

Chambless & Muse
Passing Tales & Glories
CMCD2014

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Musicians

Jil Chambless: Vocals, Flute

Scooter Muse: Guitar, High String Guitar, Banjo

With:

Jason Bailey: Mandolin, Octave Mandolin (*By Way of Sorrow*)

Rich Brotherton: Cittern (*Now Westlin Winds*)

Daniel Carwile: Fiddle, Bouzouki (*Canadee-i-o*)

EJ Jones: Great Highland Pipes (*Rich Man's Silver*)

Lorne MacDougall: Smallpipes (*Harbour Wall*)

Ed Miller: Vocals (*Now Westlin' Winds*)

John Taylor: Fiddle (*Shoals of Herring, Wild Geese, Rare Ould Times, Midnight on the Water*)

N C Thurman: Keys (*The Farley Bridge, Peter's Song*)

Nick Watson: Percussion

Bob Wray: Bass

All arrangements by Scooter Muse and Jil Chambless, Saddell Abbey Music ASCAP

Produced by Scooter Muse and Jil Chambless

Recorded 2014 at Saddell Abbey Studio, Florence, Alabama

Engineered by Scooter Muse

Mixed and Mastered by Jimmy Nutt at The NuttHouse Recording Studio, Sheffield, Alabama.

www.thenutthouse.com

Main cover photos: Lori Lovelace

This CD is dedicated to longtime friend and mentor Alex Beaton, without whom many would never have discovered the magical world of Celtic music.

“A journey across Celtic borders, songs of the people beautifully performed!”

Alexander McKinven / Mull of Kintyre Music Festival / Scotland

See our websites for performance schedules, booking information, and more:

www.jilchambless.com www.scootermuse.com

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Notes and Lyrics:

1. *Canadee-i-o* (Traditional)

Jil got this song from the singing of Nic Jones. Also known as "The Wearing of the Blue," this traditional Canadian and English ballad is believed to have been written before 1839.

Well, it's all of a fair and a handsome girl
She's all in her tender years
She fell in love with a sailor boy
It's true that she loved him well
For to go off to sea with him
Like she did not now how
She longed to see that seaport town
Called Canadee-i-o

So she bargained with the sailor boy
All for a piece of gold
Straightaway then he led her
Down into the hold
Sayin', "I'll dress you up in sailor's clothes
And your jacket shall be blue
And you shall see that seaport town
Of Canadee-i-o”

Now, when the sailors heard this news
Well they fell into a rage
And with the whole ship's company

They were willing to engage
Sayin', "We'll tie her hands and feet, my boys
And overboard we'll throw her
And she'll never see that seaport town
Called Canadee-i-o"

Now, when the captain he heard the news
Well he too fell in rage
And with the whole ships' company
He was willing to engage
Sayin', "She'll stay in her sailor's clothes
And her color it shall be blue
And she'll see that seaport town
Called Canadee-i-o"

Now when they come down to Canada
Scarcely 'bout half a year
She's married this bold captain
Who called her his dear
She's dressed in silks and satins now
And she cuts a gallant show
The finest of the ladies there
Down in Canadee-i-o

Come all you fair and tender girls
Wheresoever you may be
I'd have you to follow your own true love
When he goes upon the sea
For if the sailors prove false to you
Well the captain he might prove true
You see the honor that I have gained
By the wearing of the blue.

2. *The Wild Geese* (Violet Jacob)

Written around 1915 by Scottish poet Violet Jacob in the dialect known as Braid Scots. The poem takes the form of a conversation between the poet and the North Wind and speaks of a longing for home. It was originally set to music as Norlan' Wind and popularized by Angus singer Jim Reid. It has been recorded by many, including Alex Beaton and Ed Miller.

"Oh tell me fit was on yer road, ye roarin Norland wind?
As ye come blawin frae the land that's never frae ma mind.
Ma feet they traivel England but I'm deein for the North."

"Ma man, I saw the siller tides rin up the Firth o Forth."

