Tae Dee an Dy Folk, Fae Me an My Folk:

Songs my mother taught me

Ellen Smith

Mezzo-Soprano

&

Jonathan French

Piano

Summer Recital

Wednesday 10th April 2023

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

“Here's tae dee an dy fock fae me an my fock,

An I hoop at when dee an dy fock meets me an my fock

At dee an dy fock is aye blyde ta see me an my fock

As me an my fock is, at seein dee an dy fock…”

Traditional Shetland Toast

Cover Image: Raewick Beach, Skeld, Shetland Islands

Photo Credit: Ellen Smith

“Here's to you and your folk from me and my folk,

And I hope that when you and your folk meet me and my folk

That you and your folk are always glad to see me and my folk

As me and my folk are, at seeing you and your folk…”

Traditional Shetland Toast

***Tae Dee an Dy Folk, Fae Me an My Folk*:**

Songs my mother taught me

Ellen Smith: *Mezzo-Soprano*

Jonathan French: *Piano*

The term ‘folk’, as in ‘folk art’, ‘folk music’ is derived from the German word ‘volk’, meaning ‘people’. Arguably one of the oldest genres, folk music predates all of our Western music canon. Despite this, it remains one of our most precious assets in today’s musical society.

Prior to the custom of composers such as Britten, Bartók and Dvořák (amongst many) preserving and arranging the traditional styles of their respective countries, folk music survived mainly in the hearts and minds of the very beings from whom it originated – the people. It is, in essence, *from* the people, and *for* the people. Indeed, owing to its very nature, folk music has long been passed down aurally from parent to child, often in the form of fairy tales, nursery rhymes and lullabies. These children in turn then passed on such songs to their younglings, and thus the music continues to this day.

In my recital this afternoon then, I have chosen to explore just a small selection of folk music from both near and far, with selections from Hungary and the Czech Republic, all the way to my homeland of the Shetland Islands in the North Sea. Be it an arrangement of a pre-existing melody or an original work aimed at evoking its composer’s heritage; each piece aims to showcase this concept of the ‘music of the people’.

Tae dee an dy folk, fae me an my folk: Songs my mother taught me* is my offering to you of some of my most favourite pieces which I feel embody this tradition of passing on the music of our people through that most wonderful of mediums, song.

Programme:

- Ca' The Yowes (Folksongs of the British Isles) - *Arr. Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)*

- Draem-Flooers - *Tom Anderson (1910 – 1991)*

- Öt Arany-dal - *György Ligeti (1923 – 2006)*
  1. *Csalfa sugar*
  2. *A legszebb virág*
  3. *A csendes dalokból*
  4. *A bujdosó*
  5. *Az ördög elvitte a finánc*ot

- Près des Remparts de Séville/Séguedille (Carmen) - *Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875)*

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- Když mne stará matka (Cigánské Melodie) - *Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)*

- A Charm of Lullabies – *Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)*
  1. *A Cradle Song*
  2. *The Highland Balou*
  3. *Sephestia's Lullaby*
  4. *A Charm*
  5. *The Nurse's Song*

- Da Bressay Lullaby (Baloo Blilli) – *Shetland Traditional*

Ca' The Yowes (Folksongs of the British Isles):

Arr. Benjamin Britten (1951)

Renowned throughout Scotland and beyond for his Poetry, Robert 'Rabbie' Burns also took it upon himself to collect the various folk songs he encountered on his travels. The origins of this particular melody are, like much of folk music, unclear. The text however, although often attributed to Burns, is thought to have originated from Ayrshire poet Isabel Pagan. There is some debate as to whether Burns was aware of Pagan's works, he is only noted to have said "this song is in the true Scottish taste, yet I do not know that either air or words were ever in print before." Burns went on to rewrite the text whilst taking a countryside stroll, yet both Pagan's original text and Burns' revision paint the same picture of a pastoral love scene wherein a young shepherdess, whilst herding her ewes ('yowes') falls in love with a young shepherd lad.

