

FAVOURITE SONGS OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Selected and Edited by ALAN MILLS
Piano Accompaniment by KENNETH PEACOCK

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ABOUT THE SONGS

Nowhere in Canada is singing and song-making more loved, or more in evidence as a folk art, than in that curiously shaped island which the explorer John Cabot claimed in England's name only five years after Christopher Columbus discovered America. This collection of "favourites" is but a sampling of the richness and variety of the songs and ballads of that island.

The early settlers who followed Cabot's trail to Britain's first overseas colony, and those who came in subsequent generations, brought with them many of the traditional songs of the British Isles, mainly from Ireland and the west of England. Some of these inherited ballads are still sung in various forms in the many fishing villages that dot the rugged coasts of Newfoundland; but, for the most part, these older gems have been replaced in the affections of the people by "home made" songs which grew out of the minds and experiences of native bards, songs which record local happenings and mention the names of people and places dear to the hearts of Newfoundlanders. These are the "true" folk songs of Newfoundland, loved beyond all others, and little known to "outsiders".

The melodies of these songs, no less than the words, represent a local development. Most of them were composed since 1900 and show little influence of the much older modal and pentatonic tunes from Britain and Ireland. These local tunes evolved largely from the two other sources, the mission hymn and the Irish music-hall type ditty. Hence the familiar diatonic flavour of the music.

In making the piano accompaniments Kenneth Peacock was guided by the simple harmonies the tunes seemed to imply. No attempt was made to spice up these "native" dishes for sophisticated concert presentation. They are simple fare to be tossed off on the spur of the moment for an evening's entertainment among friends—just as often happens in a Newfoundland outpost. The fact that the songs now have piano accompaniment is merely an added incentive for mainlanders to participate in the fun.

Most of the songs in this volume were selected by Alan Mills from the collections of the late Gerald S. Doyle, O.B.E., K.S.G., one of Newfoundland's most prominent businessmen, who devoted much of his time and effort to gathering the songs and poetry of "the island's" native bards, and then published them in small booklets which he freely gave to anyone who asked for them.

The editor and publishers of this volume wish to express their particular gratitude to Mrs. Gerald S. Doyle, not only for her kind permission to set the songs from her late husband's collection to piano accompaniments (many of them for the first time) but for her helpful co-operation in supplying heretofore unpublished information concerning the songs.

Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor

The tune and words of this lively Newfoundland favorite are from the Gerald S. Doyle collection.

With humour

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady bass line and a more active treble line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line, and guitar chords are indicated above it.

System 1:

Chords: C, Dm, G7, C, G7, C

Lyrics: Now 'twas twenty-five or thir-ty years since

System 2:

Chords: F, Dm, G, G7, G7, C, G7

Lyrics: Jack first saw the light. He came in - to this world of woe one dark and storm-y night. He was

System 3:

Chords: C, F, Dm, G, G7

Lyrics: born on board his fath-er's ship as she was ly-ing to, 'Bout twenty five or thir-ty miles south-

CHORUS:

east of Bac - a - lieu. Jack was ev - 'ry inch a sail - or,

Five and twen-ty years a whal - er, Jack was ev - 'ry inch a

sail - or, He was born up - on the bright blue sea.

When Jack grew up to be a man, he went to the Labrador. He fished in Indian Harbour, where his father fished before. On his returning in the fog, he met a heavy gale, And Jack was swept into the sea and swallowed by a whale.

CHORUS:

The whale went straight for Baffin's Bay, about ninety knots an hour, And every time he'd blow a spray he'd send it in a shower. "O, now," says Jack unto himself, "I must see what he's about." He caught the whale all by the tail and turned him inside out.

CHORUS: