

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Language of Folk 1*. This book is meant as an introduction to the world of folk song and is no more than a drop in the ocean in terms of the range of song types, subject matter, melodies and vocal styles found in folk music. The majority of the songs in this collection have their origins in the British Isles, though one or two come from America or further afield.

This book brings together songs from different ages. Many are very old, although in some cases they cannot easily be traced further back than the folk music revivals of the 1920s or 1950s–60s. Folk song, however, is a living tradition, so this book also includes modern songs that have been assimilated into the folk music tradition in recent years; although not ‘traditional’ in the usual sense, they have been included here because they are fantastic to sing and would happily sit in any folk singer’s repertoire.

Musicians and audiences often refer to ‘the folk music community’ when talking about the music in its modern setting. There are thousands of people singing, playing, dancing to and listening to this music, and these people form an active community with shared interests. The music is inclusive, so those new to the folk tradition are encouraged and welcomed. ‘Sing-a-rounds’ and ‘sessions’ are commonplace within the UK and Ireland; these are situations (often in a pub or in someone’s home) where anyone is welcomed to sing and play music together. The intention is to share, not to perform, and they are a fantastic setting in which to try out new songs.

Folk music needs to be loved and cherished, but it should not be put in a box. By its very nature, it is music of the people: music that is constantly being adapted and reworked to fit with the changing contexts in which it is sung. For that reason, as long as you know and respect where a song has come from, you should feel at liberty to make it your own, adapting and interpreting the music in your own way.

The following notes provide information about:

- The arrangements
  - *Notation and interpretation*
  - *Language and dialect*
  - *Performing folk songs in formal examinations*
- The song notes
- The CD
- Ornamentation

### The arrangements

This book includes ten unaccompanied songs and ten songs arranged for voice and piano. All of them sound beautiful unaccompanied; however, chord names have been provided wherever appropriate to give singers the opportunity to perform with a guitar or live band. Some of the songs have a large number of verses and have been shortened in the notated score in order to create condensed arrangements. Full versions of the lyrics can be found as a PDF file on the accompanying CD.

**The unaccompanied songs** can be sung in any key to suit the range of the singer, and they all work beautifully unaccompanied. The chord names offer musicians a starting point from which to create their own accompanied arrangements or interpretations of the songs.

# I'm BOUND away

Trad. sea shanty


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## Background

This sea shanty is thought to date from between 1860 and 1880 and it tells the story of a sailor having to leave his love behind when he goes to sea. Sea shanties, which are common all over the world, were traditionally sung by ship workers: the ship's 'shantyman' would lead the songs, call-and-response style, in order to motivate sailors as they worked. In their historical context, sea shanties were sung unaccompanied and were often improvised, with verses changing depending on the weather, the port of call, the crew and the shantyman in charge. Nowadays the term 'sea shanty' is used to describe general maritime songs, which are often accompanied and used for entertainment.

## Practice tips

- Traditionally shanties are sung heartily, but this one lends itself equally well to a more tender, almost wistful, rendition, as demonstrated on track 12. The interpretation is very much up to the individual.
- Watch out for the higher notes in bars 6, 8 and 10 ('me lassie'), where more support will be required to maintain pitch.
- Why not have a go at creating some of your own verses, as would have been done traditionally? This is a great way to put a personal stamp on the music.

 performance

 piano accompaniment

# I'm bound away

Trad. sea shanty

This arrangement includes verses 1, 2 and 4 from the traditional song.  
Complete lyrics are available on the CD as a printable PDF.

Wistful  $\text{♩} = 63$ 


Chord symbols: Eb, Bb, Ab, Bb

5  
 For the sake of you, me las - sie,  
 Far a - cross the sea, me las - sie, I'm bound a -  
 Bound to sail the roll - ing o - cean,

8  
 - way, me las - sie, for the sake of you, me las - sie,  
 far a - cross the sea, me las - sie,  
 bound a - way with - out com - mo - tion,

11  
 I'm bound a - way.

Last time  
 Eb