This particular setting is taken from a collection of folk song arrangements for voice and piano by composer Benjamin Britten. Comprising of six volumes, each containing settings of folk songs from the British Isles and beyond, this *Ca' The Yowes* finds itself in volume five, alongside settings of *The Brisk Young Widow* and *The Lincolnshire Poacher* to name but a few. The arpeggiated spreads in the piano during each refrain create a sense of the wonder and grandeur of the rolling Scottish landscape, whilst the simple broken chordal accompaniment in the verses is reminiscent of the trickling waters of the Clouden river, which features heavily in this poem.

Ca' The Yowes:

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather growes,
Ca' them where the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie.

Hark the mavis' evening sang,
Sounden Clouden's woods amang;
Then a-folding let us gang,
My bonnie dearie.

We'll gang down by Clouden side,
Through the hazels spreading wide
O'er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stol'n my very heart;
I can die but canna part,
My bonnie dearie.

Text: Robert Burns

Drive the Ewes:

Drive the ewes to the knolls,
Drive them where the heather grows
Drive them where the streamlet runs,
My lovely dear.

Hark the song-thrush' evening song,
Sounding Clouden's woods among,
Then a-folding let us go,*
My lovely dear.

We will go down by Clouden side,
Through the hazel's spreading wide
Over the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon so clearly.

Fair and lovely as you are,
You have stolen my very heart,
I can die but cannot part,
My lovely dear.

Translation: Robert Burns Federation

**a-folding is the action of driving the sheep into the fold or sheep-pen*

Draem -Flooers:

Tom Anderson

The late Tom ‘Tammy’ Anderson is celebrated in folk music circles worldwide for his work in preserving much of Shetland’s musical heritage. Owing to the aural tradition in which much of the world’s folk music is passed on, many of Shetland’s traditional fiddle tunes existed only in the hearts and minds of its people, with many threatening to fall out of existence. As an accomplished fiddle teacher and composer, Anderson could not let the music he had grown up with disappear, and so he spent over 25 years collecting and transcribing these tunes. Initially compiled in volumes and published by the Shetland Folk Society, these ‘first editions’ would later reach farther afield and bring the music of this small archipelago in the North Sea to the world’s attention; making Shetland one of the most popular destinations for avid folk musicians and enthusiasts alike. It is largely thanks to Anderson that Shetland’s rich folk music heritage survives and thrives to this day.

In a change from his usual fiddle playing, this particular piece is one of Anderson’s few attempts at writing a melody for one to sing rather than play. With text from Shetland Poet James John (J.J) Haldane Burgess (another notable figure in Shetland’s cultural heritage), *Draem-Flooers* is inspired by the thawing of the winter snow which brings with it the hope of lighter nights, longer days; which many islanders wait earnestly for as we prepare for our Summer Solstice, or ‘Simmer Dim’. Written in our distinctive Shetland Dialect (much of which is derived from Norwegian), alliterative phrases such as ‘peerie plinkin’ paint the scene of the icicles melting, the waters trickling and the warmer days approaching.

Draem-Flooers:

Ee winter day I waandered oot
An doon alang da burn,
Da snaa lay, here and dere, aboot –
Da year wis at da turn.

Da air wis clear, da cloods in baas,
Da frosty-pillars hang,
And peerie, plinkin watter-faas
Ta een anidder sang.

An as I daandered ower da braes,
An trowe da faans o snaa,
I tocht apo da simmer days
Foo dey wir far awa:

An dan I windered ta misell,
If da aald Eart wid mind,
Or if shö did an shö wid tell
At simmer eence wis kind.

Jüst dan I finns a peerie flooer
Atil a quiet nyook,
Da snaa-draps ower it in a shooer –
I hed ta staand an look.

A peerie flooer, sae bricht an fair,
Among da meltin snaa!
Sae help me as I couldna bear
Ta pluck da ting awa.

"Ald Eart," I says, shö minds,
Shö's keep da boanie peerie ting,
Shö's smiling, noo, atil her sleep,
An draemin o da spring.

Dream-Flowers

One winter's day I wandered out
And down along the streamlet,
The snow lay, here and there, about –
The year was at the turn.

The air was clear, the clouds in balls,
The frosty-pillars hung,
And little, twinkling water falls
To one another sang.

