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All tracks arranged by **ALEX CUMMING** with **AUDREY JABER, MAX NEWMAN & PETE ORD**

ALEX CUMMING: Lead Vocals, Accordion, Piano
with

AUDREY JABER: Fiddle

MAX NEWMAN: Acoustic Guitar, Mandolin, Octave Mandolin, Feet

PETE ORD: Electric Guitar, Bass, Drums, Percussion, additional vocals

KATHLEEN ORD: Orchestral Strings

And special guest backing vocalists: **ROSIE CALVERT, CATE CLIFFORD, WILL FINN, CATHERINE HAINES, LAUREL SWIFT, MIRA CLAIRE WHITING.**

Recorded at **NORTHFIRE RECORDING STUDIO**, Amherst MA, **THE STUDIO AT SUNBEAMS**, Cumbria UK, **ODC HOME STUDIO**, Brattleboro VT

Recording & Mixing by **PETE ORD**

Mastered by **STEPHEN KERRISON** for **WEIRD JUNGLE**

Produced by **PETE ORD**

Find full line of notes and lyrics at alexcummingmusic.com

BOSTON HARBOUR (TRADITIONAL)
THOMAS SHRUGS MARCH (THOMAS BARTLETT)

Arranged by Alex Cumming with Audrey Jaber, Max Newman & Pete Ord

Alex Cumming: Lead Vocals, Piano Accordion, Backing Vocals

Audrey Jaber: Fiddle

Max Newman: Acoustic Guitar

Pete Ord: Drums, Electric Guitar, Bass

Rosie Calvert: Backing Vocals

Cate Clifford: Backing Vocals

Catherine Haines: Backing Vocals

Laurel Swift: Backing Vocals

Mira Claire Whiting: Backing Vocals

Will Finn: Backing Vocals



Recording at Northfire Studio

*This is a song I finally got around to learning after many UK friends saying I should learn it when I moved to Greater Boston back in 2015. This version of the song was collected and published by Captain W.B. Whall in his 1910 book, *Sea Songs & Shanties*.*

Thomas Shrugs March is a great tune written by pianist, singer and producer Thomas Bartlett, who is probably best known in the folk realms as a member of The Gloaming.

*From Boston Harbour we set sail,
The wind was blowing a devil of a gale,
With our ringtail set abaft the mizzen peak
And our Rule Britannia ploughing up the deep.*

*Big bow-wow! Tow-row-row!
Fol de rol de ri do day! x2*

*Up comes the skipper from down below,
He looks aloft, he looks alow,
He looks alow, he looks aloft,
And its “Coil up your ropes there, fore and aft!”*

*Then down to his cabin he quickly crawls,
And unto his steward he loudly calls,
“Go, mix me a drink that’ll make me cough,
For it’s better weather here than it is up aloft.”*

*While we poor sailors standing on the deck,
With the blasted rain all a-pouring down our necks;
Not a drop of grog would he to us afford,
But he damned our eyes at every other word*

*Now the beggar is dead and gone,
But darn his eyes, he’s left a son;
And if to us he doesn’t prove frank,
We’ll very soon make him walk the plank*

*And one thing which we have to crave,
That he may have a watery grave,
We’ll heave him down into some dark hole,
Where the sharks’ll have his body and the devil have his soul.*

SINGERS REQUEST (SIR WALTER SCOTT, NIC JONES)

Arranged by Alex Cumming

Alex Cumming: Lead Vocals, Piano Accordion, Piano, Backing Vocals

Audrey Jaber: Fiddle

Rosie Calvert: Backing Vocals

Cate Clifford: Backing Vocals

Laurel Swift: Backing Vocals

Will Finn: Backing Vocals

I first heard this song many year's ago on the Nic Jones album 'From the Devil to a Stranger', but I relearned of it's joy from fabulous Rhode Island duo, The Vox Hunters. Benedict, Armand and I collaborated on a double headline gig with wonderful online gig icons, Live To Your Living Room, early in the pandemic and this was one of the songs we recorded remotely to play at the online show.

