

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Language of Folk 2*. 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 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 eight unaccompanied songs and eight 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.

# ye mar'ners all

Trad. English

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## Background

This song was collected by the Hammond brothers in the early twentieth century from a Mrs Marina Russell of Dorset, a woman reputed to have known lots of folk songs, or bits of them. The brothers thought for a while that Marina had said 'Ye mourners all' rather than 'Ye mariners all', which would have given the song a very different feel! In fact, *Ye mar'ners all* is about a barman enticing customers into his inn to 'come and drink if you are dry'. While not hugely common, 5/4 time is found within English song and is great fun to sing.

## Practice tips

- Even though you wouldn't dance to this song, it's good to get a sense of lightness into your performance, and to shape the phrases as if it were a dance.
- The melody looks relatively simple on the page, but the beauty comes from bringing out the irregular lilt and stresses of 5/4. Make sure you keep the pulse strong and solid, and don't add in an extra beat at the end of phrases.
- Bring character to your performance by adopting the persuasive tone of a barman enticing his customers to drink. Keep your diction clear so that every word can be enjoyed by the audience.

# ye mar'ners all



performance



piano accompaniment

Light and smooth ♩ = 195

Trad. English

Bb<sup>6</sup> F/A Ebmaj<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup> F Bb Dm<sup>7</sup>

1. Ye ma - ri - ners

5 Gm F/A Bb<sup>6</sup> Bb<sup>6</sup>/D Cm<sup>7</sup> Dm<sup>7</sup>

all, — as you pass by, call in and drink — if you are  
 (2.) all, if you've half a crown, you're wel - come all — for to sit  
 (3.) all, — as you pass by, come in and drink — if you are  
 (4.) old and can scarce - ly crawl, I've an old grey beard and a head that's  
 (5.) in — my grave and dead, and all my sor - rows are past and

8 D/F# Bb F/A Ebmaj<sup>7</sup>

dry; come spend, my lads, — your mo - ney brisk, and pop your  
 down; come spend, my lads, — your mo - ney brisk, and pop your  
 dry; call in and drink, — think not a - miss, and pop your  
 bald; crown my de - sire and ful - fil my bliss: a pretty young  
 fled, trans - form me then — in - to a fish, and let me

11 Cm<sup>7</sup> Dm<sup>7</sup> 1 - 4 Gm Dm<sup>7</sup> 5 Gm

nose in a jug of this. 2. Oh ma - ri - ners  
 nose in a jug of this. 3. Oh tip - plers  
 nose in a jug of this. 4. Oh now — I'm  
 girl and a jug of this. 5. Oh when I'm  
 swim in a jug of this.