"Aye wind, I ken them weel eneuch an fine they fa and rise,
And fain I'd feel the creepin mist on yonder shore that lies.
But tell me as ye pass them by, fit saw ye on the way?"

"Ma man, I rocked the rovin gulls that sail abin the Tay."

"Bit saw ye naethin leein wind afore ye come tae Fife?
For there's muckle lyin 'yont the Tay that's mair tae me nor life."

"Ma man, I swept the Angus braes that ye hivna trod for years."

"Oh wind, forgie a hameless loon that canna see for tears."

"And far abin the Angus straths I saw the wild geese flee,
A lang, lang skein o beatin wings wi their heids toward the sea,
And aye their cryin voices trailed ahint them on the air."

"Oh wind, hae mercy, haud your wheesht for I daurna listen mair."

3. *Shoals of Herring* (Ewan MacColl)

This is one of many songs we learned from the singing of Alex Beaton. Written in the 60's for the BBC Radio Ballads, it beautifully outlines both the trials and rewards of the fishing industry.

O, it was a fine and a pleasant day
Out of Yarmouth harbour I was faring
As a cabin boy on a sailing lugger
For to go and hunt the shoals of herring

O, the work was hard and the hours were long
And the treatment sure it took some bearing
There was little kindness and the kicks were many
As we hunted for the shoals of herring

O, we fished the Swarth and the Broken Bank
I was a cook and I'd a quarter-sharing
And I used to sleep, standing on me feet
And I'd dream about the shoals of herring

O, we left the home grounds in the month of June
And to canny Shiels we soon were bearing
With a hundred cran of the silver darlings
That we'd taken from the shoals of herring

Now you're up on deck, you're a fisherman

You can swear and show a manly bearing
Take your turn on watch with the other fellows
While you're searching for the shoals of herring

In the stormy seas and the living gales
Just to earn your daily bread you're daring
From the Dover Straits to the Faroe Islands
As you're following the shoals of herring

O, I earned my keep and I paid my way
And I earned the gear that I was wearing
Sailed a million miles, caught ten-million fishes
We were sailing after shoals of herring

4. *Peter's Song / Corphin Glen* (Lyrics - Davy Robertson; Tune - Alex McAllister)

Written by good friends from Campbeltown Scotland. Davy's lyrics honor the life and longings of his late brother, Peter, and they are set beautifully to an original tune by Alex. The song describes Peter's adventures as a Herring fisherman on the Firth of Clyde; the sea-approaches to Campbeltown are there. It's a moving narrative of the thoughts of the person departed, and his desire to return to life and the sea.

Thoughts of my homeland are haunting my mind
Lean times came o'er me, I left you behind
From friends and from family, I'd severed my ties
When I want to return I just close my old eyes

Take me home to Kintyre 'cross the Atlantic bound
To my braw ring net boat on the Kilbrannan sound
Then find me her neighbour and all my old crew
Only in thoughts can I come back to you

I see the fleet sail up the loch in the night
They're hauling and heaving down off Davaar light
And the Curlew they call as we pass rocky burn
To a fisherman stranded, who longs to return

I watch the wild solan glide by on the breeze
The wee storm petrels wave-skipping with ease
On the wash from our stern how they dance with delight
Off the Drumadoon shore on a warm summer's night

I hear the boys shouting the winky's away
They're chapping the anchor the herring's at play

And the moon light's the burning as we start to brail
Then 400 baskets we haul o'er the rail

That's me dreaming again of my youth that's gone by
Of my boat Maggie Jean, with a tear in my eye
And only Kilkerran can set my soul free
Let me lie there forever it will be my last lee

5. *Now Westlin Winds* (Robert Burns)

The alternate and more accurate title is "Song Composed in August". We're thrilled to have our good friend and favorite Burns scholar, Ed Miller, singing on this track. According to Ed's Burns book, Westlin Winds was one of the few songs included in the Kilmarnock edition. It was probably written 1785-6. The first 8 lines were in Burns' Commonplace book, with last 2 lines being "An' the moon shines bright, when I rove at night To muse on Jeannie Armour" (Burns' wife). But this was later changed to "charmer", referring to Peggy, Margaret Thompson of Kiroswald. Burns told Dr. Moore in a letter of his rapture with her "stepping out to the garden one charming noon, to take the sun's altitude, I met with my angel.....It was vain to think of doing anymore at school....I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her."

