"Can We Know Them by the Songs They Sing?" Shakespeare's Use of Ballad and Psalm Allusions as a Characterization Tool in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

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Shakespeare's characters (especially those one suspects their creator most liked or admired) are routinely invested with the spirit of music; the poet/dramatist seems biased in favor of musical people—a conclusion supported by Lorenzo's converse claim in *The Merchant of Venice*, "The man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, / Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils" (5.1.82-84).[1] The relation of any given Shakespearean character with music often provides clues to his or her essential nature or moral stature. Sometimes in moments of disarming relaxation or repose (as in the romantic Lorenzo/Jessica night reverie at Belmont just referenced), or even in what might be termed unlikely circumstances, at inopportune times of significant stress (as when Brutus requests of his sleepy servant boy Lucius on the eve of the battle of Philippi, "Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes a while, / And touch thy instrument a strain or two?" [*Julius Caesar* 4.2.307-308]), the bard's characters appear distracted by (or preoccupied with) song. Often they are caught humming a tune or muttering part of a refrain from some now obscure/then popular ballad (as when Desdemona, awaiting Othello's fatal last visitation, remarks that Barbary's "song of willow. . . . / Will not go from [her] mind" [4.3.27, 30], and subsequently offers a fragmented rendition).

The quoted lyrics may seem, at first hearing, of slight relevance to the immediate situation or context. But, of course, we simply cannot assume that anything in a Shakespearean text is *actually* irrelevant, and I shall proceed from the opposite assumption, or hypothesis, here—that there is much to learn about the character from the catch or ditty he or she sings, that even a casual snatch of

song is likely to prove significant at some level.[2] Whether it be the formerly-demure-now-mad Ophelia, chanting strikingly out-of-character bawdy folk verses to the mortification of her brother and the formal royal company (in *Hamlet* 4.5) or Parson Hugh Evans amid un-cleric-like duel preparations (in *The Merry Wives* 3.1), nervously mumbling alternately the words of a pious psalm and Marlowe's intensely secular "Come Live with Me and Be My Love," Shakespeare frequently sets up fascinating and complex dynamics between his song references and the characters who make them. My specific goal in this paper will be to anatomize (and hopefully to shed light on) the author's use of psalm and ballad allusions, often subtly and indirectly, to reveal or develop character in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.[3]

What we, as modern or post-Modern readers and auditors, need to remind ourselves in contemplating the significance of vocal music references in Shakespeare is just how central popular songs were to the grass roots culture of the day. We have to imagine a time before electronic media when the only music, for the majority of the populace, was that which they produced for themselves in the home or tavern or church. There were no tapes or CDs whereby a person of middling status might experience the rarefied artistry of a Perlman or a Pavarotti; the common citizenry had little or no access to the palaces and private theaters where they might have heard what we would term today "high art"—the formal lute songs, the elaborate madrigals and masques of the court. Indeed, the public playhouse served (incidentally, certainly not by design) as a unique medium for the broader dissemination of aristocratic culture. In attending (and attending to) the plays of Shakespeare and Jonson, commoners might well sample and (to the extent that their ears and musical skills would allow) assimilate the high fashion of sonnets and art songs, but for the most part the underclasses had to entertain themselves, and they did so primarily by singing readily intelligible lyrics to simple, tuneful melodies.

This was the age of the ballad, rooted in oral folk tradition, but recently commoditized in the form of the printed broadside, sold voluminously in the London streets, peddled through the countryside to often ravenous consumers by roving ballad-sellers like Autolycus from *The Winter's Tale* (see 4.4.182-300). Broadside ballads served a rich range of roles for Elizabethan society, equivalent, it would seem, to the combined function of newspapers, tabloids, and the electronic media today. They were often current in so far as they reported recent, usually sensational, events—

notorious murders, grisly hangings, monstrous births, for example—but also nostalgic in that they revived old folk songs, retold biblical episodes, or recounted famous battles.[4] As in the case of popular music and verse from any age, love was the principal theme of all; hence, the disproportionately large number of wooing, seduction, or (often satirical) marriage ballads that flooded the market.