*Now the sun it doth decline,
Pour the beer and pour the wine;
Let us lead your thoughts astray
From the world and from the day.*

*Dark the night and long till day,
Do not bid us further stray. x2*

*We bring songs from history,
Love and war and mystery.
We can lead you from despair
Or can chill the darkening air.*

*You can choose to pass us by
With a cruel or scornful eye.
We will see the ending through;
Then we'll turn and say to you ...*

HOMECOMING (ALEX CUMMING)

ALONG THE REDWOOD ROAD IN A RED CHEVY CONVERTIBLE (ALEX CUMMING)

Arranged by Alex Cumming with Audrey Jaber, Max Newman & Pete Ord

Alex Cumming: Piano Accordion

Audrey Jaber: Fiddles

Max Newman: Acoustic Guitar, Mandola, Feet

Pete Ord: Drums, Electric Guitar, Bass, Auxiliary Vocals

Both of these tunes were composed after my first trip to the Bay Area back in 2018. The first tune, Homecoming, started to form in my head whilst flying back home to the East Coast. The second tune was composed after a rather memorable trip to the airport in, yes you guessed it, a red Chevy convertible, through the Redwood Forests. Part way through this journey we stopped in an amphitheater in the middle of some incredible redwood trees, and had a little waltz party. It was magical!



The Chevy adventure!

POLLY VAUGHAN (TRADITIONAL)

Arranged by Alex Cumming

Alex Cumming: Lead Vocals

This song was one of the key songs on my folk singing journey. I remember just being so fascinated by the melody, ornaments and lyrics, and there was a true sense of excitement once I had learned to sing it the way I wanted. I learnt this song from Sandra Kerr, during my first year at Newcastle University, studying on the Folk and Traditional Music Degree back in 2011.



Folk & Traditional Music Degree, Class of 2014.

*Come all of you fellows that carry a gun,
I will have you sent home by the light of the sun,
For young Jimmy was a fowling, and a fowling all alone,
When he shot his own true love, his own Polly Vaughan*

*She was walking through the green fields, when a storm it came one,
And she hid in the green bush, the shower to shun.
With her apron around her, he mistook her for a swan,
And he shot his own true love, his own Polly Vaughan*

*When first he came to her and found it was she,
A shakin', a tremblin', his eyes scarce could see.
"Oh well now that you are dead love, and your sorrows are all o'er,
Farewell my dear Polly, I will see you no more".*

*Then off ran young Jimmy with his dog and his gun,
Saying "Uncle, dearest Uncle, have you heard what I have done?
Oh cursed be that gun smith that made my own gun,
For I shot my own true love, in the room of a swan"*

*Then out came old uncle with his locks hanging grey,
saying "Jimmy, dearest Jimmy, don't you run away,
With her apron around her, he mistook her for a swan,
and they never will hang you for the crime that you have done".*

*Well the trial it did come on, and Polly appeared,
crying "uncle, dearest uncle, let Jimmy go clear,
With my apron around me, he mistook me for a swan,
and his heart still lies bleeding for Polly, his own".*

GREEN & PLEASANT LAND (WILLIAM BLAKE)

Lyrics by William Blake, music and arrangement by Alex Cumming

Alex Cumming: Lead Vocals, Piano Accordion, Piano

Audrey Jaber: Fiddle

Kathleen Ord: Orchestral Strings

Pete Ord: Percussion

This song started life as a commission from Nils Fredland, then Artistic Director for Revels North in 2019. I was asked to rework the melody and create a new arrangement of this famous William Blake poem, better known as Jerusalem. The piece was originally arranged for full chorus, folk band and brass ensemble but this recording showcases the paired down version, with piano and strings. I was very lucky to be a guest artist in their 2019 Christmas Revels, and I have since become the new Artistic Director for the organization which is a true honor. You can find out more about the organization by visiting RevelsNorth.org. Maybe you could even come be part of a show someday?

The tune is based upon a version of the Blue Eyed Stranger published by Mary Neal in the Esperance Morris Book and has become a firm favourite of mine for many years. You may have heard a version of it on The Teacups third album, In Which... as part of a mouth music morris tune set.