And as I wandered over the hills,
And through the snow drifts,
I thought about the summer days
For they were far away:

And then I wondered to myself
If the old earth would remember,
Or if she did and she would tell
That summer once was kind.

Just then I found a small flower
In a quiet nook,
The snow dropped over it in a shower –
I had to stand and look.

A little flower, so bright and fair,
Among the melting snow!
So help me for I could not bear
To pick the thing away.

"Old Earth," I say, she remembers,
She will keep the pretty little thing,
She's smiling, now, in her sleep,
And dreaming of the spring.

Text: J. J. Haldane Burgess

Translation: Ellen Smith

Öt Arany-dal *(5 Arany Songs):*

György Ligeti (1952)

Quite a contrast in style from that which Ligeti is known for, *Öt Arany-dal* is a song cycle comprising of five pieces for voice and piano with text from Hungarian poet János Arany. Composed in 1952, the cycle follows themes such as a loss of innocence to a celebration of the devil himself – with a drinking song falling in the middle for good measure! Although not one of Ligeti's better known works, *Öt Arany-dal* provides a fascinating snapshot of some of the composer's earlier sounds, and particularly his foray into folk music.

Each poem paints a different scene which one would expect from a folk song collection, be it a metaphor for losing one's virginity in *Csalfa sugar*, the celebration of nature, a gift from God himself in *A legszebb virág* or sheer joy (and subsequent regret) of a drinking session in the local tavern in *A csendes dalokból*.

The piano part echoing the text is particularly striking, with various musical gestures cleverly interspersed throughout each piece. This is most notable in the fourth movement, *A bujdosó.* Painting a typical pastoral scene of a lone traveller, journeying through the countryside and questioning his place in the world, the piano can be heard to echo the chirping of this dove and nightingale which feature in the poem. Ever present, the continued 'chirping' of the birdsong provides a constant reminder to the protagonist that the existence of such birds on this earth is just as futile and just as fleeting as his.

The final movement, *Az ördög elvitte a fináncot!,* continues in this ilk of echoing the text, with the opening bars of the piano playing (rather crudely) the tuning notes of the violin which the Devil himself has appeared with. The syncopated rhythms along with the particularly well-placed dissonances create the manic scene of a village celebrating one hideous entity and thanking him for removing an equally hideous entity.

1: Csalfa sugár

Kis bokor, ne hajts még,
Tél ez, nem tavasz;
Kis lány, ne sóhajts még;
Nem tudod, mi az.

Bokor új hajtását
Letarolja fagy;
Lány kora nyílását
Bú követi, nagy.

Szánnam a bokorkát
Lomb - s virágtalan:
S a lányt, a botorkát,
Hogy már oda van!

1: Treacherous Ray of Sunllight

Little bush, don't bud yet,
It is winter, not spring;
little girl, don't sigh,
You don't know, what that is

The young shoots of the bush
are ravaged by the frost;
the early bloom of the girl
is followed by much sorrow.

I'm sorry for the bush,
with no leaves or blossoms;
and for the girsl, the little silly,
wilted so soon!

2: A legszebb virág

Szép virág a rózsa;
hát még a bimbója!
Mert az ég harmatja
mindennap mosdatja.

Szép virág a szűzlány
ünnepnapra kelve.
De legszebb virág
a haza szent szerelme!

Nem terem az kertbe
a fekete földbül,
Sem a virágágyból
soha ki nem zöldül.

Csak terem az épen
az ember szívében,
Az ember szívének
legislegmélyében.

2: The Most Beautiful Flower

A lovely flower is the rose;
and her buds even more so!
For heaven's dew
bathes them each day.

A lovely flower is a maiden,
awakened on festival day.
But the most beautiful flower
is the holy love of the fatherland!

It grows not in the garden
out of black earth,
nor in the flower bed
does it blossom.

It grows hearty only
in the human heart,
in the human heart,
deep, deep within.

3: A csendes dalokból

Igyunk biźazt egy-egy kicsit,
Ne szégyeljük, ha jól esik;
Hiszen egy-két ital bortul
Ez a világ fel nem fordul.