What all the broadsides had in common was that they were tailored to sell, produced for mass distribution and universal consumption. They sought to articulate the core values, ideals, and attitudes of society, and they quickly became an integral part of the cultural vocabulary—a source of catch phrases, familiar refrains, colloquial, proverbial, and platitudinous expressions that everyone knew and might easily incorporate into everyday discourse. The collective consciousness of early modern people was no doubt deeply informed and shaped by the simple rhymes, the accessible rhetoric, the narrative formulas, the conventional images, situations, and character types found in the ballads. And again, what we must remind ourselves in reconsidering the import of these texts is that they were not just passively read. They were actively, often communally, sung and habitually memorized. While most of Shakespeare's classical or biblical allusions remain comprehensible to humanistically-educated moderns, many of his references to single lines or phrases from popular songs must (without the aid of footnotes) strike us as trivial or nonsensical simply because we have lost the crucial knowledge base: we no longer know the songs—or certainly, we don't know them well, as presumably the playwright and his contemporaries did.

These same fragmentary references would have readily evoked for Shakespeare's original audience the full text and meaning of the song in question, together with its several manifestations (for in the case of the most popular songs there were usually several versions in circulation).[5] In fact, they probably would have triggered in the minds of Elizabethan theatergoers a wave of associations with other ballads closely related in subject, theme, or language, since—then, as now—for every hit there were countless imitations and sequels.[6] Finally, the associative process might well extend to strikingly diverse and heterogeneous texts based on commonality of music, for the balladeers routinely set new lyrics to the old familiar tunes.[7] Broadsides only rarely contained musical notation; they were typically single-sheet documents that included only a boldface title, a song text, a primitive woodcut illustration, and a simple directive such as *To the tune of Greensleeves*,[8] or *Walsingham*, or

others. Thus a bawdy drinking song might come to share its melody with a pious moral exemplum; and in fact, as Winifred Maynard has remarked, "the provision of sacred parodies, edifying words written to popular tunes 'for auoyding of sin and harlatrie', was a practice much favoured during and after the Reformation."[9] My main point here is that in order to understand Shakespeare's ballad references in something like the way his original audience did, and in order to appreciate fully their function and significance in relation to the characters who make them and the dramatic contexts in which they occur, we will need to revisit the song texts *in full*, and in some cases explore further intertextual connections within the intricate network of broadside culture.

That popular songs figure prominently in the communal rhetoric of provincial Windsor becomes evident early in *The Merry Wives*, when Mistress Ford employs a remarkable analogy to illustrate the discrepancy she finds between Falstaff's public knight-like courtesy and his inward degeneracy, as evidenced by the audacious written invitation to adultery she has just received: "He would not swear, praised women's modesty, and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness, that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words. But they do no more adhere and keep place together than the hundred psalms to the tune of 'Greensleeves'" (2.1.50-56).

The comment tells us something about the cleverness and intellectual vigor of Mistress Ford. She may allow herself a moment of amusement over the prospect of being "knighted," but she is too clearly a person of assertive mind and character to prove genuinely vulnerable to Falstaff's dubious charms. In fact, she and the equally shrewd and resilient Mistress Page repeatedly defy the expectations not only of the misogynous Falstaff, but also (assuming that the ballad references are fully comprehended) of an audience persistently teased through the course of the play with allusions to willing, assailable, or ultimately yielding women. As we shall see, this ballad imagery of successful male seduction is consistently evoked by Falstaff and serves both to reflect and to rally his wishful thinking.

Mistress Ford's choice of song reference here is likewise self-revelatory, not to mention prophetic. It should not surprise us that she thinks of "Greensleeves" first as the definitive example of lighthearted secular song, and as the polar opposite of, hence perfect comic foil to, the grave and godly psalms. It was, after all, the most famous and beloved English folk song of the day. But there was a reason why "Greensleeves" was so popular, especially

with respectable middle-class women like Mistress Ford. Setting the complaints and frustrations of the male speaker aside, the song text reads as a kind of fantasy list of fine and fashionable commodities that any woman of the period might desire, and that a newly rich woman might actually hope to obtain:

> I bought thee kerchiefs to thy head
> that were wrought fine and gallantly:
> I kept thee both at board and bed,
> which cost my purse well favoredly. / *Greensleeves was all my joy. . . .*
>
> Thy purse and eke thy gay gilt knives,
> thy pincase gallant to the eye:
> No better wore the burgess wives,
> and yet thou would'st not love me. / *Greensleeves. . . .*
>
> Thy crimson stockings all of silk,
> With gold all wrought above the knee,
> Thy pumps as white as was the milk,
> And yet thou would'st not love me. / *Greensleeves. . . .*
>
> Thy gown was of the grassy green,
> Thy sleeves of satin hanging by:
> Which made thee be our harvest Queen,
> And yet thou would'st not love me. / *Greensleeves. . . .*[10]

One can see how the song, with its frank materialism, with its copious and marvelously specific gift imagery, might appeal to an aspiring middle-class sensibility. Moreover, for all its pseudo-courtly language and emphasis on luxury goods, the imagery is not essentially aristocratic: Greensleeves, the woman with a coif (however finely wrought) to her head, armed with a knife (however fancily gilded) for cooking and a pincase for sewing and clothes-fastening purposes, who saw enough milk daily to appreciate it as a standard of whiteness, and whose greatest social triumph was to be named harvest Queen, was certainly no lady of the royal court, but a prospective domestic housewife—a Mistress Ford *in training*.

