Session 1: "Folk, what folk?"

Organisation and Housekeeping

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

In this lecture we will look at popular songs of protest and songs that are critical about societal inequality and of authority, mainly from the British Isles, with a time frame ranging from the Jacobite Rebellions in Scotland (18th century) and the Irish struggle for independence, taking in class conflict before and as a result of the Industrial Revolution, but also soldiers' songs in the World Wars and protest in the 20th and 21st century (e.g. Anti-Vietnam protests, Labour songs and Occupy Wall Street). Such songs have a number of socially important functions inasmuch as they address social friction and in doing so present an "underdog" perspective on events often ignored in top-down (political and social) history. Furthermore, they are a very powerful tool for mobilisation in social movements, for creating solidarity and for expressing social criticism through the lens of "historicity" of traditional songs of inequality by implying parallels to injustice in present times.

As far as the actual focus of this lecture is concerned, see "Learning Outcomes" below.

By the end of this course, it is expected that students will understand or have gained insights into:

- basic notions of folk song performance especially in terms of
 - o performance frames
 - o the role(s) of the performer
 - o as a means of dissemination and transmission of original song material
- strategies for addressing the "social drama" inherent in the conflict between hegemonic and antihegemonic discourse
- the impact of folk song performances at the time of their composition and in present-day practice (folk scene)
- social stratification of the 19th/20th century, also as far as authorship and dissemination of songs of social comment are concerned
- the multimodality of protest in song, musically and linguistically, and
- the role of communal singing as a means of mobilisation
- discourse strategies in the depiction of "us and them" inherent in the songs
- links between historical events and social movements of the period with the content of the songs

Schedule

- 19.2.2019 Folk, what folk? Problems of a definition
- 26.2.2019 Part I: "Come all ye..." Folk Song as register: Folk Song Schemata

Part II: "As I rode over London Bridge": Formulaic lyrics and composition in traditional ballads and their impact on songs of protest

- 5.3.2019 Performances, performers and the transmission of songs
- 12.3.2019 Tutorial session I: Talking about music: folk song structures
- 19.3.2019 "The Warld is Ill-Divided": forms of antihegemonic discourse in songs (Part I: basic notions; Part II: "Us and Them")

- 26.3.2019 Part I: "Scots Wha Hae Wi' Wallace Bled" and "Both Sides of the Tweed": Songs and the Jacobite Rebellion (1688 to 1746) Part II: "The Orange and the Green": The 'Irish Question' in song 2.4.2019 "Which Side are You On?": union and labour songs 9.4.2019 Tutorial session II: Exploring the broadside ballads 16.4.2019 "Let My People Go": songs of slavery and emancipation (guest lecturer: Mat Callahan) 23.4.2019 **Easter Break** 30.4.2019 "Oh What a Lovely War": songs from the trenches 7.5.2019 "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die": anti-war songs 14.5.2019 Tutorial session III: An introduction to the musical instruments of the British Isles (with performance)
- 21.5.2019 "Wall Street Blues": Depression, the dustbowl and the ghost of Tom Joad
- 28.5.2019 "That's Not the Way It's Got to Be" Protest songs from the 50s to today

Evaluation

Evaluation:

Students are to hand in a brief summary of what they perceived as the academic core insight of each lecture and tutorial class as well as their own take-home message, a template for which will be uploaded on the relevant webpages. These are due in Weeks 5, 10 and at the end of the course. More details will follow at the beginning of the lecture class. Dates for handing in the final assignment (as mentioned above) is Friday, 31 May.

Please note that students are expected to

- participate regularly and actively
- attend the tutorial classes.

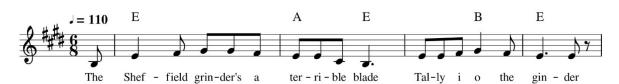
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Songs

trad

Tally I O the Grinder

Adapted from Palmer (1974) Poverty Knock p. 30









He shortens his life and hastens his death
Tally-i-o, the grinder
Will drink steel dust in every breath
Tally-i-o, the grinder
Won't use a fan as he turns his wheel
Won't wash his hands ere he eats his meal
But dies as he lives as hard as steel
Tally-i-o, the grinder

These Sheffield grinders of whom we speak
Tally-i-o, the grinder
Are men who earn a pound a week
Tally-i-o, the grinder
But of Sheffield grinders another sort
Methinks ought to be called in court
And that is the grinding Governing Board
Tally-i-o, the grinder

At whose door lies the blacker blame?

