

Three Welsh Songs

I am the world's worst singer, unless your hat is in the ring. I always wanted to sing "All Through the Night," and bought an anthology including it. The English translation given there may have been faithful to the Welsh, for all I know, but was pretty clumsy after the first four lines. The arrangement was plain, with a nice use of parallel thirds in lines five and six. I kept the four good lines and the parallel thirds, and the glorious tune itself, and otherwise started from scratch.

"Welcome Robin" and "Kind Old Man" were in the same anthology, again with simple accompaniments. "Welcome Robin" already had a charming text, and needed only more harmony and counterpoint. "Kind Old Man" is a wonderful nonsense song, alternating between doleful and lively refrains. I added still more nonsense to the words, and hammed up the slow parts with barbershop melisma and melodrama. Keep the text in front of you, since I have asked the singers to take the fast parts presto possibile.

"All Through the Night," of course, is the closer. I intended the text as a lyric, with a common touch, rather than a stand-alone poem. I chose hymn-like harmonies, more or less inevitably, but added a counter-melody in broken chords to bring out the bardic potential.

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