S ha felfordul: mit én bánom!
Abba sincsen semmi károm;
Tán, kit a sors fejre buktat,
Akkor ismét talpra juthat.

Ha felfordul: Isten neki!
Tán bizony még használ neki:
Mélyen leszánt a jó gazda,
Úgy esik alul a gazza.

3: From the Quiet Songs

Come, let's drink a wee bit,
We'll not be ashamed if it does us good;
One or two swallows of wine
Won't turn the world upside down.

And if it is turned upside down: well then!
It won't bother me any;
If fortune drops you on your head,
It can set you on your feet again.

If it's turned upside down: in the name of God!
Perhaps it may be of some use;
A good farmer ploughs deeply,
Thus are the weeds buried under.

4: A bujdosó

Párjavesztett gilicének szíve fáj.
Fülemile panaszától zeng a táj;
Ne szomorkodj, ne szomorkodj,
Fülemile, gerlice:
A te bajod az enyémhez semmi se.

Égi madár hegyen-völgyön megszállhat,
Társa helyen társra megint találhat:
Jaj de nekem nincs se hazám, se párom,
A világot egyesegyedül járom.

Messzi honom tája körül jaj be kék...
Azt se tudom, hegy-e az ott, vagy az ég;
Azt se tudom, eljutok-é oda még,
Vagy sose lesz egyéb hazám, mint az ég.

4: The Errant

The widowed dove is heartsick.
The nightingale's complaint fills the countryside;
Don't be sorrowful,
O dove, o nightingale;
your grief is nothing compared to mine.

A bird of the skies can accommodate itself
in mountain or valley,
In place of its lost companion, it will find another;
But, woe is me, I have neither home nor companion,
I wander alone through the world.

Blue surrounds the landscape of my far-off homeland;
I dont even know whether it's mountain or sky;
I don't know whether I'll ever get back there
Or if I'll ever have a home other than heaven.

5: Az ördög elvitte a finánccot

Az ördög elvitte a finánccot!

Jött az ördög hegedűszóval,
elvitte a finánccot,
és minden asszony így kiált:
"Belzebúb, éljen a táncod!"

Az ördög e tánccal oda van,
oda van a finánccal.

"Cefrét verünk, főzünk italt,
lakomát csapunk, nagy táncot:
Szépen köszönjük, hogy viszed,
Belzebúb, a finánccot!"

Az ördög e tánccal oda van,
oda van a finánccal.

5: The Devil has taken away the Taxman

The Devil has taken away the taxman!

The devil came along playing the violin,
he took the taxman away with him;
and all the women called out:
'Beelzebub, long live your dance!'

The devil is gone with his dance,
is gone with the taxman.

'We're mixing the mash, brewing the drink,
setting the banquet, dancing:
we are giving thanks, Beelzebub,
that you took the taxman with you!'

The devil is gone with his dance,
is gone with the taxman.

Près des Remparts de Séville/Séguedille (Carmen):

Georges Bizet (1875)

Perhaps one of the best-known operas, Bizet's *Carmen* needs little introduction. An opera in three acts with a libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halvéy, Carmen is based on a novella of the same name by French author Prosper Mérimée. It was premiered in Paris on 3rd March 1875.

Introducing us to a fiercely independent, fiercely seductive Gypsy woman, the opera follows the titular character Carmen through her many trials and tribulations in the pursuit of love, lust and money. It is when she encounters the soldier Don José that both hers and this unfortunate individual's fates begin to unravel. Upon starting a fight outside the cigarette factory, Carmen is arrested and left in the charge of this unfortunate soldier. Using her powers of seduction, she manages not only to earn her freedom, but also the infatuation of her captor.

It is often recognised that, owing to her Gypsy origins, setting Carmen's arias to Spanish folk dances such as the *Habañera* and *Séguedille* was a natural choice for Bizet. That which perhaps is more interesting however, is that the character of Carmen was originally conceived as a villain. Her wily, womanly ways had led to the downfall of the 'true' hero, the male character in Don José. It mattered not that he was capable of making his own decisions, indeed, society at this time would not have recognised this. As such, to portray this to audiences, Carmen's arias were composed with what was in the late 1800s considered 'low art' – in essence folk music.

