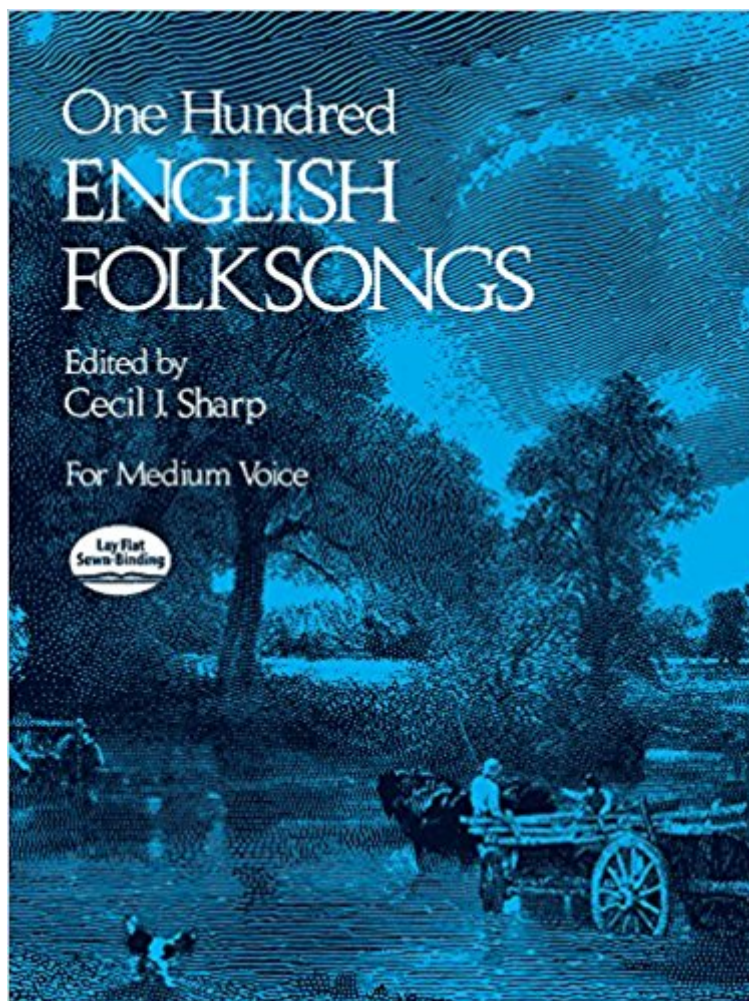




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One Hundred English Folksongs (Dover Song Collections)



Synopsis

English folk music collector Cecil J. Sharp (1859–1924) was one of the most renowned musicologists in the area of true folksong, and these 100 folksongs were all collected by him from actual singers all across Britain. The tunes are presented precisely as they were originally taken down from the lips of the singers, and the lyrics are the best, most intelligible versions of the actual words and variants. Arranged for medium voice and piano, these songs are among the best in the English folk tradition, and through the survival of Border ballads and others in the United States, in the American folk tradition as well. Included are "Henry Martin," "Robin Hood and the Tanner," "Lord Bateman," "Barbara Ellen," "The Outlandish Knight," "The Golden Vanity," "The Green Wedding," "Lord Rendal," "Lord Lovel," "The Death of Queen Jane," "The Crystal Spring," "The Drowned Lover," "O Waly, Waly," "Fanny Blair," "The Lark in the Morn," "Hares on the Mountains," "The Brisk Young Bachelor," "Sweet William," "Scarborough Fair," "The Keeper," "The Robber," "Botany Bay," "Admiral Benbow," "The Ship in Distress," "A Brisk Young Sailor," "The Twelve Days of Christmas," "The Ten Commandments," "The Barley-Mow," and many more. The editor has provided a general introduction to the field of English folksong and substantial notes on all of the songs, citing related versions, historical allusions, etc. Amateur and professional singers will find this collection to be of unusually high quality, and it is of great interest to collectors, musicologists, and historians of culture.

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Customer Reviews

Very nice arrangements of these folk classics.

This book, while it contains a collection of traditional songs, is probably of more value to those interested in the history of folksong collecting than to folk music performers. For starters, the music is written for piano, with no guitar chords, and who plays folk music on a piano these days? Nevertheless, Cecil Sharp was a very important early collector of folk songs, and appears to have had a great ear for melody. The tunes in this book are often subtly more beautiful than other better known variants. Unfortunately, he was also a serious prude, so that more robust and interesting sets of lyrics can be found in other collections. One tiny example is the substitution of "maiden name" for "maidenhead" in the song "The Two Magicians". So find some other words and work out your own chords. There are notes on the histories of each song, and these are fascinating. The collection documents one stage in the wobbly history of what we call folk song.