*And did those feet in ancient time
walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
on England's pleasant pastures seen?*

*And did the countenance divine
shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
among these dark satanic mills?*

*Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!*

*I will not cease from mental fight,
nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
till we have built Jerusalem
in England's green and pleasant land.*



Full cast and band from 2019's Christmas Revels at the Lebanon Opera House

HARBOUR STEEL (ALEX CUMMING)

FRANCIS FRENZY (ALEX CUMMING)

Arranged by Alex Cumming with Audrey Jaber, Max Newman and Pete Ord

Alex Cumming: Piano Accordion

Audrey Jaber: Fiddle

Max Newman: Guitar, Mandolin, Octave Mandolin

A set of two jigs that Audrey and I originally arranged to perform for a rapper dance as part of the 2021 Christmas Revels at the legendary Sanders Theater in Harvard Square, Cambridge MA. The first tune, Harbour Steel, was composed for my Boston area based rapper team of the same name, and works perfectly as an opener to one of their original dances. The second tune was a commission from wonderful dance caller Beverley Francis, who requested a minor slinky jigs for an English Country Dance.



Harbour Steel at the 2023 Dance America Rapper Tournament, photo by Mira Whiting

YOUNG BEICHAN (TRADITIONAL)

Arranged by Alex Cumming with Audrey Jaber, Max Newman and Pete Ord

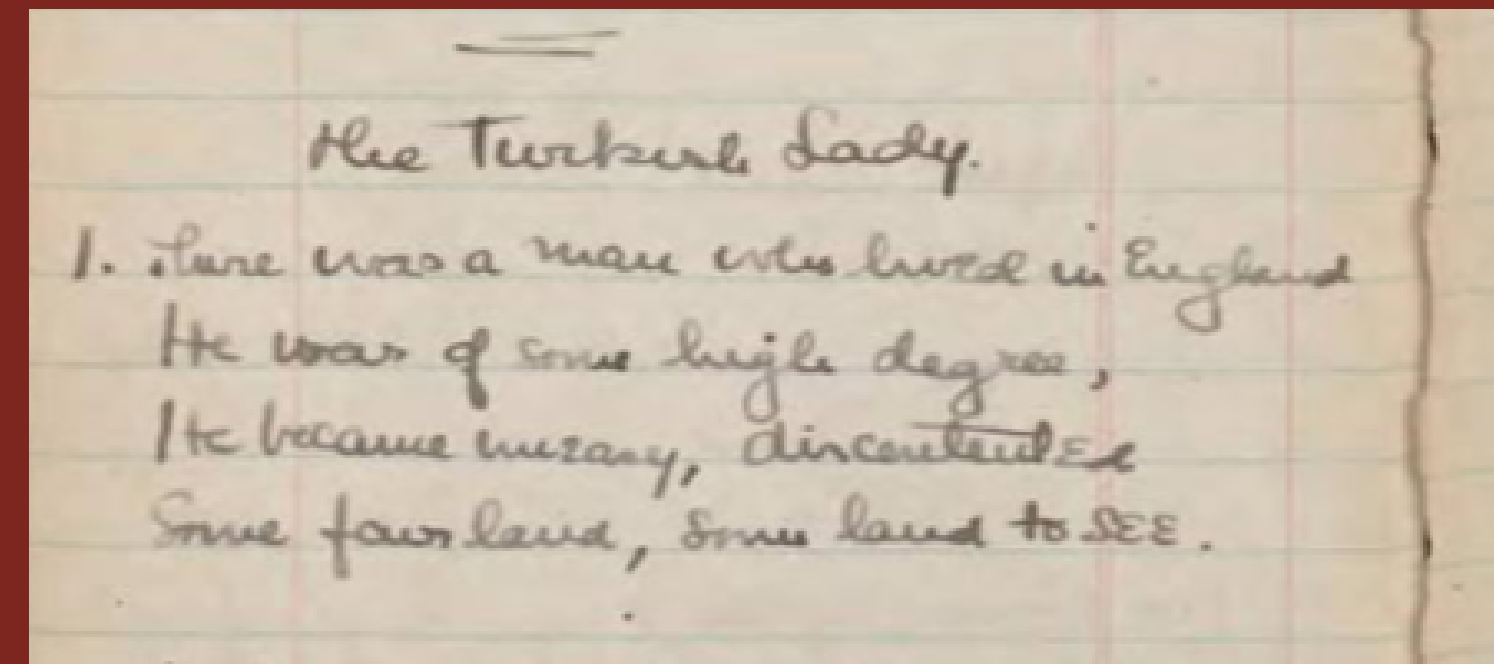
Alex Cumming: Piano Accordion

Audrey Jaber: Fiddle

Max Newman: Acoustic Guitar, Octave Madolin, Feet

Pete Ord: Electric Guitar, Percussion

This was one of the first songs Olive Dame Campell collected when she first encountered folk songs being sung by students and teachers at the Hindman Settlement School in Kentucky in 1907. The other songs she collected during the same visit include The Foolish Boy, Come All You Fair & Tender Ladies and probably her most well-known collected song, Barbara Allen. Young Beichan is a rather wonderful version of the popular ballad, Lord Bateman.



An excerpt from Campbell's diary with the lyrics for Young Beichan

YOUNG BEICHAN CONTINUED

*There was a man who lived in England
And he was of some high degree
He became uneasy, discontented,
Some fair land, some land to see.*

*He sailed east, and he sailed west
And he sailed o'er the Turkish shore