Regardless of one's view of Carmen, this particular aria, taking place at the end of the first act, features the trademark rhythms of a Séguedille dance. Additionally, the modal nature of the opening motif (which later features in Carmen's vocal line) create a sense of an 'exotic other', ultimately leaving the audience in no doubt that this character is fully aware how far the influence her gypsy origins can take her – and that she will not hesitate to use them in any way she sees fit.

Près des Remparts de Séville (Séguedille)	***Near the Ramparts of Séville (Séguedille)***
Près des remparts de Séville,	*Near the ramparts of Séville,*
Chez mon ami Lillas Pastia,	*At the place of my friend Lillas Pastia,*
J'irai danser la séguedille	*I will go to dance the Seguidilla*
Et boire du Manzanilla!	*And to drink some Manzanilla!*
J'irai chez mon ami Lillas Pastia.	*I will go to the place of my friend Lilas Pastia.*
Oui, mais toute seule on s'ennuie,	*Yes, but all alone one gets bored,*
Et les vrais plaisirs sont à deux...	*And the real pleasures are for two...*
Donc, pour me tenir compagni	*So, to keep me company*
J'emmènerai mon amoureux	*I will take my lover*
Mon amoureux! ... Il est au diable	*My lover! He has gone to the Devil…*
Je l'ai mis à la porte hier .	*I had him put out the door yesterday...*
Mon pauvre coeur très consolable,	*My poor heart very consolable,*
Mon coeur est libre comme l'air .	*My heart is free like the air...*
J'ai des galants à la douzaine,	*I have suitors by the dozen,*
Mais ils ne sont pas à mon gré;	*But they are not to my liking;*
Voici la fin de la semaine;	*Here it is the end of the week;*
Qui veut m'aimer? Je l'aimerai.	*Who wants to love me? I will love him!*
Qui veut mon âme? Elle est à prendre .	*Who wants my soul? It is for the taking.*
Vous arrivez au bon moment.	*You are arriving at a good moment.*
Je n'ai guère le temps d'attendre,	*I have hardly the time to wait,*
Car avec mon nouvel amant…	*For with my new lover…*
Près des remparts de Séville	*Near the ramparts of Séville*
Chez mon ami Lillas Pastia,	*At the place of my friend Lillas Pastia,*
Nous danserons la séguedille	*We will dance the Seguidilla*
Et boirons du Manzanilla.	*And drink some Manzanilla.*
Tra la la la la la la la la la	*Tra la la la la la la la la la*

Text: Henri Meilhac & Ludovic Halvéy *Translation: IPA Source*

Když mne stará matka (Cigánské Melodie – Gypsy Songs. Op 55):

Antonín Dvořák (1880)

Czech composer Antonín Dvořák is often celebrated for transforming folk material into 19th Century romantic Music, and his *Cigánské Melodie* (Eng: Gypsy Songs) are no exception. With text from Czech poet Adolf Heyduk, this song cycle was conceived to celebrate the freedom of the Roma (Gypsy) way of life. With seven in total, each piece evokes a romantic picture of various aspects of nomadic life, the most famous of which being my next offering to you.

Often given the name 'Songs my mother taught me', *Když mne stará matka* (Eng. *When my old Mother*) paints a bleak picture of a young woman, fondly yet sadly remembering how her mother would sing her songs with tears in her eyes. Now she finds herself with those same tears, trying to hide her sadness as she teaches her own children.

The contrast of the accompanying piano part in compound time whilst the vocal line sings in simple time adds to this inner turmoil, whilst the various grace notes in each part add to that folk music feel for which Dvořák is so well recognised.

Když mne stará matka

Když mne stará matka zpívat, zpívat učívala,
podivno, že často, často slzívala.

A ted' také pláčem snědé líce mučim,
když cigánské děti hrát a zpívat učim!

When my old mother

When my old mother taught me songs to sing,
Strange that she often had tears in her eyes.

And now I also weep
When I teach Gypsy children to play and sing!