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring autumn's pleasant weather
The moorcock springs on whirring wings
Among the blooming heather
Now waving grain, wild o'er the plain
Delights the weary farmer
The moon shines bright as I rove at night
To muse upon my charmer.

The pairtrick lo'es the fruitful fells
The plover lo'es the mountains
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells
The soaring hern the fountains
Through lofty groves the cushat roves
The path of man to shun it
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush
The spreading thorn the linnet

Thus every kind their pleasure find
The savage and the tender
Some social join and leagues combine
Some solitary wander
Avaunt, away, the cruel sway

Tyrannic man's dominion!
The sportsman's joy, the murdering cry
The fluttering gory pinion!

But Peggy dear, the evening's clear
Thick files the skimming swallow
The sky is blue, the field's in view
All fading green and yellow
Come let us stray our gladsome way
And view the charms of nature
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn
And ilka happy creature

We'll gently walk and sweetly talk
Till the silent moon shines clearly
I'll clasp thy waist and, fondly prest
Swear how I love thee dearly
Not vernal showers to budding flowers
Not autumn to the farmer
So dear can be as thou to me
My fair my lovely charmer

6. *The Harbour Wall* (Kenny Gilchrist)

This song was written by the late Kenny Gilchrist and suggested to us by our good friends from Campbeltown, Alex McKinven and Les Oman. According to the local legend, when a fisherman departs from this life, his soul waits by the Harbour Wall for the passing of his loved one. Then, after many years apart, he helps her aboard his boat to "never again be alone" as together they make their way to the afterlife.

At the head of the quay I'll wait for thee
When your fires burn low
And I'll carry you home to where you belong
Eternally entwined are we
And you'll never again be alone

And I'll count up the years that I waited here
By the harbour side
As your seasons still turn I've tethered mine down
So long to be apart from thee
And you'll never again be alone

And so I'll stand waiting as the tides rise and fall
And the waves keep on crashing on the harbour wall

It's been many a year since I left you here
And there's many a tear that's been cried
When you step from the shore I'll help you aboard
Entwined are we. We'll set to sea
And I'll never again let you go

7. *By Way of Sorrow* (Julie Miller)

A hauntingly beautiful song that reminds us no matter what paths our lives take, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

You've been taken by the wind
You have known the kiss of sorrow
Doors that would not take you in
Outcast and a stranger

You have come by way of sorrow
You have come by way of tears
But you'll reach your destiny
Meant to find you all these years

You have drunk a bitter wine
With none to be your comfort
You who once were left behind
Will be welcome at love's table

All the nights that joy has slept
Will awake to days of laughter
Gone the tears that you have wept
You'll dance in freedom ever after

8. *The Farley Bridge* (Duncan Chisholm)

Rich Man's Silver (Roy Gullane)

Roy sent this song to Jil after we played the Rural Hill Scottish Festival in North Carolina with the Tannahill Weavers in April 2013. The discovery in recent travels of oil off the northern coast of Scotland has created countless jobs and people have traveled from all over the British Isles to take them. For some the work was a stroke of fortune, while for others it meant complete upheaval and an intrusion in their way of life. For those who had worked in the traditional jobs of the region, the transition was often quite difficult. You don't have to travel thousands of miles to feel homesick; indeed the hero of this song can see the island where he was born and bred but he just can't get over there. The black rain mentioned in this song refers to a prophecy made by

the Brahan Seer, the last person to be hung for witchcraft in Scotland. He predicted that a black rain would fall destroying the north of the country.

A lone heron flies into the last fire of sunset,
Wild seabirds cry, sad for the passing of the day.
Had I the wings, there is a dream I'd surely follow.
Swiftly they'd bring me where my thoughts so ever stray.

