

CHAN 6650



Down by the Salley Gardens

Benjamin Luxon *baritone*
David Willison *piano*

1	The Jolly Miller arr. Roger Quilter (1877–1953)	1:59
2	Drink to Me only with Thine Eyes arr. Quilter	2:49
3	The foggy, foggy Dew arr. Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)	1:39
4	The Isle of Cloy arr. E.J. Moeran (1894–1950)	3:55
5	The Trees they grow so high arr. Britten	2:55
6	Died for Love arr. Percy Grainger (1882–1961)	1:22
7	Lovely Mollie arr. Herbert Hughes (1882–1937)	3:22
8	I love my Love arr. Goff Richards (b. 1944)	3:56
9	The Shooting of his Dear arr. Moeran	2:20
10	Down by the Salley Gardens arr. Britten	2:49

11	The Old Turf Fire arr. Hughes	0:53
12	Ye Banks and Braes arr. Quilter	2:24
13	Barb'ra (H)Ellen arr. Grainger	6:27
14	Barbara Allen arr. Quilter	3:35
15	She moved thro' the Fair arr. Hughes	3:03
16	The Star of the County Down arr. Hughes	2:03
17	Sweet Nightingale arr. Richards	4:09
18	Blow the wind southerly arr. Gerald Moore (1899–1987)	3:13
19	The British Waterside arr. Grainger	1:54
20	The Pressgang arr. Moeran	1:54

21	Little Sir William arr. Britten	2:12
22	Six Dukes went a-fishin' arr. Grainger	1:39
23	Sweet Polly Oliver arr. Britten	1:53
24	Bold William Taylor arr. Grainger	4:23
25	Charlie is my Darling arr. Quilter	1:31
26	O Waly, Waly arr. Britten	3:11
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Having gone through a period of my life as a professional singer when I frequently performed traditional folk music either unaccompanied or with folk instruments, it is most interesting to turn now to the folksong as set by major British composers and song writers.

There is no doubt in my mind that setting a folksong to piano accompaniment does certainly alter the feel of the original song and turns it into much more of a set piece. Obviously, for instance, in performance one cannot have the variations that different folk-singers can bring to the same song. Having said this, I have returned to the piano-accompanied folksong with fresh enjoyment and admiration for the imagination and love that so many of our song writers have lavished on them.

Take for example two settings from such vastly different composers as Roger Quilter and Percy Grainger, both variations of the 'Barbara Allen' song. Both composers have responded dramatically to the story of the heartless Barbara Allen, or (H)Ellen, who so coldly reacts to the death of the heartbroken young man who loved her, and then, realising the full extent of her own callousness, dies of remorse.

Quilter's 'Barbara Allen' is without doubt one of his most passionate songs, unusually so. In his 'Barb'ra Ellen' Percy Grainger, although a musician who wrote that one of the greatest crimes against the folksong was to 'middle class' it or to sing it with 'white collar voice production and other townified suggestions', responds to the song with a piano accompaniment that would do credit to a section from a major piano concerto. Both settings are, to use that very apt slang term, 'over the top', but somehow this only serves to impress upon us some fifty years later the extent to which two artists of very different temperaments were affected in a similar fashion by a simple and beautiful story and tune.

The selection of songs and composers on this disc is a personal choice and it would take far more than one record to do justice to this fascinating sphere of song writing. In making my choice I have followed the Percy Grainger dictum:

The folk song by and large is a narrative song. Therefore it is surprising that in the large number of composers that have made arrangements in the last one hundred years, none – as far as I know – has given us 'narrative song' type settings. (1952)

For this reason I have ignored the great collectors such as Baring-Gould, Cecil Sharpe and Ralph Vaughan Williams, whose approach, by and large, was to make a musical setting for one verse which they then simply applied to the remaining stanzas of the poem. I have tried to choose songs where the accompaniment adds a changing musical perspective to the narrative or emotional development of the song, or where it chooses a set musical figuration to create a more static atmospheric setting: for example, Grainger's *Died for Love* and Britten's *The foggy, foggy Dew* and *O Waly, Waly*.

Of the seven composers or arrangers featured on this recording three went out 'into the field' to notate their songs from the singing of local folk singers. These were E.J. Moeran, Herbert Hughes and Percy Grainger. Roger Quilter, although belonging to this same period (the early years of the twentieth century), with his frail health and sophisticated disposition was not, one feels, the man to go on such a quest. His one collection of arrangements reflects this, for it consists mainly of well-loved national songs as opposed to folksongs. Musicians like Benjamin Britten, Gerald Moore and Goff Richards, coming that much later, have been able to choose their songs from a wealth of notated folk material.

Although the performance of folk music is not so widespread as it was in the time of the great collectors already mentioned, I feel sure that settings such as those on this recording have done much to preserve the life and vitality of this wonderful tradition of natural music.

The Jolly Miller has an interesting history. The tune is very folk-like but is said to have come from 'The Budgeon is a fine Trade' (1725). The words, or certainly the first verse, were featured in the play *Love in a Village* by Bickerstaff in 1762.

Drink to Me only with Thine Eyes (Ben Jonson). This beautiful poem set to an eighteenth-century tune is an example of a song that has become so popular and beloved that it has become part of the folk repertoire.

The foggy, foggy Dew (Suffolk) is one of the best-known of English folksongs, succinct and quite distinctive. Unlike so many other popular folksongs this one has remained unchanged, except for the odd word here or there, in text and tune.

The Isle of Cloy (Suffolk) is an unusual song and one of the many folksongs on the theme of a young girl separated from her sweetheart by ruthless parents – in this case the father – with tragic results.