Text: Adolf Heyduk

Translation: Gayle Royko Heuser & Anna Majtas Royko (lieder.net)

A Charm of Lullabies (Op.41):

Benjamin Britten (1947)

It is said that one afternoon whilst taking a stroll with his good friend, the renowned Mezzo-Soprano Nancy Evans, Britten turned to her suddenly and asked if she would like him to write some songs for her. She accepted this offer with relish, and thus, *A Charm of Lullabies* was born. Composed in 1947 for voice and piano, this song cycle draws on texts from a range of different styles and time periods, each with their own unique 'charm' as it were. Britten's meticulous attention to detail is evident in each piece, with specific dynamics placed at just the right moment. Rhythms are articulated just so, in order to really draw out the essence of each word at the most opportune moments.

Despite the word 'lullaby' in the name of this cycle, each movement has a somewhat sinister undertone. A haunting vocal line weaving in and out of an equally haunting piano accompaniment makes for the first movement, with hints to periods of resolution, only to be 'disturbed' once more as the protagonist in the form of a mother attempts to soothe her baby to sleep.

In contrast, the drones of the bagpipes, complimented by scotch-snap rhythms often found in Highland Pibroch tunes paint a very Scottish picture in the second piece. The mother is proud beyond words of her illegitimate child and sings of the bright future he has ahead of him. She urges him to bring her back a prized cow on his raids and is certain he is destined to be just as respected as his father, the great chief of the Clan Ronald.

An almost music box-like piano part with aptly placed dissonances, interspersed with bell like clangs in the refrain compliment the text of the third song perfectly. A mother is making a rather futile attempt to soothe her child, which she now must care for alone. It can be suggested that she had no desire to bear the child in the first place, but now with the father absent, she is left to navigate this hopeless existence alone.

The screams and cries of a restless child are evident in the tremolando chords which are heard at the start of the penultimate piece. Again, a helpless mother is trying in vain to settle her child and begins to threaten all the horrors she can muster upon this wretched creature. The refrain of 'Quiet! Sleep!' makes several appearances, and it is evident that despite her best efforts, this child will not settle.

It is the final piece in the cycle however, which brings perhaps the most contrast. Beginning with just the vocal line, a doting nurse attempts to settle her charge in the dead of night. Her tenderness for the child is evident, and when the piano does enter, its slurred choral pattern evokes a rocking motion which the child needs to be able to eventually drift off, perchance to dream…

1) A Cradle Song:

Sleep, sleep, beauty bright,
Dreaming o'er the joys of night;
Sleep, sleep, in thy sleep
Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Soft desires I can trace,
Secret joys and secret smiles,
Little pretty infant wiles.

O! the cunning wiles that creep
In thy little heart asleep.
When thy little heart does wake
Then the dreadful lightnings break,
From thy cheek and from thy eye,
O'er the youthful harvests nigh.

Infant wiles and infant smiles
Heaven and Earth of peace beguiles.

Text: William Blake (1794)

2) The Highland Balou:

Hee Balou, my sweet wee Donald,
Picture o' the great Clanronald!
Brawlie kens our wanton Chief
What gat my young Highland thief.

Leeze me on thy bonnie craigie!
And thou live, thou'll steal a naigie,
Travel the country thro' and thro',
and bring hame a Carlisle cow!

Thro' the Lawlands, o'er the Border,
Weel, my babie, may thou furder!
Herry the louns o' the laigh Countrie,
Syne to the Highlands hame to me!

Text: Robert Burns (1792)

2) The Highland Balou:

Lullaby, my sweet little Donald,
Image of the great Clan Ronald!
Finely knows our wanton Chief
Who begot my young Highland thief.

Blessings on your lovely neck!
If you live, you will steal a horse,
Travel the country through and through,
And bring home a Carlisle cow!

Through the Lowlands, over the Border,
Well, my baby, may you prosper!
Harry the rogues of the Low Country,
Then to the Highlands home to me!

