

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
 - performance frames
 - the role(s) of the performer
 - 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 World 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.

Songs

Tally I O the Grinder

Adapted from Palmer (1974) *Poverty Knock* p. 30

trad

trad

$\text{♩} = 110$

The Shef - field grin-der's a ter - ri - ble blade Tal-ly i o the gin - der

5 He sets his lit - tle ones down to trade Tal - ly i o the grin - der

10 He turns his ba-by to grind in the hull till his bo-dy is stun-ted his eyes are dull

15 and his brains are diz - zy and dazed in his skull Oh tal-ly i o the grin - der

The Sheffield Grinder's a terrible blade,
 Tally-i-o, the grinder
 He sets his little ones down to trade
 Tally-i-o, the grinder
 He turns his baby to grind in the hull
 Till his body is stunted, his eyes are dull
 And his brains are dizzy and dazed in his skull
 Tally-i-o, the grinder

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)

Version 2 Lloyd (1952 [1978]) *Come All Ye Bold Miners*, p. 180

trad

trad

$\text{♩} = 100$

D G D G D Em Bm A7

On Clyde's bon - ny banks where I sad - ly did wan - der,

5 D Bm D A7 G D A7

near the vil - lage of Ban - tyre where I chanced to stray

10 D G D Em Bm A7

I e - spied a young wo - man she was dressed in deep mourn. ing,

15 D Bm G D Bm D A7 D

so sad - ly la - ment - ing the loss of her love

By Clyde's bonny banks as I sadly did wander,
Among 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.

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

$\text{♩} = 80$

The weaver's wife sits at the fi-re and ca's the pirn wheel

5 She likes tae hear her ain guid man drive on the shutt-le wheel

10 The shutt-le rins the shutt-le rins the shutt-le rins wi' speed

15 Oh sweet-ly may the shutt-le rin that wins the bair-nies bread

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 claih
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 crawl 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>