

An Ives Songbook

Sangtekster / Song text

Memories (Charles Ives)

A. VERY PLEASANT

We're sitting in the opera house,
the opera house, the opera house;
We're waiting for the curtain to arise
with wonders for our eyes;
We're feeling pretty gay, and well we may -
"O Jimmy look!" I say,
"The band is tuning up and soon will start to play!"
We whistle and we hum, beat time with the drum ...

We're sitting in the opera house,
the opera house, the opera house,
awaiting for the curtain to rise
with wonders for our eyes,
a feeling of expectancy,
a certain kind of ecstasy,
expectancy and ecstasy,
expectancy and ecstasy---
Sh'—s'—s' —s.

Curtain!

B. RATHER SAD

From the street a strain on my ear doth fall,
A tune as threadbare as that "old red shawl",
It is tattered, it is torn,
it shows signs of being worn,
It's the tune my Uncle hummed from early morn.

'Twas a common little thing and kinda sweet,
But 'twas sad and seemed to slow up both his feet;
I can see him shuffling down
to the barn or to the town,
a-humming.

The Circus Band (Charles Ives)

All summer long, we boys
dreamed 'bout big circus joys!

Down Main Street comes the band,
oh, "Ain't it a grand
and glorious noise!"

Horses are prancing,
knights advancing;
helmets gleaming,
pennants streaming;
Cleopatra's on her throne!
That golden hair is all her own!

Where is the lady all in pink?
Last year she waved to me, I think.
Can she have died? Can! that! rot!
She is passing but she sees me not!

Tom Sails Away (Charles Ives)

Scenes from my childhood are with me:

I'm in the lot behind our house upon the hill,
a spring day's sun is setting;
Mother with Tom in her arms is coming towards the garden;
the lettuce rows are showing green.

Thinner grows the smoke o'er the town,
stronger comes the breeze from the ridge,
'Tis after six, the whistles have blown,
the milk train's gone down the valley.
Daddy is coming up the hill from the mill;
We run down the lane to meet him.

But today! in freedom's cause Tom sailed away for
over there, over there, over there!

Scenes from my childhood are floating before my eyes.

Down East (Charles Ives)

Songs!
Visions of my homeland,
come with strains of childhood,
Come with tunes we sang in schooldays
and with songs from mother's heart:

Way down east in a village by the sea
stands an old red farm house that watches o'er the lea;
All that is best in me,
lying deep in memory,
draws my heart where I would be:
nearer to thee.

Ev'ry Sunday morning, when the chores were almost done,
from that little parlor sounds the old melodeon,
"Nearer my God to Thee,
nearer to Thee";
With those strains a stronger hope
comes nearer to me.

Old Home Day (Charles Ives)

'Ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnin'

"Go my songs! Draw Daphnis from the city."

1. A minor tune from Todd's opera house
comes to me as I cross the square, there,
We boys used to shout the songs that rouse
the hearts of the brave and fair.

CHORUS

As we march along down Main street,
behind the village band,
The dear old trees,
with their arch of leaves
seem to grasp us by the hand.

While we step along
to a tune of an Irish song,
Glad but wistful sounds the old church bell,
for underneath's a note of sadness,
"Old home town" fare-well.

2. A corner lot, a white picket fence,
daisies almost everywhere; there,
We boys used to play "One old cat",
and base hits filled the air,

CHORUS

As we march along on Main street,
of that "Down East" Yankee town,
Comes a sign of life,
from the "3rd Corps" fife,
strains of an old break-down.

While we step along
to the tune of its Irish song
Comes another sound we all know well;
It takes us way back forty years:
that little red schoolhouse bell.

"All The Way Around And Back" (Charles Ives)

is but a trying
to take off, in sounds and rhythms, a very common thing in a back lot
– a foul ball –
and the base runner on 3rd has to go all the way back to 1st.

The See'r (Charles Ives)

An old man with a straw in his mouth
sat all day long before the village grocery store;
he liked to watch the funny things
a-going by!

Heaven-Haven (Gerard Manley Hopkins)

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail,
And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

A Day In The Life (John Lennon & Paul McCartney)

I read the news today, oh boy,
About a lucky man who made the grade.
And though the news was rather sad,
Well, I just had to laugh,
I saw the photograph.

He blew his mind out in a car,
He didn't notice that the lights had changed.
A crowd of people stood and stared,
They'd seen his face before,
Nobody was really sure if he was from the House of Lords.

I saw a film today, oh boy,
The English army had just won the war.
A crowd of people turned away,
But I just had to look,
Having read the book,
I'd love to turn you on.

Woke up, got out of bed,
Dragged a comb across my head,
Found my way downstairs and drank a cup
And looking up I noticed I was late.

