

David Watkins. Folk Songs; for voice(s) and harp (or piano). London: Stainer & Bell (Galaxy), 1984. [25 p.; \$8.95.]

These lovely arrangements were completed in 1980, published in 1984 by Stainer & Bell, and have only within the last year or two made their way to reviewers in the United States. The four songs—"Scarborough Fair," "Barbara Allen," "Now is the Month of Maying," and "Sumer is Icumen in"—are familiar to most, and represent lovely choices for voice and harp: they are in turn light, transparent, and haunting. (I cannot support the printed suggestion that unison voices can be substituted for the solo singer—ideally a light tenor or soprano—and piano can be substituted for the harp.)

David Watkins is a British harpist who has several successful publications for the instrument to his credit, including an *Anthology of English Music for the Harp*, a *Complete Method for the Harp*, and the *Petite Suite*, a work programmed frequently on solo recitals. His gifts here lie in his choice of appealing themes readily accessible to any audience, set with ingenious, uncomplicated contrapuntal skill. The songs could be performed by a folk singer and an intermediate-level harpist.

Watkins is principal harpist of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and professor of harp at the Guildhall School of Music. There can be little doubt that he works in the shadow of Benjamin Britten, whose magisterial folksong arrangements certainly provided inspiration for the present opus. The result is, however, no poor second, and bears favorable comparison with Britten's best.

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