Translation: Ellen Smith (2023)

3) Sephestia's Lullaby:

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

Mother's wag, pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy;
When thy father first did see
Such a boy by him and me,

He was glad, I was woe;
Fortune changèd made him so,
When he left his pretty boy,
Last his sorrow, first his joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

The wanton smiled, father wept,
Mother cried, baby leapt;
More he crow'd, more we cried,
Nature could not sorrow hide:

He must go, he must kiss
Child and mother, baby bliss,
For he left his pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee,
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

Text: Robert Greene (1589)

4) A Charm:

Quiet! Sleep!
Or I will make..

Erinnys whip thee with a snake,
And cruel Rhadamanthus take
Thy body to the boiling lake,
Where fire and brimstones never slake;
Thy heart shall burn, thy head shall ache,
And ev'ry joint about thee quake;
And therefore dare not yet to wake!

Quiet, sleep!
Quiet, sleep!
Quiet!
Quiet! Sleep!
Or thou shalt see…

The horrid hags of Tartary,
Whose tresses ugly serpants be,
And Cerberus shall bark at thee,
And all the Furies that are three
The worst is called Tisiphone,
Shall lash thee to eternity;
And therefor sleep thou peacefully

Quiet, sleep!
Quiet, sleep!
Quiet!

Text: Thomas Randolph (1632)

5) The Nurse's Song:

Lullaby baby,
Lullaby baby,
Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be.
Lullaby baby!

Be still, my sweet sweeting, no longer do cry;
Sing lullaby baby, lullaby baby.
Let dolours be fleeting, I fancy thee, I ...
To rock and to lull thee I will not delay me.

Lullaby baby,
Lullaby, laby, laby baby,
Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be
Lullaby, laby, laby baby

The gods be thy shield and comfort in need!
The gods be thy shield and comfort in need!

Sing Lullaby baby,
Lullaby, laby baby

They give thee good fortune and well for to speed,
And this to desire ... I will not delay me.
This to desire ... I will not delay me.

Lullaby lullaby
Lullaby baby,
Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be.
Lullaby, laby, laby, laby baby.

Text: John Philip (1559)

Da Bressay Lullaby (Baloo – Balilli):

Shetland Traditional, transcribed by Mrs E. J. Smith, from her mother's singing.

A lullaby often sung to Shetland children, this final piece in my programme is well known throughout the isles. Despite its popularity, however, its origins are unclear. It exists in notation in only one source, a small compilation of Shetland songs called '*Da sangs at a'll sing ta dee' (The songs that I will sing to you),* published by the Shetland Folk Society in 1973. The foreword of this book remarks how Shetland has few traditional songs, that there has not been a long-continuing culture of this. Indeed, despite Shetland's rich musical heritage, much of this stem from the ever-popular fiddle playing tradition, and there is not as strong a desire to share our music through the art of song.

This publication, however, preserves the small but cherished selection of songs we do have, and both *Draem-Flooers* and my closing offering to you are taken from it. This song is published under the name *Baloo-Balilli* (traditional Scots for lullaby), yet it is often referred to as *Da Bressay Lullaby* (Bressay being a small, inhabited island a short boat trip away from Lerwick, Shetland's capital town).

Its sentiments are simple enough, asking any bothersome spirits ('Peerie Fairies') to leave the sleeping child be, and have the angels watch over them as they drift off into a dream. Often have I heard it sung to Shetland youngsters, and often has my own mam sung it to me. It is a song I will sing my own children, when that day comes.

I leave you with this piece; it truly is a song my mother taught me.

Da Bressay Lullaby (Baloo – Balilli):

Baloo Balilli, Baloo Balilli,
Baloo Balilli, Baloo-li Ba

Ging awa, peerie fairies,
Fae wir peerie bairn noo,
Ging away, peerie fairies
Fae wir bairn noo.

Baloo Balilli, Baloo Balilli,
Baloo Balilli, Baloo-li Ba

Dan come, boannie angels,
Tae wir peerie bairn noo;
Dan come, boannie angels,
Tae wir bairn noo.

Baloo Balilli, Baloo Balilli,
Baloo Balilli, Baloo-li Ba

Dey'll sheen ower da cradle,
O' wir peeire bairn noo;
Dey'll sheen ower da cradle
O' wir bairn noo.

