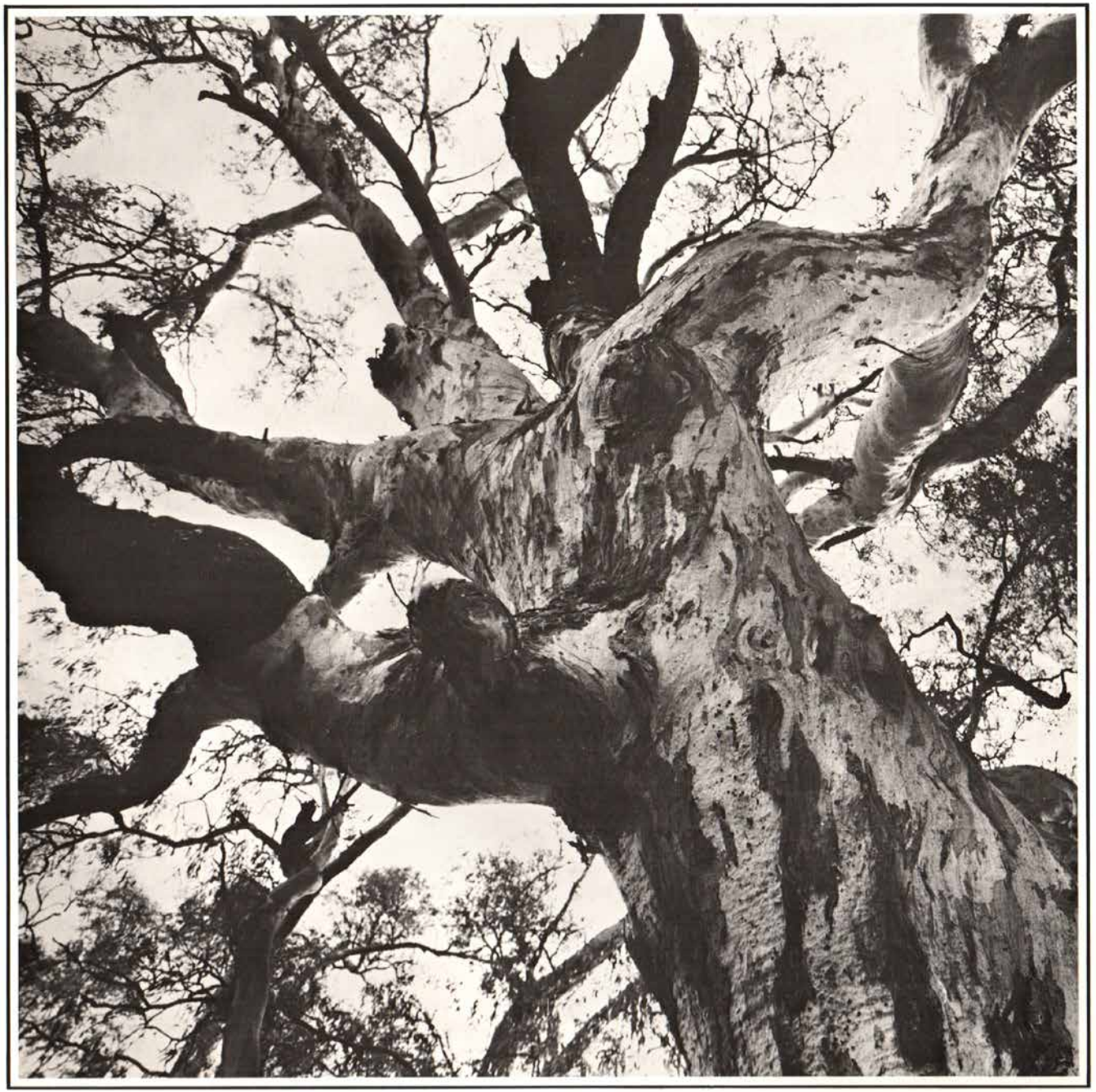
Alan Light sings GREAT BASS BALLADS



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Alan Light sings GREAT BASS BALLADS

arranged and conducted by ERIC GROSS

1 The boys of the old brigade *(Weatherly/Barri)* 3'20"
2 The cobbler's song *(Asche/Norton)* 3'05"
3 The stockrider's song *(Lockton/James)* 3'00"
4 Down among the dead men *(17th century English drinking song)* 2'45"
5 The lass of Richmond hill *(McNally/Hook)* 2'00"
6 Ten green bottles *(Traditional)* 5'10"
7 Drinking (In cellar cool) *(Muchler/Fischer)* 3'53"
8 Men of Harlech *(New words by Hal Saunders, melody traditional)* 4'40"
9 The land of who knows where *(Lockton/James)* 1'30"
10 Ma curly headed baby *(Clutsam)* 4'30"
11 Greensleeves *(Traditional)* 5'00"
12 A'roving *(Traditional)* 3'00"
13 The Lincolnshire poacher *(Traditional)* 2'30"
14 Camptown races *(Foster)* 2'05"

I have composed much music for Alan Light, including an opera, *The Amorous Judge*, two cantatas, and a number of songs. Through our collaboration I have been able to study his vocal and personal characteristics and in my arrangements of these songs I have endeavoured to use the knowledge thus acquired to full effect.