Till he was caught and put in prison,
Never to be released any more*

*The Turk he had but one lone daughter
And she was of some high degree
She stole the keys from her fathers dwelling
And declared Lord Batesman she'd set free*

*She led him down to the lower cellar
And drew him a drink of the strongest wine
Every moment seemed an hour
Oh Lord Batesman if you were mine!*

*Let's make a vow, let's make a promise,
Let's make a vow, let's make a stand;
You vow you'll marry no other woman
I'll vow I'll marry no other man*

*They made that vow, they made a promise
They made a vow yes they made a stand
He vowed he'd marry no other woman
She vowed she'd marry no other man*

*When seven long years had rolled around
It seemed as if it were twenty-nine
She bundled up her finest clothing
And declared Lord Batesman she'd go find*

*She went till she came to the gate, she tingled
It was so loud but she wouldn't come in
Is this your place she cried Lord Batesman
Or is that you've bought your new bride in?*

*Go remember him of a piece of bread
Go remember him of that glass of wine
Go remember him of that Turkish lady
Who freed him from the iron, cold bonds*

*He stamped his foot upon the floor
He burst the table in pieces three,
Saying I'll forsake both land and dwelling
For the Turkish lady that set me free*

*She went till she came to the gate, she tingled
It was so loud but she wouldn't come in
She's got more gold on her little finger
Than your new bride and all your kin.*

BOLD NELSON (TRADITIONAL)

Arranged by Alex Cumming

Alex Cumming: Lead Vocals & Backing Vocals

Rosie Calvert: Backing Vocals

Will Finn: Backing Vocals

I first heard this song from the singing of Peter Bellamy, but first starting singing the song after learning it from British/Australian folk singer, James Fagan. I love a good historical story, and these lyrics coupled with an incredible tune have made it one of my favourites to sing. To optimize the sing-along credentials of the song, I added an extra line to the refrain which has certainly created some incredible harmony moments over the year's. Though this song never became an official song that we sang with my band The Teacups, we did arrange a version of it when we were invited to the Netherlands to perform at the Internationaal Folk & Seasons Festival Bie Daip Appingedam, and we needed to up our sea themed repertoire.



