

Reel 171A

- 1-8 Introduction to "The Broken Ring"; this is a talk by Mr. James Bannerman, Toronto, to the CBC Wednesday night presentation of the folk opera based on Nova Scotia songs and legends.
- 8-9 There Came One Jew; short singing game as played by school children at West Pubnico, sung and described by Mrs. Laura McNeil.
- 9-10 Mary Across the Wild Moor; sung by Linda Gilkie, aged 11, Sambro, as learned from her father, six verses; interesting to see how child has adopted her father's unique manner of singing.
- 10-10 $\frac{1}{2}$  Fraulein, sung by Linda Gilkie, as learned from radio, words therefore not typed.
- 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ -15 Plug McCarthy, sung by Mr. William Gilkie, Sambro, one verse and chorus of Irish drinking song.
- 15-end Wreck of the "Atlantic", sung by Mr. William Gilkie, Sambro, 25 verses, not all recorded. Interesting local song of ship wrecked off Halifax Harbour.

(This was recorded from James Bannerman's introduction to the CBC presentation of the folk opera known as "The Broken Ring")

One of the notable programmes on the CBC Wednesday night presentation is a folk opera called "The Broken Ring". It comes to you from Halifax. I would like to start with the folk opera first, starting with what may well be a bit of hair splitting. There are folk dances and folk songs and folk ways and folk legends and folk all sorts of things. But it doesn't seem to me that there ever has been or ever could be such a thing as a genuine folk opera. The business of putting an opera together is surely altogether too complex and in the best sense of the word too artificial to be a folk activity. "The Broken Ring", for example, was put together by Trevor Jones, who chose and arranged and orchestrated the music, and by Donald Wetmore who wrote the libretto and it will be produced by Ira Stewart and directed by Thomas Meyer. And besides the combination of professional and far from folksy skills that they represent, the little opera also involves the professional skill of soprano Karen Mills and baritone Bernard Johnston, narrator Ray Simpson, the Acadian Male Quartet and members of the Halifax Symphony Orchestra. And that, mind you, is a relatively small number of the kind of highly trained people who must collaborate ~~before~~ in various ways before any opera can be produced, which is why I maintain that the production of opera isn't a real folk activity, and that it is a contradiction in terms to call something a folk opera.

However, it is a convenient description for an opera based on a folk legend or on folk songs, and "The Broken Ring" is based on both. The legend is the story of a mutiny on board the ship "Saladin" a little over a hundred years ago, and of how it parted the cabin boy on her from his faithful sweetheart, and of how they were reunited in the end - a legend that is part of the rich folklore of Nova Scotia. The songs are Nova Scotian folk songs by adoption if not always by origin, and one of the songs in particular gave not only the title for tonight's opera but the story as well through a sort of interweaving with the legend. The song I mean is of course "The Broken Ring". It was Trevor Jones's point of departure when he began to think about composing the opera, and it first came to his attention when he first saw it in one of Helen Creighton's collections of folk songs and ballads from Nova Scotia. And yesterday Miss Creighton told me how the song was sent to her in 1937 in the living quarters of the Chebucto Head lighthouse, by Mrs. Gallagher, the wife of the keeper of the light. Chebucto Head is a steep promontory which thrusts out to sea in the approaches to Halifax Harbour, and Mrs. Gallagher sang "The Broken Ring" for Miss Creighton one Saturday afternoon while she was scrubbing her kitchen floor. Mrs. Gallagher's housekeeping problems

weren't complicated by having all the rooms set one on top of the other in a vertical line as they are in the famous Eddy-stone Light, for instance, which consists of a single tapering tower surmounted by the great lamp. Chebucto Head has a house like of the neat white houses that look so pleasant in the Nova Scotia countryside or in the little ports around the coast. But her problems as a mother of three sons were complicated by the house in that it stands near a steep place on the rock, and as a consequence Mrs. Gallagher had to bring up her babies quite literally on the edge of the cliff. In another complication, or what would have seemed like one to a good many people, is that Chebucto Head is isolated and lonely. But Mrs. Gallagher and her family were very happy, and Miss Creighton remembers to this day what Mrs. Gallagher said when she asked her if she liked living there. Mrs. Gallagher smiled in a peaceful, contented way and said, "I might as well like it; it's my home." One reason why isolation didn't bother the Gallaghers was that they could all play some musical instrument, the harmonica, or the accordion or the guitar, and they did play them and thoroughly enjoy themselves, and that Mrs. Gallagher sang folk songs. She thoroughly enjoyed herself too. But her approach to them wasn't simply the matter of the pleasure that could be got from them. Before her marriage she was a school teacher, and she was more than usually aware of the special value of folk songs and of the importance of treating them with respect and of cherishing them.