Alan Light has also a highly developed sense of situation, mood and drama, which is shown very clearly in his interpretation of those songs.

In every individual song I have tried to create an appropriate mood or atmosphere, whilst leaving Alan Light sufficient freedom to impose his own artistic individuality through the vocal line.

Eric Gross 1977

The ballads on this record are many and varied but all were chosen for their great popularity through the years, for the fine melodies, and in many cases for the poems and lyrics. For two of the songs, words have been specially written for this recording, either to bring the song up to date or to complete the narrative. "Men of Harlech" presents Australian writer Hal Saunders' new translation, and Alan Light wrote a final verse to conclude the narrative of "Ten green bottles".

A ballad is really a song, with words that tell a story, and with an overall appeal to popular sentiment. Every one of these fine songs brings enjoyment to a wide cross-section of people.

In some cases, as in "Greensleeves" and "Ten green bottles", the arrangement in a key suited to the bass voice gives a new and interesting sound to a normally light ballad. "Drinking (In cellar cool)", perhaps the most famous of all bass songs, has been restored to the original German notation, and arranged down a minor third to give an even more bassy and cavernous effect.

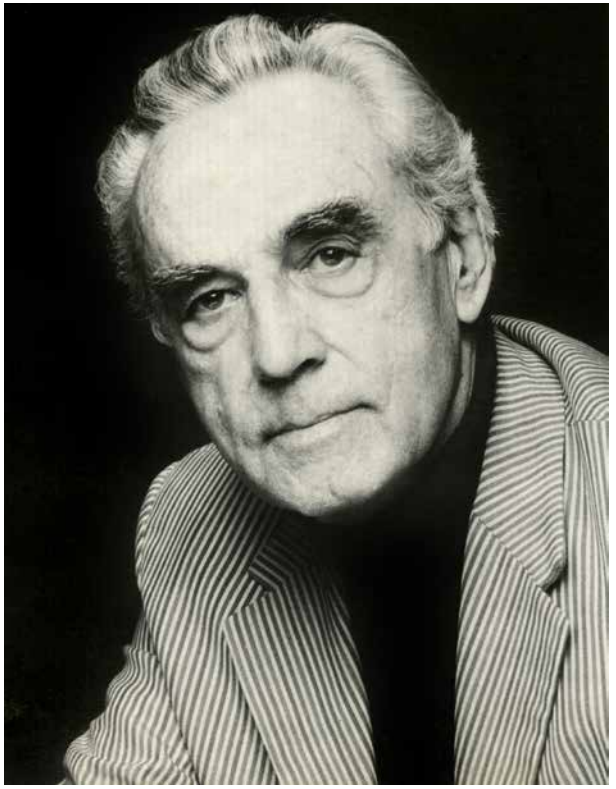
Also included are "A'roving", a universally popular sea shanty, "The cobbler's song" from *Chu Chin Chow*, "Ma curly headed baby", made popular by Paul Robeson, and that grand old Peter Dawson favourite "The boys of the old brigade".

To represent Australian music are two songs from the William James song cycle *Six Australian Bush Songs*, "The land of who knows where" and "The stockrider's song" with its urgent rhythm so evocative of outback horse riders.

In Stephen Foster's "Camptown races" Eric and Alan decided to change a convention in modulation, that of finishing in a higher key. They modulate to a lower key with quite an interesting effect, bringing this collection of 14 *great* bass ballads to a conclusion.

Alan Light is one of Australia's best-known voices. He was a foundation principal baritone of the Australian Opera, NSW National Opera, and National Theatre of Melbourne. Since then he has appeared in over 150 opera roles as well as lead roles in musicals such as *Kismet*, *South Pacific*, and *Oklahoma*.

In this recording he appears in conjunction with **Eric Gross**. Eric is a composer, arranger, and educator, having been a member of staff at Sydney University since 1960. He has composed music for Alan Light including an opera and two cantatas. On this recording we find Eric Gross's special arrangements to suit Alan's particular style and voice, as well as his role as conductor of the orchestra and choir.



The Orchestra:
John Lyle *(leader)*, Klara Korda, Mark Fitzpatrick, Phillip Hartl *(violins)*, Doreen Price, Frank Coe *(violas)*, Kathy Finnis *(cello)*, Dave Ellis, John Gray *(double basses)*, Rosalind McGrath *(oboe)*, Reuben Solomon *(clarinet)*, Jason Morphett *(bassoon)*, Anthony Buddle, Alan Mann *(horns)*, John Wood, Peter Walmsley *(trumpets)*, Russell Mattocks *(trombone)*, Cliff Goodchild *(tuba)*, June Loney, Peader O'Carroll *(harps)*, Lawrence Bartlett *(organ)*, Cec Longhurst *(percussion)*.

The Conservatorium Singers, director Richard Gill.

Eric Gross conductor.

Recorded in 1977 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in their Sydney studios.

Producer: John Widdicombe
Sound Engineer: Alan McLean
Project Co-ordinator:
Michael Bowden
Front photograph:
Howard Birnstihl

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