Beethoven Scottish and Irish songs

TENOR Richard Dyer-Bennet
PIANO Natasha Magg
VIOLIN Urico Rossi
CELLO Fritz Magg

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

this is a STEREOPHONIC RECORDING
A note on Beethoven's Scottish and Irish Songs, and on this recording

Although these unusual songs do not merit inclusion with Beethoven's greatest works, they have a modest charm of their own and certainly merit a contemporary hearing. I have performed them with four different trios at one time or another, and in each case the music was a fresh and pleasant surprise to the musicians involved as well as to the listeners. Because they are virtually unknown to musicians and to audiences, an historical note is indicated.

George Thomson, (1767-1851), was a Scottish office clerk with a hobby of collecting Scottish folk-songs. He believed the traditional words could be improved upon, and that accompaniments were by the finest available composers. By various use of cajolery, appeals to national pride, and money, he was able to engage a number of distinguished poets and musicians in his enterprise. Among these were Scott, Burns, Haydn, and Beethoven. At Burns' suggestion he enlarged his venture to include Irish and Welsh songs.

The Beethoven settings were published in three volumes, two of Irish airs, in 1814 and 1816, and one of Scottish in 1818. In these original publications Thomson simplified some of Beethoven's harmonies, omitted sections of the 'cello and violin parts, and changed tempo indications. In the Breitkopf and Hartel edition of Beethoven's works, the original full score was printed, and it is the full score we use in this recording.

Performance of these songs presents certain difficulties. For one thing, Beethoven set the tunes without knowing what the words meant in some cases and without any texts, understood or not, in others. When Thomson felt the setting did not match the words, he commissioned new words to be written. In the case of a musical poet, this can be satisfactory; in several instances I fear the poets concerned were not very musical, for the prosody is awkward. Furthermore, the vocal line is sometimes doubled by violin or 'cello as well as by piano. I suspect this was a deliberate aid to the amateur singer who could not be trusted to hold her part unassisted. I say "her" part advisedly, for I also suspect the vocalists Thomson had in mind were the musical young ladies of the day. Now, a soprano voice would lift the melody an octave and give it some chance to soar above the other instruments, but the male voice has some difficulty projecting words through the surrounding pitches of piano, violin, and 'cello.

In this recording, we did not forget that the music is song and the text of some importance; we also tried to keep in mind that it is not song with accompaniment, but rather song in quartet form, with text and vocal line together constituting the first violin part.

As to whether the music remains folk song or has become Beethoven, what does it matter? The question is a thorny one for reviewers, catalog compilers, and program planners in those final bastions of good music in this electronic century — the FM radio stations, bless their souls. The music remains folk song, and even beauty, and in the instrumental interludes and codas you may hear now and again the unmistakable touch of the German master.

Richard Dyer-Bennet, September, 1958

Side I

Faithful Johnnie Scottish air with words by "Mrs. Grant."

On the massacre of Glencoe Scottish air with words by Sir Walter Scott.

Bonnie laddie, highland laddie Scottish air with words by James Hogg.

Sunset Scottish air with words by Sir Walter Scott.

The lovely lass of Inverness Scottish air with words by Robert Burns.

The pulse of an Irishman Irish air ("St. Patrick's Day") with words by Alexander Boswell.

Side II

Once more I hail thee Irish air with words by Robert Burns.

Morning a cruel tembler is Irish air with words by Alexander Boswell.

The morning air plays on my face Irish air with words by Joanna Baillie.

The return to Ulster Irish air with words by Sir Walter Scott.

Oh! Who my dear Dermot Irish air with words by William Smyth.

Again, my lyre Scottish air with words by William Smyth.

Because of the dialect and poetic ornament involved, the complete lyrics have been printed on a separate sheet inside this cover.

Biographical notes on the musicians of the trio

Notasha Magg, pianist was born in Vienna. She has had a rich musical background on both sides of her family, and from childhood on has concentrated as a soloist and chamber-music player.

Unico Rosi, violinist: a native of Connecticut, attended Juilliard, Yale, and the Eastman School of Music. His many appearances as soloist with symphony orchestras include ones with the Rochester, New Haven, and Indianapolis Philharmonics. Mr. Rosi is first violinist of the Berkshire Quartet and is Musical Director of Music Mountain.