Tally-i-o, the grinder

Where rests the heavier weight of shame?

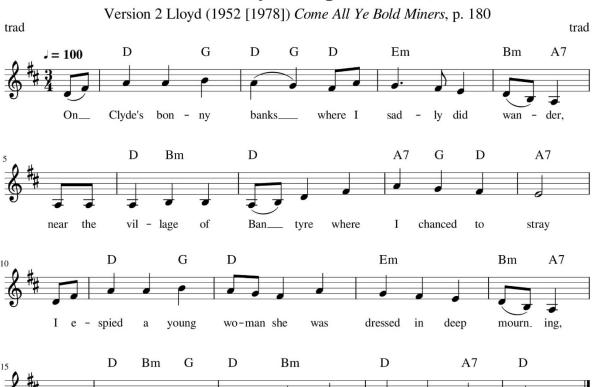
Tally-i-o, the grinder

On the famine price contractor's head
or the workman's, under-taught and fed,

Who grinds his own bones and his child's for bread?

Tally-i-o, the grinder

The Blantyre Explosion (ii)



the

loss

By Clyde's bonny banks as I sadly did wander, Amang the pit heaps, as evening drew nigh, I spied a fair maiden all dressed in deep mourning, A weeping and wailing, with many a sigh.

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so

I boldly stepped to her, said I, "my poor woman, pray tell me the cause of your sorrow and woe. I do hear you lamenting the fate of a young man His name and what happened to him I'd like for to know."

With sobbing and sighing, at length she then made answer.

"Johnny Murphy, kind sir, was my true lover's name. Twenty one years of age, and of mild good behaviour.

To work down the mines of High Blantyre he came.

"On the eleventh of December I'll always remember, In health and in strength to his labour did go. On that fatal morning without one moment's warning Two hundred and ten in cold death were laid low." "The explosion was heard, all the women and children

of

With pale anxious face made haste to the mine. When the truth was made known, the hills rang with their mourning.

her

love

as two hundred and ten young miners were slain.

"But come the spring, with all its sweet flowers, That bloom through its wildness so fragrant and fair, I will gather the snowdrops, primroses and daisies, round my lover's grave I will transplant them there."

All the fathers and mothers, all the widows and orphans

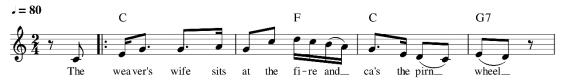
in Stonefield, High Blantyre, they'll never forget.

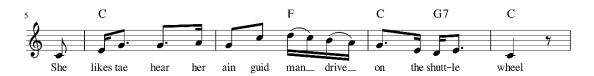
And all you good people now you've heard this sad story,

Shed a tear for the victims who were laid to their rest.

The Shuttle Rins

traditional Scots song about independent weavers (19th century)









The weaver's wife sits at the fire And turns the pirn wheel She likes tae hear her ain gude man Drive on the shuttle weel

The shuttle rins, the shuttle rins
The shuttle rins wi speed
O sweetly may the shuttle rin
That wins the bairn's breid

Thread after thread maks up the claith Until the wage he wins And ilka weaver maks the mair The mair the shuttle rins

He rises early in the morn He toils fu late at night He fain wad independent be He kens what is his right

Although he has nae dainty fare His wages being sma Yet he can wi his thrifty wife Keep hungry want awa He fondly soothes a neebor's grief Or shares a neebor's glee And fain tae gie his bairns lair He gars the shuttle flee

State cormorants may craw fu crouse And haughty be an' prude But were they paid by "ells o keels" They wadna laugh sae loud

The proudest o the land wad pine Without the weaver's wark The pampered priest, the haughty peer Wad gang without a sark

Then cheer your hearts ye workin' men An' a like brithers be Rouse up against restrictive laws And set industry free.

for more information about the context and some "translations" from Scots, cf. https://sangstories.webs.com/shuttlerins.htm