Long is the night many's the waves upon the ocean.
Dawn's early light finds me so far from native shore.
Gladly I came seeking the joy of rich man's silver,
Now is the flame of my dear youthland gold and more.

Black rain and drills calling me here among these strangers,
The brewer's ancient skills can't cheer a heart that's growing cold.
Carry me o'er like a wild wave on the water,
Onto the shore of my fair heartland loved of old.

9. Jamie Raeburn's Farewell (Traditional Scottish)

We recorded a different version of this song long ago with Henri's Notions, but this version we learned from Alex Beaton. Jamie Raeburn is reputed to have been a baker in Glasgow before being sentenced for petty theft, although he was allegedly innocent, and then sent out to the colonies in Botany Bay as punishment.

My name is Jamie Raeburn, in Glasgow I was born
My place and habitation I'm forced to leave in scorn
Frae my place and habitation, I now must gang awa'
Far from the bonnie hills and dales of Caledonia

It was early on one morning, just by the break of day
The turnkey he came to us and unto us did say
Arise you hapless convicts, arise you one and a'
This is the day you are to stray from Caledonia

We all arose in misery, our hearts were full of grief
Our friends all gathered 'round the coach could grant us no relief
Our parents, wives and sweethearts, it broke their hearts in twa
To see us leave the hills and dales of Caledonia

Farewell my dearest mother, I'm vexed for what I've done
I hope none shall cast up to you the race that I have run
I hope God will protect you when I am far awa'
Far from the bonnie hills and dales of Caledonia

Farewell, my honest father, you were the best of men
And likewise my own sweetheart, it's Catherine is her name
No more we'll walk by Clyde's clear stream or by the Broomielaw
For I must leave the hills and dales of Caledonia

10. The Rare Ould Times (Pete St. John)

Yet another song we learned from Alex Beaton and one of his wife Linda's favorites. The song's narrator recalls his upbringing and laments the changes that have occurred in the city since his youth.

Raised on songs and stories, heroes of renown
The passing tales and glories that once was Dublin town
The hallowed halls and houses, the haunting childrens' rhymes
That once was Dublin city in the rare ould times

Ring a ring a rosey, as the light declines
I remember Dublin city in the rare ould times

My name it is Sean Demspey, as Dublin as can be
Born hard and late in Pimlico, in a house that ceased to be
By trade I was a cooper, lost out to redundancy
Like my house that fell to progress, my trade's a memory

I courted Peggy Dignan, as pretty as you please
A rogue and a child of Mary, from the rebel liberties
I lost her to a student chap with a skin as black as coal
When he took her off to Birmingham, she took away my soul

The years have made me bitter, the gargle dims my brain
'Cause Dublin keeps on changing and nothing stays the same
The Pillar and the Met have gone, the Royal long since pulled down
As the grey unyielding concrete makes a city of my town

Fare thee well sweet Anna Liffey, I can no longer stay
And watch the new glass cages, that spring up along the Quay
My mind's too full of memories, too old to hear new chimes
I'm part of what was Dublin in the rare ould times

11. Midnight on the Water (Tune - traditional, Luke Thomasson; Lyrics - Ron Kavana)

The traditional instrumental Texas waltz has long been popular in bluegrass and other music genres. Jil learned this version with words from the Waterson-Carthy recording. We came up with this arrangement with John Taylor at a gig somewhere.

I never thought much of that fancy dancing
With my two left feet and my roving eye
But when the band plays that slow air in that 3/4 time
I could dance with my darling until morning light

Play me a fiddle tune, sing me a song
Banish Misfortune, my time is not long
Midnight on the Water, so steady and slow
The Lark in the Morning, one more for the road
Midnight on the Water, so steady and slow
Let's have another drink and set 'em up Joe

Well, I've done all my dancing down in those bar-rooms
Dancing and drinking go hand in glove
So give a beer to the fiddler and play all the old tunes
So I can dance closer to the one that I love