Baloo Balilli, Baloo Balilli,
Baloo Balilli, Baloo-li Ba

Words and Music Traditional

Da Bressay Lullaby (Baloo – Balilli):

Lullaby, Lullaby,
Lullaby, Lullaby

Go away, little fairies,
From our little child now,
Go away, little fairies
From our child now.

Lullaby, Lullaby,
Lullaby, Lullaby

Then come, pretty angels,
To our little child now;
Then come, pretty angels
To our child now.

Lullaby, Lullaby,
Lullaby, Lullaby

They'll shine over the cradle,
Of our little child now;
They'll shine over the cradle
Of our child now.

Lullaby, Lullaby,
Lullaby, Lullaby

Translation: Ellen Smith

Biography:

Originally from the Shetland Isles, Ellen is currently in her first year of an MMus in Vocal Studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Under the tutelage of Amanda Roocroft, she has been fortunate enough to represent the conservatoire on many occasions, most notably in their popular VoxBox recital series.

Prior to her time at RBC, Ellen enjoyed a successful career as a classroom music teacher in the preparatory school at The Glasgow Academy, one of Scotland's leading independent schools. She earned her teaching qualification through the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, wherein she studied with Margaret Izatt, ultimately graduating in 2015. It was through RCS that she earned a place in *Les Sirènes Female Chamber Choir*; wherein she is proud to have helped them to their 2012 victory in the Choir of the Year competition. *Les Sirènes* has enabled her to record two commercial albums with both the Nimbus Alliance and Albion Record labels.

Ellen currently sings with renowned Birmingham based ensemble *Ex Cathedra,* having earned a place as a student scholar. Choral singing is a passion of hers, and she is fortunate enough to have been a long-standing member of the *National Youth Choir of Scotland* (*NYCoS*). With *NYCoS*, she has toured extensively across much of Europe and the United States, performing both intimate a cappella concerts and larger scale works with orchestra. Through *NYCoS*, she has had the opportunity to work with esteemed conductors including Christopher Bell, Donald Runnicles, and Sir John Eliot Gardiner. In addition to this, she has worked frequently with ensembles such as the *London Symphony Orchestra*, *The Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique* and the *Monteverdi Choir*. In 2019, she featured as a soloist on the latest release from NYCoS on the Signum Classics record label, *Cantos Sagrados*.

Alongside performing, Ellen is a passionate educationalist and particularly specialises in enhancing the learning experience for primary pupils (ages 3-11) in music. She firmly believes in enabling all learners to reach their full musical potential through active and innovative teaching techniques. She has also worked extensively with choirs of varying levels. Ellen feels both humbled and privileged to be studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and is grateful to be supported through her degree with generous contributions from *RBC*, *Help Musicians* and *Ex Cathedra*.

Acknowledgements:

I would first and foremost like to thank my vocal coach, the inimitable Amanda Roocroft. Her continual support and encouragement has been invaluable over this past year, and I am earnestly looking forward to seeing what we manage to uncover in the next year!

To the piano powerhouse that is Jonathan French – thank you for continually providing myself and my colleagues with your incredible talent and insight into each piece we bring you – even that troublesome Tippett! I always feel secure in my performances when I have such a strong foundation in your playing.

To my good friend Judith, her father Andy and the legend that is her mother, Mary Le Breuilly – my self-proclaimed 'Brummy Mummy'. Having such a loving and welcoming cohort so close, especially whilst I am miles away from home means the absolute world to me. Your continued support not to mention steady flow of home cooked meals has been such a great comfort this past year – thank you!

To my ever loving and ever supportive Mam – possibly the only member of my family to truly appreciate my music tastes (apart from that 'fiddly diddly' traditional fiddle music you hate so much!) Much of the songs you sang to my siblings and I when we were 'peerie' were my first experiences of vocal music, and they undoubtedly were the foundations of the musician I am continually striving to become.

And finally, thank you to all of you for coming along and letting me share this wonderful music with you. It is a great honour to be able to share just a small selection of folk music from all over; it is an even great honour to be able to share the songs from my Shetland home - to be able to share with you the songs my mother taught me.