perfect, thanks

I beg to differ from some of the other reviewers here. I found One Hundred English Folksongs while a student at the University of Chicago - I used this collection as the basis for a recital I held there, accompanied by a brilliant pianist, who, by the way, had just won a youth competition and earned the right to perform a Ravel piano concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (why did I never ask to hear the recording? I was kind of a jerk then I guess). So just take that for starters: this specific arrangement was good enough for her to perform a year later. But I hadn't just heard these songs in college. I grew up listening to Alfred Deller, a counter-tenor (this is essentially a male contralto - he sings in a falsetto that is rich and deep and completely controlled) who had the most beautiful voice I've ever heard, sing many of these songs exquisitely, on an album known as The Wraggle Taggle Gypsies, which came out in the late 50s or early 60s I think (sadly, just as I sense that the conversation we are having here is being attended by nearly nobody, that album has only one lonely reviewer on -- though there is a collectible edition selling for \$120, so that tells you something -- so perhaps this treasure of our civilization - the songs, I mean - is also going the way of the glaciers (but I guess I'm trying to do something about that now)). And oh yeah, that Alfred Deller guy, he performed the songs in this collection in precisely the style and manner in which they are documented in this book. These songs tell sad tales, happy tales, break-your-heart-with gladness tales, and tales of horrible loss. One of my favorites is Lord Rendal, a conversation

between a mother and her dying son. The son has just come to the house where his mother lives after being fed poisonous eel by his treacherous lover. "Make my bed soon," he says, "for I'm sick to my heart and fain would lie down." His mother asks where he's been ("to my lover"), what he's been eating ("eels and eel broth"), their skin color ("spicket and sparkit"), and where they came from ("from hedges and ditches") to deduce that her son has been done in. Realizing this is the end and that time is short, though still in the most incredible state of shock and sorrow a human can experience - the murder of your own child - she asks her son to make out his will. His name is Lord Rendal, which means he's of the noble class, so there is considerable wealth to be distributed. "What will you leave your father, Rendal my son," she asks. "What will you leave your father, my pretty one?" "My land and houses, mother," he replies. "Make my bed soon, for I'm sick to my heart, and I fain would lie down." We learn that for the mother there is "my gold and silve" and for the brother "my cows and horses." When the mother asks, with such a heavy heart, "What will you leave your lover, my pretty one?" the son replies, in the closing passage of the song: "A rope to hang her." These are the songs that made me want to sing. These songs tell histories from the perspective of the people who were writing popular song in England in the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s. England then was a bawdy and raw and wild place, oppressed by a huge cantilevered behemoth of privileged nobility who are the model for the lifestyle outfits like Abercrombie & Fitch create as fantasy for their customers, who by the way are most often the kind of people whom, had they been alive, barons and lords would have spat upon after grinding them into the dirt and letting them live if they felt like it, just as the extremely white sons and daughters of Kennedy-level elites we see portrayed in A&F ads and who are actually living now in the Hamptons (and in Dubai and New York and London) do now currently at this moment spit upon after grinding into the dirt and letting live if they feel like it those self-same customers of Abercrombie & Fitch. Through these songs you have the opportunity to observe this history. These songs were cultivated, contracted, published, and performed by the Jim Grahams, Columbia Records, iTunes Stores and Beyonces of their times, so embedded in them is a level of political control, just as our current music is made to serve the interests of the rapacious oligarchy of our day. Listening to these songs gives you a perspective on your life now that you couldn't obtain in any other way. These songs recount the same drama and betrayals and bliss and excitement and deep deep sorrows as the songs of our day. The politics of course are only what the powers of the day allowed, so expect a certain amount of hackneyed wish-creation-to-keep-the-masses-at-bay, prudishness, and obey-authority-if-you-don't-wish-to-be-dying-in-the-street messaging. Despite this, as we know, to sell big, you have to tell convincing stories, and since humans haven't changed all that much in a

few hundred years, neither has the essence of the stories. The absence in those songs, however, of the accoutrements of today - the technology, religion's loss of hold on people and all that entails, and so on - give you the opportunity to see in your own life in sharper relief what is basic to your existence in this Anglo-American-centric society we live in: your own hopes, fears, deep joy, sorrow, appreciation, and surprise. So, do I like it? 5 stars. Do I win my case?

Book arrived in perfect condition, pro

Incredibly useful immediately for my work as a song writer. Good edition, with lots of great material for the musician and the scholar.

The collection of songs in this book was well researched and amusing. The songs were a wide range of music from drinking diddies to lullabies. The instruction in this book was clear and easy to understand. Many people at Renn Fairs got a kick out of hearing some of them. A good read in all. A must for Renn Fair singers!

Really nicely preserved collection of folksongs from an anthropological standpoint. Would not recommend this book for the average female looking for conventional performance songs as most are written from a male perspective. I, personally, love the collection, but I think I have an unconventional aesthetic for a female.

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