

Other Airs for Odell/Stansbury Songs

Five other airs are named in Sargent's collection: "When Britain First At Heaven's Command," "The King's Old Courtier," "Black Sloven," "Cesar and Pompey were both of them, &c.," and "Come my Kitten, my Kitten...." It crossed my mind that the Ballad Listserve might be able to provide information on some of these tunes, so I put out a call to <ballads@mailbase.ac.uk>, naming a few of them, and got two replies.

First, from Steve Roud:

A song called "Black Sloven," commencing "Last Valentine's Day..." is in *Universal Songster* Vol.3 (1825/6) p.99, but text only. *The Masque* (c1785 edn.) has a song commencing "What a noise there has been..." to the tune of "Caesar and Pompey Were Both Horned" (text only). *Convivial Songster* (1782) pp.26-7 has a song commencing "Hey my kitten, a kitten..." (with music). Various other early 19th cent broadsides and songsters have songs to the tune of "Hey My Kitten" or "Ho my kitten."

Bruce Olson also responded:

"Black Sloven" is a song with tune in *The Universal Magazine*, 1771. (BUCEM)

Allan Ramsay in the 4th volume of *The Tea Table Miscellany* reprinted "Hey my kitten, my kitten," without music, but with the tune direction "Yellow Stockings." Wm. Stenhouse in *Illustrations to the Scots Musical Museum* said it was by Jonathon Swift, but I don't know where he got that information. The song is on a single sheet song with music, and with a quite variant version of the tune in *The Scots Musical Museum*, #558. See the Scots and Irish tune indexes on my website for several other copies and variants of the tune. One Irish collection calls the tune "The Kitten."

I don't have a copy of "Black Sloven" (a horse, if I remember correctly.) Here's an ABC for the tune for the song commencing "Oh, my kitten, my kitten" (5 verses, no attributions or publisher's imprint) from the single sheet song issue in the Library of Congress. I also transcribed the tune from another copy at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

See "Tune Family 1" at the end of the Irish tune title index on my website for the many variant versions and their titles and a reference to a study of the variants of the tune, and file T1.HTM for six versions of the tune in ABC notation.

X:1
T:A New Song For young Mothers, & Nurses
S:Single sheet song, c 1720, Folger Shakespeare Lib.
Q:120
L:1/4
M:9/4
K:C
(c3/2 B/)AAEAAEA|(c3/2 B/)AAEAB2B|c3/2 B/A(AE)A(AE)A|\
G2dd2cB2G||c3/2 d/eg2eg2e|c3/2 d/ e(gf)ed2d|\
c3/2 d/ eggege|B3/2 c/d(de)dB2B|]

Bruce's website address is <www.erols.com/olsonw>. From it you can move to the ABC Home Page to learn how to read this musical script. ABC is a language designed in 1991 to notate tunes in an ascii format. It was designed primarily for folk and traditional tunes of Western European origin which can be written on one stave in standard classical notation. Its designers claim that with a little practice, one can learn to play a tune directly from the ABC notation without having to process and print it out. To go directly to ABC:

<<http://www.gre.ac.uk/~c.walshaw/abc/index.html>>

I have since discovered that a tune for "Black Sloven" is given by Irwin Silber for the anonymous Tory song, "The British Light Infantry" (153-54).