Fritz Magg, cellist: is also Viennese by birth. His career has included, besides many solo appearances, the post of first cellist in both the Vienna Sinfonie and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestras. Mr. Magg, is cellist of the Berkshire Quartet which is in residence during the summer at Music Mountain, Falls Village, Connecticut; and during the winter at Indiana University.

Other albums in this series:

Richard Dyer-Bennet 1 [DYB 1000] 12" LP includes:

The lonesome valley Oh! in the stillly night The bonnie Earl of Morny

So we'll go no more a roving The joys of love Molly Brannigan

Down by the Sally Gardens The bold Fenian man The three fishes

Fine flowers in the valley Phyllis and her mother The vicar of Bray

Pull off your old coat Down in the valley Pedro I'm a poor boy

Richard Dyer-Bennet 2 [DYB 2000] 12" LP includes:

Clock Robin Blow the candles out Corn ricks are banished

The garden where the pretty rose Cockleshells The beggarman

Two maidens went milking The ballet's daughter of Lillington Veiled de Noel

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Richard Dyer-Bennet 3 [DYB 3000] 12" LP includes:

The lady's policy Dinah and Williken Fain would I wed

Willie Taylor Charlie is my darlin' Lilli burrlo The beloved kiten

Spotted Ast Napoleone Rocking on Russia 1812 The loss from the low country The swapping song

The house carpenter The lady who loves a swain Go down, Moses

Richard Dyer-Bennet 4 [DYB 4000] 12" LP includes:

A May day carol The rising of the moon The Kerry recrueit

Searching for lambs The bonnets of bannie Dundee The Spanish lady of Dublin City The three res-ens Song of reproach

Jag will go well The three tailors The swagoan The foggy, foggy dew

The fox, Drill, ye tarriers, drill

Richard Dyer-Bennet 5 [DYB 5000] 12" LP includes:

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The Quaker lover The brothers —I ride an old paint

Richard Dyer-Bennet 6 [DYB 6000] 12" LP includes:

Songs with young people in mind

The leprechaun The piper of Dundee Three jolly rouses of Lyon John Peel

The tailor and the mouse Come all ye Green corn Old Bangum

The hole in the bottom of the sea Backwe Jim The little pigs

The frog went a courting Go tell Aunt Rhodie One morning in May

The three cows Bow down

Beethoven Scottish and Irish songs

Album design: Martin Rosanweig

Photos by Clemens Kalischer

For best response on high fidelity phonographs use R.I.A.A. characteristic.

Recording engineer: J. Gordon Holt

Produced by Harvey Cort

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P. O. Box 235, Woodside 77, New York
Faithfu' Johnie

'When will you come again, my faithfu' Johnie,
When will you come again?'

"When the corn is gathered,
And the leaves are withered,
I will come again, my sweet and bonnie,
I will come again."

"Then will you meet me here, my faithfu' Johnie,
Then will you meet me here?"

"Though the night were Hollowe'en,
When the fearfu' sights are seen,
I would meet thee here, my sweet and bonnie,
I would meet thee here."

'And shall we part again, my faithfu' Johnie,
Shall we then part again?'

"Sae long's my een can see, Jean,
That face sae dear to me, Jean,
We shall not part again, my sweet and bonnie,
We shall not part again."

Bonny laddie, highland laddie

Where got ye that siller moon,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,
Glinting brow your belt a bocn,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?
Belted plaid and bonnet blue,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,
Have ye been at Waterloo,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?

Weels me on your tartan trews,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,
Tell me, tell me a' the news,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie.
Saw ye Bony by the way,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?
Blucher wi' his beard sae grey,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?

Or that doure and deadly Duke,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,
Scattring Frenchmen wi' his look,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?
Some say he the day may rue,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,
Ye can tell gin this be true,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie.

Wou'd ye tell me gin ye ken,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,
Aught o' Donald and his men,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?
Tell me o' my kilted Clan
Bonny laddie, highland laddie,
Gin they fought, or gin they ran,
Bonny laddie, highland laddie?

Sunset

The sun upon the Weirdlaw hill,
In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore;
Tho' Ev'ning, with her richest dye,
Flames o'er the hills on Ettrick's shore.

On the massacre of Glencoe

Oh! tell me, Harper, wherefore flow
Thy wayward notes of wail and woe
For down the desert of Glencoe,
Where none may list their melody?
Say, harp' sthou to the mists that fly,
Or to the dundeer glancing by,
Or to the eagle,
That from high screams chorus to thy minstrelsy.