The Trees they grow so high. Many versions of this song have been collected. It has been said that the song is based on the

actual marriage of the juvenile Laird of Craigton to a girl several years his senior. He died three years later in 1634. However, the song could be older, since child marriages for family consolidation were not unusual throughout the middle ages.

Died for Love (Lincolnshire) is a strange, tender, rather morbid little lullaby-like song.

Lovely Mollie. In this Irish version of the heroine following her sweetheart into the army or navy, Mollie attempts to take to the high seas but is dissuaded by her beau.

I love my Love (Cornwall) is one of the many versions on the 'Maid of Bedlam' theme. Gustav Holst set this lovely melody in one of his suites for military band.

The Shooting of his Dear (East Norfolk) is a strange little story, and one I cannot help but feel has been mis-heard in its handed-down existence. The song has become slightly nonsensical.

Down by the Salley Gardens is a rare example of a poem by a major poet, in this case W.B. Yeats, crossing into the folk tradition. The air is the 'Maids of Mourneshore'.

The Old Turf Fire is an Irish jig and again a written poem, this time words by Johnny Patterson – with two of the original stanzas omitted in this version by Herbert Hughes.

Ye Banks and Braes (Scottish). The poems of Robert Burns inspired many fine Scottish folksongs, and this is one of the best-known.

Barb'ra (H)Ellen (Lincolnshire). Cecil Sharpe personally collected some twenty-seven versions of this song, and almost all of them were in five-time. Here, the story is based in Scotland. It evokes an elaborate and detailed treatment of the lady's cruel behaviour, taking some thirteen stanzas, and ending with the reincarnation of the dead spirits as a rose and a briar which eventually form a 'true lovers' knot' high on the church tower.

Barbara Allen. There are many settings of this lovely song from all over the country. The many variations involve both tune and words. This particular setting, I believe, is probably the best-known.

She moved thro' the Fair was originally a fiddle tune from Donegal. The words are an old ballad reworked by Pádraic Colum. In the third stanza there are various versions: 'she came softly in', 'my dear love came in', and 'my dead love came in'. I have chosen the last version which, I believe, gives the song a particular haunting quality.

The Star of the County Down is a charming 'verse-and-chorus' type folksong from the North of Ireland.

Sweet Nightingale (Cornwall) is a curious song, and one of the few folksongs that seemed to originate in Cornwall. As far as I know there are no other variants. It has an unusual and, in a way, unfolk-like melodic line. Little is known of its history, but it was first

noted from the singing of Cornish miners in Germany in 1854.

Blow the wind southerly is an exceptional song very much in keeping with the rich folksong tradition of Northumberland and the Border Country.

The British Waterside (Nottinghamshire) is an uncomplicated rollicking mariner's song.

The Pressgang (East Norfolk) is an unusually graphic song about the promises and reality of the pressed sailor's existence.

Little Sir William (Somerset) is a very strange old song, said to date perhaps from the thirteenth century. There are many versions of this tragic little story, and it also appears in folk-carol form. This version is one of the simplest and most direct as regards both text and tune.

Six Dukes went a-fishin' (Lincolnshire). This song has a curious history. It is suggested that it relates to William de la Pole, first Duke of Suffolk, whose murdered body was washed ashore near Dover in 1450. In variants of this song the Duke comes from Grantham, Grafton

or Bedford. It is an unusual and characterful song.

Sweet Polly Oliver is one of the many songs in a genre where the intrepid heroine dons man's apparel and either joins the army or sets out on the high seas to find her love with varying results. This particular tale has a happy ending.

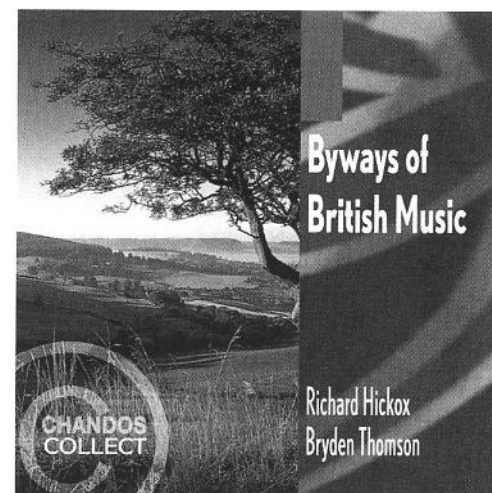
Bold William Taylor (Lincolnshire) is a wonderful narrative folksong of the same genre as 'Sweet Polly Oliver'. However, in this version Sally Gray, our heroine, is a lady of great determination and knows no compromise!

Charlie is my Darling (Scottish) was one of the most popular songs of the Jacobite rebellion and dates from around 1775.

O Waly, Waly (Somerset) is one of the most beautiful and well-known of British folksongs. Its origins are rather obscure but thought possibly to be Scottish, part of a long ballad called 'Lord Jamie Douglas'.

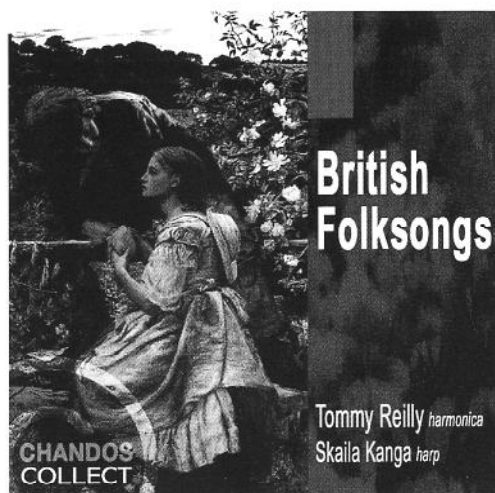
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