford, where the most advanced 24-track recording equipment is muffled against the lowing of cows outside and the rhythmic filling and emptying of the village pub 'The Boot'.

Nick Bicat, who plays the guitar and also drums and keyboard instruments on most of the rest of the records, left the Oxford University school of music to play popular music and compose for the theatre. Andrew Parrott, playing the clavichord in the first and last songs of the record and on several others, is the director of *Musica Reservata* and an expert on Renaissance music. He is married to Emma Kirkby who sings some of the girls' songs. Victoria, who sang with Mouloudji and Michel Legrand in France sings the others and plays her own guitar. The group that plays with Alasdair Clayre is supplemented here by George Adie, a young composer and guitarist, Dave Brooks, a flute player here playing a harmonica and Roddie Skeaping.

A1 A Gentle Easy-Flowing River

Made from the words of some Thames lightermen, the men who work the barges on the river. Lightermen are skilled men who can handle a barge anywhere on the river by day and night, using only an oar. Their trade is dying. This song was composed for a 'radio ballad', a kind of radio programme originated by Charles Parker, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, who taught Alasdair Clayre the ways of writing from tape-recorded words that they had evolved.

A2 Sell Your Beauty

This song is a mother-and-daughter exchange, like many traditional songs; but it is about something less traditional than murder - advertising.

A3 Adam and the Beasts

Because man may be comparatively weak by nature, does he lack the restraints that prevent the lion and the tiger from harming their own kind when they play, or when they fight each other? If so, then through the discovery of tools and ever more deadly weapons, man could be the one creature that has outgrown its innate restraints; and the only one that kills its own kind.

This song was first written for the Royal Shakespeare Company's Theatregoround.

A4 Lullaby and Come Afloat

All the other songs on this record are arranged and improvised by the musicians collectively, especially by Nick Bicat and Andrew Parrott. This is the exception - the only one where the instrumental parts were written out in advance. John Byrt, a young British composer, harmonised Alasdair Clayre's words and melody for four voices and Roddie Skeaping, a member of the musical family, many of whom specialise in old instruments, plays viols for two of the voices.

A5 Springtime Song

Written in and about the month of April.

A6 Irish Girl

Written partly from the words - recollected uncertainly next morning - of a traditional storyteller from South Roscommon describing the hedgerows and fields at different times of year. This is the farthest west in Ireland where English rather than Irish has for a long time been the language used by poets and storytellers and the English used in South Roscommon is said to be particularly rich as a result. The story is of a girl who went to a big city in the east.

A7 Motorway Promoter

When the authorities planned to build a ring of motorways or elevated freeways close to the centre of London - cutting through people's houses and open space - the local people protested. The authorities got the city engineer from Leeds to tell them what London needed. A number of Londoners thought they knew London better.

This was the campaign song, sung in the rallies before the debate in the House of Commons. The campaign won.

A8 An Old Wind Blows

An image in a film script by Dylan Thomas, of a butterfly flying in and out of an empty cow's skull, seems to have been connected with the origin of this song, consciously or unconsciously; it was an incident in the autobiography Twenty Years A-Growing by Maurice O'Sullivan set in the Blasket Islands in the far West of Ireland.

In verses 2 and 3, two ideas about how to sing the song came together by accident on the same tape at different speeds; as they seemed better than anything planned, they were left as they happened.

B1 Two Evenings

Hitch-hiking at night down to Newcastle from the North of England has a particular chill about it. There is an image in Dante about evening striking a traveller with perhaps the same feeling, if he hears a peal of bells from a long way off. Today it might be a lorry accelerating, or a train gathering speed in the darkness.

B2 Ballad of London

This was written for the first helicopter film of Britain made by BBC television, to cover the flight from the Essex marshes with their deserted mudflats to Westminster and the Houses of Parliament: a journey in time as well as space, though nothing much seems to have changed since 'the first man came to the River Thames'.

B3 Guerilla

Already the standardising mythology of the poster had been at work on Guevara when a number of English writers collaborated on a book about him, 'Viva Che'. Even without that mythology he would not have been a simple man to write honestly about. The song is an attempt to come to terms with a man living by violence as well as by suffering, a man 'not pure or "good"', going 'out beyond the streets we know'.

B4 Snow

The melody of this song echoes a theme of Neidhart von Reuenthal, a medieval German poet who wrote songs for country people to dance to; and the accompaniment is correspondingly simple, bare fifths in alternation. Emma Kirkby sings both voices.

B5 Old Rich World's Daughter

The girl may be poor but the world she is in is too rich to sort out all its different messages. The song might equally and perhaps more conventionally have been a girl singing about a man.

B6 Hawthorn Berries

This song is about two people going for a walk in winter. It can be sung with a single voice; but it fits into a canon, with two voices.

B7 Mass Production Song

Written for a radio programme with Charles Parker and Peggy Seeger about the British Leyland motorworks at Cowley, partly out of the words of an Irishman who worked there, partly out of the writer's own experience of working on assembly lines himself. The hooter at the end is not easy to recognise as a clavichord, but that's what it is.

B8 Travelling North

This is a train song and a celebration,

TRAVELLING NORTH

Words and Music by Alasdair Clayre

1. Travelling north, travelling north to find you

The train wheels beating, the wind in my eyes,

Don't even know what I'll say when I find you

I'll call your name out, and don't be surprised.

Refrain:

2. It's so many miles and it's only once I've met you

I don't know what I'll find when I get to you

But suddenly now I know where I belong

It's many hundred miles and it won't be long.

3. Nothing at all in my head to say to you

Only the sound of the train I'm on

Nothing I've learnt all my life on the way to you

Only one love and that's over and gone.

Refrain:

4. It's so many miles and it's only once I've met you

I don't know what I'll find when I get to you

But suddenly now I know where I belong

It's many hundred miles and it won't be long.

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