The hand that mingled in the meal,
At midnight drew the felon steel,
And gave the host's kind breast to feel,
Meed for his hospitality.
The friendly hearth which warm'd that hand,
At midnight arm'd it with the brand
That bade destruction's flames expand
Their red and fearful blazonry.

Long have my harp's best notes been gone,
Few are its strings, and faint their tone,
They can but sound in desert lone
Their grey hair'd master's misery.
Were each grey hair a ministrel string,
Each chord should imprecations fling,
'Till startled Scotland loud should ring,
"Revenge for blood and treachery!"
Blest be the land in the wide western waters,
Sweet Erin, lov’d Erin, the pride of my song,
Still brave be the sons, and still fair be the daughters
Thy meads and thy mountains adorning!
And tho’ the eastern sun seems tardy,
That the pure light of knowledge slow,
And night and delusion,
And darkling confusion.

Now is the time to take thy part,
In the battle of life, or death no more;
In thy loved arms may rest thy head,
And happy thy last moments are.

The pulse of an Irishman

The pulse of an Irishman ever beats quicker
When war is the story, or love is the theme;
And place him where bullets fly thicker and thicker.
You’ll find him all cowardice scorning,
And tho’ a ball should maim poor Darby,
Light at the heart he rallies on,
Fortune is cruel,
But Norah, my jewel,
Is kind, and with smiling,
All sorrow beguiling,
Shall bid from our cabin all care to be gone
And they will jig it,
And tug at the spigot,
On Patrick’s day in the morning.

The return to Ulster

Once again, but how chang’d,
Since my wand’rings began
I have heard the deep voice of the Lagan and the Nith
And the pipes of Cuanbrassil resound to the roar
That woe we the echoes of fair Tullamore.
Alas! my poor bosom, and why shouldst thou burn?
With the scenes of my youth can its raptures return?
Can I live the dear life of delusion again,
That flow’d when these echoes first mix’d with my strain?

The lovely loss of Inverness

The lovely loss of Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For o’en and mor she cries alas!
And ay the salt tear blinds her e’ye.
Drumossie muir, Drumossie day.
A waeful day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear and brothers three.

Their winding sheet the bloody clay,
Their graves are growing green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman’s e’e.

Morning a cruel turmoil is

Morning a cruel turmoil is,
Banishing ease and repose;
Noonday a roaster and broiler is,
How we pant under his nose!

Morning a cruel turmoil is,
Ev’ning for lover’s soft measures,
Each hour the clock is telling,
And tug at the spigot,
On Patrick’s day in the morning.

Myrrles and vines some may proate about,
Bawling in heathensh glee.
Stuff I won’t bother my pate about,
Shamrock and whiskey for me!

But was she, too, a phantom, the maid who stood by,
And listed my lay, while she turn’d from mine eye?
Was she, too, a vision, just glancing to view,
Then dispers’d in the sunbeam, or melted to dew?

O! would it had been so, O! would that her eye
Had been but a star glance that shot through the sky.
And tho’ the eastern sun seems tardy,
And tho’ the eastern sun seems tardy.

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The morning air plays on my face

The morning air plays on my face
And through the gree mist peering,
The fondly sail’y sun trace,
Wood, wild, and mountain cheering.
Larks aloft are singing,
Hares from covert springing.

My parting with Nancy, ah! ne’er to meet again
My anguish awakes at thy visage so hoar;
Since hope is departed and comfort is gone.

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Is kind, and with smiling,
All sorrow beguiling,
Shall bid from our cabin all care to be gone
And how they will jig it,
And tug at the spigot,
On Patrick’s day in the morning.

Again my lyre

Again my lyre, yet once again,
With tears I wake thy thrilling strain!
O! sounds to sacred sorrow dear,
I weep, but could forever hear!
Ah, cease! nor more past scenes recall,
Ye plaintive note notes! thou dying fall!
For lost, beneath thy lov’d control
Sweet lyre! is my dissolving soul.

Around me airy forms appear,
And Seraph songs are in mine ear!
Ye Spirits blest, oh bear away
To happier realms my humble lay!
For still my love may deign to hear
Those human notes, that once were dear!
And still one angel sigh bestow on her who weeps,
Who mourns below.

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