Richard Dyer-Bennet
TENOR accompanying himself on the classic Spanish guitar

The lady’s policy   Dinah and Villikens   Fain would I wed   Willie Taylor   Charlie is my darling
Lilli burlero    The beloved kitten   Spottlied auf Napoleon’s rückzug aus Russland 1812  Go down, Moses
The swapping song  The house carpenter  The lady who loved a swine  The lass from the low country

Complete lyrics to all songs on this record included inside jacket. A long playing record on high fidelity.
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A note on this recording

Here is the third release of our young but healthy company. Again I have attempted to present a shorter version of what I do on the concert stage — namely, a varied program. The range of material represented gives me the opportunity to deal with a point close to the heart of my work.

"Why did you sing a Negro spiritual?" is a question often asked me after a performance. The implication is that because I am not a Negro I cannot possibly do justice to the song. May I point out that I am also not an Elizabethan Englishman, nor a Napoleonic European, nor an 18th century sailor — nor even a pig, though I represent one momentarily on this record.

I sing only what I think I understand and have considerable feeling for. My job as an artist is to persuade you of this understanding and feeling. May Orpheus guide me.

Side 1

Group 1

The lady's policy

Probably 18th century English, it was brought to my attention by John Ward. The last verse, including the whistle in the parallel minor, is my own invention.

Dinah and Villians

My grandmother taught me this, and though she was born and raised in America I believe the song stems from the 19th century English music hall tradition. The American folk song "Sweet Betsy from Pike" is usually sung to an almost identical melody.

Pain would I wed

Again I am indebted to John Ward for this anonymous 16th century English song. I have altered the last two lines in order to avoid an ambiguity. The original lines seemed to suggest that a woman is speaking, whereas the first two verses are clearly a man's statement. Possibly the person who noted it down had remembered it incorrectly. At any rate, this is an example of the non-scholarly but necessary liberty a singer must take if he wishes to make contemporary sense.

Willie Taylor

This was sung to me about twenty years ago by James Goronwy Ressor, a Welsh-American friend living in Berkeley, California; where he learned it I don't know. It harks back to the "press gangs" of 18th century England. These gangs practised an aggressive recruiting technique. Entering a tavern, for instance, they would bang likely-looking prospects on the head with a beer mug. Next morning the prospects would awaken aboard ship, duly accredited members of the Royal Navy.

Charlie is my darling

A Jacobite song. Charlie is, of course, the "Bonnie Prince" of history and legend. I have made one or two errors in singing the accepted text, but was well enough pleased with the general delivery to let them stand.

Lilliburlero

An anti-Jacobite song, to balance matters. In 1686, King James II nominated General Richard Talbot to the lieutenancy of Ireland, "on account of his being a furious papist" says Percy in his "Reliques of English Poetry." Percy goes on to say that Talbot's subsequent behaviour justified the king's expectations and the Protestants' fears. First published in 1688, the text is attributed to Lord Wharton and the tune probably traditional Irish.

Side 2

Group 2

The beloved kitten

In 1820 Beethoven, who had apparently noted down this Austrian folk song, sent it to his publisher, Simrock, in Bonn. In an accompanying letter Beethoven added that he thought it better to hunt folk songs than to hunt men, though heroes have been praised for the latter. I have made a fairly literal translation of the one Austrian verse Beethoven wrote down, and have added a second verse of my own devising.

Spottlied auf Napoleons Rückzug aus Russland 1812

Here is the great retreat from Russia as seen by a poet of the time. Could the Napoleonic superman myth be more delightfully and vigorously deflated? I got the song from Sven Scholander in Sweden in 1935. Incidentally, the reference to the Prince of Neufchatel in the fourth verse puzzled me until I ran across a reference to Neufchatel as reputedly the ugliest man in Europe at that time.

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