So when she sang "The Broken Ring" to Miss Creighton that Saturday afternoon while she was scrubbing the kitchen floor she did it partly spontaneously and, so to speak, hospitably, since it was something she knew her visitor wanted to hear. But she also sang it in the knowledge that "The Broken Ring" belonged to the living archives of Nova Scotian history, and that Miss Creighton was a fellow archivist who would see that it was preserved as it ought to be, and tonight, at the outset of the little opera that it inspired, you will hear a recording of Mrs. Gallagher's voice singing the last three verses. It appears to me that "The Broken Ring" couldn't have a more heartwarming introduction.

March 22, 1956

THERE CAME ONE JEW

Reel 171A8-9

There came one Jew, all dressed in blue,  
By the way he bent his knees.  
No matter what you do, no matter what you say,  
It's you, you, you, you, you.

Then they'd point to one pupil, and he'd be "it". If there was a line of children, they'd point like you, you, you, you, you, and the last one would be "it". Then the next time it would be two Jews, and then three Jews, and four Jews until all the children were out. The last one in the line would be out of the game altogether. Then they'd start again, and the one who was "it" would be out of the game again, you see, until they were all out of the game. They'd march, you see they would be going backward and forward while they were singing that. It was a game. They'd march forward and backward until they were through with "it" in time to the music.

Sung by Mrs. Laura McNeil, West Pubnico, and recorded by Helen Creighton, June 1957

(Machine has bad hum)

It was on one cold winter's morn  
When the wind blew across the wild moor,  
When young Ma ry came wandering home  
With her child right home to her own father's door.

2

"Dear father, dear father", she cried,  
"Come down and open the door  
For the child in my arms will soon perish and die  
From the wind that blew 'cross the wild moor."

3

Her father was deaf to her cry,  
Not a sound of her voice did he hear.  
But the watch dogs did howl, and the village bells tolled,  
And the wind blew across the wild moor.

4

"Oh, why did I leave this fair land,  
Where I once was so happy and free,  
When now I must roam with no friends of my own,  
Or no one to take pity on me."

5

Oh how her father must have felt  
When he came to the door the next morn,  
And found Mary there dead, and the child still alive,  
Clutched close in his dead mother's arms.

6

In anger he tore his grey hair,  
While the tears down his cheeks they did flow,  
When he saw how that night Mary perished and died  
From the wind that blew across the wild moor.

7

Sung by Linde Gilkie, aged 11, Sambro, as learned from her  
father and sung in his manner; recorded by Helen Creighton,  
June 1957

PLUG McCARTHY

Reel 171A 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ -15

Chorus:

For the element of the music it did play

It was my delight to see the sight  
Of those Irishmen so gay.

Oh I never laughed so hearty in the course of all my life  
Looking at Plug McCarthy a-Tivertin' with his wife.

2x 1

Four o'clock in the mornin' the raffle it was o'er

John Gally he got rolling drunk and stove away the door.

Clancy with a bottle sure he'd all the windows broke

Crofga grabbed him by the throat and, boys, I thought he'd choke.

Sung by Mr. William Gilkie, Sambro; recorded by Helen  
Creighton, June 1957

Dear friends come hear the mournful tale,  
The loss which we deplore  
Of the gallant ship Atlantic  
Wrecked on Nova Scotia's shore.  
A most terrific accident  
Befell that fatal ship  
As she approached our rocky shore  
On her way across the deep.

2

The sun had set below the hill,  
Night spread her wings around,  
A night that will remembered be  
For many a year to come,  
Alas a ship, a noble ship  
Which had the ocean crossed  
Upon the rocky Prospect shore  
That night was wrecked and lost.

3

With near a thousand souls on board  
Her captain had no fear,  
And heeded not the rocky coast  
Which they were drawing near  
Until alas it was too late,  
The final shock was given,  
That noble ship had struck the rocks  
And midships she was driven.

4

And terror stricken souls on board,  
O who could give them aid?  
Until each other looked for help  
Each praying to be saved.  
Numbers overboard were washed  
And perished in the deep  
While others frozen in the cold  
Died with that sinking ship.

5

Poor helpless women down below  
Of whom not one was saved,  
Dear little helpless children too  
All met a watery grave,  
Among the women there were two  
Beneath the waves that night  
Had each of them a little babe  
That scarce had seen the light.

6

A lady with her babe in arms  
Had reached the deck, we're told,  
With nothing but her nightclothes on  
To shield her from the cold.  
To save her life her slender form  
Was fastened to the mast  
Where ten long hours she there remained  
Before she breathed her last.