Myself and The Teacups at Bie Daip 2014

*On the Twenty-First of October, before the rising sun,
We formed the line for action, my boys, at twelve o'clock begun
Brave Nelson to his men did say: "The Lord will prosper us this day.
Give them the broadside, fire away."
On board the man of war x2*

*Then broadside to broadside our cannon balls did fly,
Like pale stars, their small shots all round our deck did lie.
Our mast and rigging they were shot away, Besides some thousand in that fray
Were killed and wounded on that day
On board the man of war x2*

*And then our brave commander in grief he shook his head:
There is no relief, there is no reprieve, Great Nelson he is dead.
It was a fatal musket-ball, That caused our hero for to fall
But he died in peace, God bless you all
On board the man of war x2*

*When the merchants of Yarmouth, when they did hear it so,
They said: "Come brother sailors, to church now let us go.
And there we'll build a noble pile, All for the hero of the Nile
Who gave his life for England's isle
On board the man of war." x2*

*Our soldiers and sailors many noble deeds have done
While fighting in foreign, many battles they have won.
If the Nile it could witness there, Or the Capes of Trafalgar declare:
There is none to Nelson can compare
On board the man of war x2*

WATCHET SAILOR (TRADITIONAL)

ON A WINTER'S MORN (ALEX CUMMING)

Arranged by Alex Cumming with Nicola Beazley, Audrey Jaber, Max Newman & Pete Ord

Alex Cumming: Lead Vocals, Piano Accordion

Audrey Jaber: Fiddles

Max Newman: Acoustic Guitars

Pete Ord: Electric Guitars, Percussion, Bass

I was very lucky to grow up in the same village as the late, great traditional folk singer, George Withers. It was a really special evening when George was present at our local folk session, always bringing fabulous songs such as this and many comical songs.

Watchet is an utterly beautiful harbour town on the north coast of Somerset, and to this day still has a steam railway running through the town. This arrangement is inspired by version I used to perform with the wonderful English fiddler Nicola Beazley. The accompanying tune was composed on one of the coldest winter days in New England.



A stunning sunset in Watchet, Somerset, taken during a visit in 2022

*As I was a-walking down Watchet Swain Street
A jolly old ship mate I chanced for to meet.
Said I, "Hello sailor and welcome to home;
In season to Watchet I think you have come."*

*"You remember once courting a pretty young maid,
Well, you've been so long gone now she's going to be wed.
In Bristol, tomorrow, the wedding's to be
And I am invited for that thing for to see."*

*Jack went a got a licence that very same night.
And he travelled up to Bristol as soon as t'was light,
He sat in the Temple church yard for a while
And he saw the bride coming which caused him to smile..*

*And he took that fair maid by the lily white hand,
"You're going to be married so I understand.
Well if you're to marry then you must be mine
So I have come here for to baulk your design."*

*"Well alas," cried the maiden, "oh what can I do?
I know I was solemnly promised to you.
But the sailor's my true love and I'll be his bride,
There's none in the world I can fancy beside."*

*Well the man he roared like a man that was mad,
"I'm ruined, I'm ruined, I'm ruined." he said.
So all of you fellah's, get wed while you may,
Or all those Jack Tars they will take them away.*

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING? (TRADITIONAL)

Arranged by Alex Cumming

Alex Cumming: Lead Vocals, Piano

Kathleen Ord: Orchestral Strings

This is a song that has got me through some incredibly hard times, through the Covid years and my battle with chronic pain. I had known this song for a long time but first arranged and performed the piece whilst I was the Music Director for Unitarian Universalist Church of Medford, MA. For the first month of the pandemic I had to move away from my partner and children due to being Immunocompromised and my wife being a doctor working on the front lines of the Covid outbreak. This was a really scary time, being away from my family, the fear I could die or become seriously ill, but this song really helped keep my head above the water. No matter what, this song reminded me I could still sing and hold onto the music to guide me through.



The stunning sanctuary at UUC Medford, MA

*My life goes on in endless song
Above earth's lamentations,
I hear the real, though far-off call
That hails a new creation.*

*Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear its music ringing,
It sounds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing?*

*While though the tempest loudly roars,
I hear the truth, it liveth.
And though the darkness 'round me close,
Songs in the night it giveth.*

*No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is all of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?*

*When tyrants tremble in their fear
And hear their death knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near
How can I keep from singing?*

*In prison cell and dungeon vile
Our thoughts to them are winging,
When friends by shame are undefiled
How can I keep from singing?*

PHOTOS FROM THE RECORDING SESSIONS AT NORTHFIRE STUDIOS, AMHERST, MA