Found my coat and grabbed my hat,
Made the bus in seconds flat,
Found my way upstairs and had a smoke
And somebody spoke and I went into a dream.

I read the news today, oh boy,
Four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire.
And though the holes were rather small,
They had to count them all;
Now they know how many holes it takes to fill the Albert Hall.
I'd love to turn you on.

**Grantchester (Rupert Brooke)
(with a quotation by Debussy)**

... You may lie
Day-long and watch the Cambridge sky,
And, flower lulled in sleepy grass,
Hear the cool lapse of hours pass,

Until the centuries blend and blur
In Grantchester, in Grantchester ...

...would I were
In Grantchester, in Grantchester!
Some, it may be, can get in touch
With Nature there or Earth or such.
And clever modern men have seen
A Faun a-peeping through the green,
And felt the Classics were not dead,
To glimpse a Naiad's reedy head,
Or hear the Goat foot piping low:...

But these are things I do not know.
I only know that you may lie
Day-long and watch the Cambridge sky,
And, flower lulled in sleepy grass,
Hear the cool lapse of hours pass,
Until the centuries blend and blur
In Grantchester, in Grantchester ...

The Housatonic at Stockbridge (Robert Underwood Johnson)

Contented river! in thy dreamy realm –
The cloudy willow and the plummy elm:
Thou beautiful! From ev'ry dreamy hill
What eye but wanders with thee at thy will...

Contented river! And yet overshy
To mask thy beauty from the eager eye;
Hast thou a thought to hide from field and town?
In some deep current of the sunlit brown?

Ah! there's a restive ripple, and the swift
Red leaves – September's firstlings – faster drift;

Wouldst thou away, dear stream? Come, whisper near!
I also of much resting have a fear:
Let me tomorrow thy companion be
By fall and shallow to the adventurous sea!

The New River (Charles Ives)

Down the river comes a noise!
It is not the voice of rolling waters;
it's only the sounds of man:
 Dancing halls and tambourine,
 phonographs and gasoline,
 human beings gone machine.
Killed is the blare of the hunting horn;
the river Gods are gone.

At the River (Robert Lowry)

Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod,

With its crystal tide for ever
Flowing by the throne of God?
Gather at the river!

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Yes, we'll gather at the river,
That flows by the throne of God.
Shall we gather? shall we gather at the river?

Watchman! (John Bowring)

Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
 Trav'ler, o'er yon mountain's height,
 See that glory-beaming star!
Watchman, aught of joy or hope?
 Trav'ler,
Yes!
 Trav'ler,
Yes!
 Trav'ler, yes; it brings the day,
 Promised day of Israel.
 Dost thou see its beauteous ray?
 Trav'ler, see!

General William Booth Enters Into Heaven (From a Poem by Vachel Lindsay)

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Hallelujah!
Saints smiled gravely and they said, "He's come."
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Walking lepers followed rank on rank,
Lurching bravoos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale -
Minds still passion ridden, soul powers frail: -
Vermin-eaten saints with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Ev'ry slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over. (Booth had groaned for more).
Ev'ry banner that the wide world flies,
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang;
Tranced, fanatical they shrieked and sang: -
"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"
Hallelujah! Hallelujah, Lord, Hallelujah, Lord, Hallelujah!
It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare.
On, on, upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood in the blood of the Lamb?)

Jesus came from the court house door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones,

Round and round the mighty court-house square.
Yet! in an instant all that bleare review
Marched on, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, (Hallelujah!) withered limbs uncurled,
And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world.

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Gyp The Blood or Hearst – Which is Worst?

Gyp, a prominent criminal, (legally) gets the gallows - Hearst, another prominent criminal, (not legally) gets the money. Hearst's newspapers make Gyps. He sells sensational bunk to the soft-eared and softheaded, and headlines and pictures that excite interest in criminal life among the weak-brained and defectives. An old-fashioned western horse thief is a respectable man compared to Hearst. When the American people put Hearst with the thief, "on the rope", American history will have another landmark to go with Bunker Hill, and perhaps a new song to go with *The Battle Cry of Freedom*.

Whispers of Heavenly Death (Walt Whitman)

From Darest Thou Now O Soul

Darest thou now O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not O soul,
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible land.

From Whispers of Heavenly Death

Whispers of heavenly death murmur'd I hear,
Labial gossip of night, sibilant chorals,
Footsteps gently ascending, mystical breezes wafted soft and low,
Ripples of unseen rivers, tides of a current flowing, forever flowing,
(Or is it the plashing of tears? the measureless waters of human tears?)

Der Mond hat eine schwere Klag' erhoben (Paul Heyse, aus dem Italienischen Liederbuch)

Der Mond hat eine schwere Klag' erhoben
und vor dem Herrn die Sache kund gemacht:
er wolle nicht mehr stehn am Himmel droben,
du habest ihn um seinen Glanz gebracht.