7

And e'er she died her little babe  
Was swept into the sea,  
What suffering did that mother bear  
In those hours of agony,  
With full a thousand souls on board  
And close upon the shore  
The splendid ship to pieces went  
To sail the sea no more.

8

Third officer Brady, a brave man,  
Swam over to the shore  
And quickly sent a line on board  
To help the others o'er,  
Now the kind-hearted fishermen  
Did gladly them receive,  
Giving them gladly of their store,  
Supplying all their need.

9

Next morning as the sun arose,  
As the angry billows swell,  
The people on the Prospect shore  
A fearful sight beheld,  
The rocks around were strewn with dead  
And as each wave broke o'er  
Bearing its burden to be laid  
With sorrow on the shore.

10

Both men and women, young and old  
With clothes and flesh all torn,  
Upon the sharp and craggy rocks  
The angry waves had thrown,  
A mother with her little babe  
Clasped tightly to her breast  
Upon the tangled seaweed lay  
Gone to her long long rest.

11

All who came there to see the sight  
With heartfelt grief bemoan,  
The fate of those who left their homes  
To cross the ocean's foam,  
And far away from friends and here  
In a foreign land to die,  
To strangers owe a burial place,  
No friend to close an eye.

12

Among the men of Prospect shore  
Who risked a watery grave  
And spurred up those around  
The shipwrecked men to save  
Was their kind and loving clergyman,  
Mr. Ancient is his name,  
Whose deeds deserve to be engraved  
Upon the roll of fame.

13

He said, "My friends, come take the boat,  
And try whom we can save,"  
Then boldly took the foremost part,  
The bravest of the brave.



The hardy men who gave such help  
Deserve the highest praise,  
O ne'er forget their noble deeds  
When thankful songs we raise.

14

The captain in that trying hour  
Spoke kindly to the men,  
Saying, "Be calm good men," while angry waves  
Swept furious over them,  
When Mr. Sweet, a gentleman,  
Quite frantically with despair  
From cabin came and in his arms  
His little daughter bare.

one 15

And to Mr. Ellery he said,  
"Charlie, pray take my child  
While I go my wife to seek  
The billows raging wild."  
And as the steward took the child  
And saw her face so fair,  
His thoughts went quickly to his home,  
He had one like it there.

16

The father did the mother seek,  
But neither one came back  
As angry waves soon swept them  
From off the sinking wreck,  
Poor suffering little innocent  
It cried out, "Papa come,"  
It's clothes were thin, just taken from  
It's little bed so warm.

17

It cried out "Pa" for a short time  
But papa never came,  
Expiring in the steward's arms  
In pain and sufferings,  
It's little soul to heaven fled  
To call it's papa there,  
I hope they hand in hand will walk  
Through heavenly mansions fair.

18

Among those rescued from the wreck  
Was John Hindley, a brave lad,  
Who boldly struggled to the deck  
Bereft of all he had,  
His father, mother, brother too  
Had sunk to rise no more,  
But he with help from strong men  
Got safely to the shore.

19

Kind friends then took him to their homes,  
His wants they did supply,  
Strangers with pity in their hearts  
Beheld the orphan boy,

When he arrived in Halifax  
Warm welcome he received,  
And then we leave him journeying home  
With his sisters dear to live.

20

And never may those cruel rocks  
Another victim gain,  
Let lightships guard our rocky coast  
For those who cross the main,  
To those who perished in the deep  
We gave a Christian grave,  
Our joys would have been greater far  
Had we the power to save.

21

And now the hoble steamer  
Atlantic she is lost,  
Which o'er the stormy ocean  
Of times before had crossed,  
And sad and touching scenes  
Which never could be told,  
And many hundred lives were lost,  
And many hearts made cold.

22

Now she will never sail again  
Unto that distant shore,  
To those who look with tearful eye  
For friends they'll see no more,  
The dreadful sight will never from  
Our memories fade away  
Till children that surround us now  
Are feeble, old, and grey.

23

O angry sea give up thy dead,  
O rocky reefs sink low,  
How could you part so many friends,  
Why did you casuse such woe?  
O goodly ship that proudly sailed  
An hour before the shock,  
Why did you not keep far away  
And shun the sullen(?) rocks.

24

With all our friends around us  
We close our eyes in sleep,  
Our thoughts will oft times wander  
Across the dreary deep,  
And grieve for those who closed their eyes,  
No thought that death was near,  
But woke while sinking in the sea,  
Shrieks sounding in their ears.

25

So list with me my loving friends,

There's breakers all around,  
And in an unexpected hour  
The last great tramp may sound,  
The shrieks and groans and cries of those  
Who fear the chastening rod  
All unprepared. More than came forth  
To meet Almighty God.

Sung by Mr. William Gilkie, Sambre, and recorded by