Als er zuletzt das Sternenheer gezählt,
da hab' es an der vollen Zahl gefehlt gefehlt;
zwei von den schönsten habest du entwendet:
die beiden Augen dort, die mich verblendet.

Here, There And Everywhere (John Lennon & Paul McCartney)

To lead a better life,
I need my love to be here.

Here,
Making each day of the year,
Changing my life with a wave of her hand,
Nobody can deny that there's something there.

There,
Running my hands through her hair,
Both of us thinking how good it can be,
Someone is speaking, but she doesn't know he's there.

I want her everywhere,
And if she's beside me, I know I need never care,
But to love her is to need her

Everywhere.
Knowing that love is to share,
Each one believing that love never dies,
Watching her eyes and hoping I'm always there.

I want her everywhere,
And if she's beside me I know I need never care,
But to love her is to need her

Everywhere.
Knowing that love is to share,
Each one believing that love never dies,
watching her eyes and hoping I'm always there.

I'll be there
And everywhere,
Here, there and everywhere.

Peace (Gerard Manley Hopkins)

When will you ever, Peace, wild wooddove, shy wings shut,
Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?
When, when, Peace, will you, Peace? I'll not play hypocrite
To own my heart: I yield you do come sometimes; but
That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What pure peace allows
Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?

O surely, reaving Peace, my Lord should leave in lieu
Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite,
That plumes to Peace thereafter. And when Peace here does
He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo,
He comes to brood and sit.

And Your Bird Can Sing (John Lennon & Paul McCartney)

Tell me that you've got every thing you want,
And your bird can sing,
But you don't get me, You don't get me.

You say you've seen seven wonders,
And your bird is green,
But you can't see me, You can't see me.

When your prized possessions
Start to wear you down,
Look in my direction,
I'll be round, I'll be round.

When your bird is broken,
Will it bring you down?
You may be awoken,
I'll be round, I'll be round.

Tell me that you've heard every sound there is,
And your bird can swing,
But you cant hear me, You can't hear me.

Mir ward gesagt, du reisest in die Ferne (Paul Heyse, aus dem Italienischen Liederbuch)

Mir ward gesagt, du reisest in die Ferne.
Ach, wohin gehst du, mein geliebtes Leben?
den Tag, an dem du scheidest, wüsst' ich gerne;
mit Thränen will ich das Geleit dir geben.

Mit Thränen will ich deinen Weg befeuchten -
gedenk' an mich, und Hoffnung wird dir leuchten!
Mit Thränen bin ich bei dir allerwärts -
gedenk' an mich, vergiss es nicht, mein Herz!

For No One (John Lennon & Paul McCartney)

Your day breaks, your mind aches,
You find that all her words
Of kindness linger on
When she no longer needs you.

She wakes up, she makes up,
She takes her time
And doesn't feel she has to hurry,
She no longer needs you.

And in her eyes you see nothing,
No sign of love behind the tears,
Cried for no-one,
A love that should have lasted years.

You want her, you need her,
And yet you don't believe her
When she says her love is dead,
You think she needs you.

And in her eyes you see nothing,
No sign of love behind the tears,
Cried for no-one,
A love that should have lasted years.

You stay home, she goes out,
She says that long ago she knew someone,
But now he's gone,
She doesn't need him.

Your day breaks, your mind aches,
There will be times when all the things she said
Will fill your head,
You won't forget her.

And in her eyes you see nothing,
No sign of love behind the tears,
Cried for no-one,
A love that should have lasted years.

In The Night (Charles Ives)

Oh! I hear the owl ahootin'
in the darkness of the night,
and it brings the drops of sweat out on my brow.
And I git' so awful lonely
that I almost die of fright,
for the little cabin all is empty now.

From the "Incantation" (Lord Byron)

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glowworm in the grass,

And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass;

When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still,
In the shadow of the hill,

Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Um Mitternacht (Eduard Mörike)

Gelassen stieg die Nacht ans Land,
Lehnt träumend an der Berge Wand,
Ihr Auge sieht die goldne Waage nun
Der Zeit in gleichen Schalen stille ruhn;
Und kecker rauschen die Quellen hervor,
Sie singen der Mutter, der Nacht, ins Ohr
Vom Tage,
Vom heute gewesenem Tage.

Das uralte alte Schlummerlied,
Sie achtet's nicht, sie ist es müd;
Ihr klingt des Himmels Bläue süßer noch,
Der flücht'gen Stunden gleichgeschwungnes Joch.
Doch immer behalten die Quellen das Wort,
Es singen die Wasser im Schlafe noch fort

Vom Tage,
Vom heute gewesenen Tage.

Evening (John Milton)

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for the beast and bird
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests were slunk,
but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence is pleased:...