Still, the most important function of Mistress Ford's "Greensleeves" allusion may be one of narrative foreshadowing, for the song (unlike those Falstaff will reference later) chronicles through eighteen full stanzas the repeated, absolute failure of male solicitation.[11] From the man's perspective, which the ballad of course privileges, the lady is cruel, selfish, and unfeeling: he clearly sees himself as an innocent victim of her unjust denial. But one wonders whether Mistress Ford and other merry wives of the time, in their pride of feminine strength and dignity, may have taken some secret delight in the fact that Greensleeves could not

be bought. Surely there is potential here for a subversive reading of the ballad's main theme, not as the failure of honest male entreaty, but as a kind of triumph of female resistance—and a refreshing alternative to the misogynistic seduction tale that was so prevalent. In any case, in an admittedly remote and highly associative way, Greensleeve's unwavering rejection (and thorough humiliation) of her suitor anticipates Mistress Ford's later treatment of Falstaff.

In a more general sense, the "hundred psalms to the tune of Greensleeves" joke points up a striking dichotomy in the popular vocal music of the day. It was, after all, as much the golden age of the psalm as it was of the ballad: psalm singing remained throughout the period an enormously popular pastime both in and out of church.[12] The seemingly incongruous psalm/ballad conflation (not actually as far-fetched as it sounds, given the *sacred parody* phenomenon aforementioned) also subtly supports the play's central thesis—that wives can be both socially assertive and chaste, both merry and essentially pious. Provincial gossip though she is, Mistress Ford is no silly romantic country lass like Dorcas or Mopsa of *The Winter's Tale*, with little on her mind besides secular escapist love songs and longed-for fashionable trinkets. The casual, unselfconscious reference to ballad and psalm in the same breath suggests that Mistress Ford's undeniably worldly side, her materialist, class- and fashion-conscious external persona, is balanced by a morally scrupulous (perhaps even reasonably devout?) core sensibility. It reflects her maturity and broad-mindedness, as well as her wit, and contributes to our impression of her as a surprisingly dimensional, well-integrated personality.

The jarring, satiric conflation of sacred and profane song introduced in Mistress Ford's ingenious analogy for Falstaff's hypocrisy continues as a key comic motif in act 3, scene 1, where we find Hugh Evans anxiously awaiting his duel with Caius. That a Christian minister feels compelled to defend his masculine honor in armed combat and finds himself gripped with simultaneous emotions of terror for his life and murderous aggression against his challenger seems strange and inappropriate enough. That he should be caught in the midst of this singing a frankly sensual love song—with the opening line of a holy psalm interjected—only intensifies the incongruity, and spurs our closer consideration of the character of this unorthodox parson:

[folio] *EVANS* [*Sings.*] . . . .

> To shallow rivers, to whose falls
> Melodious birds sing madrigals—
> There will we make our peds of rose

And a thousand fragrant posies.
To shallow—

Mercy on me, I have a great dispositions to cry.
[*Sings.*] Melodious birds sing madrigals—
Whenas I sat in Pabylon—
And a thousand vagram posies.
To shallow, etc. (3.1.16-25)[13]

Of course, much of Hugh Evans's behavior in the scene can be explained by the fact that he is a Welshman and conforms to many of the sixteenth-century English stereotypes thereof. According to the period Anglo-centric view, the Welsh were a savage, warlike people (a perception founded on centuries of armed uprisings and sporadically successful Welsh resistance to English control); they were vain and boastful, prone to superstition: they practiced magic or even witchcraft; passion usually got the better of reason in them; they couldn't speak English worth a damn, but they were gifted poets and musicians.[14]

Such were the assumptions upon which Shakespeare had fashioned his first great Welsh portrait—that of Owen Glendower in *Henry IV, Part 1*, the rebel lord who insists to Hotspur, "The earth did shake when I was born" (3.1.19), and recalls how once he "framed to the harp / Many an English ditty lovely well" (3.1.120-121). In *The Merry Wives* (3.1), the fact that Evans sings at all, given the circumstances, suggests that he is uncommonly musical, but the impression is only strengthened by his subliminal choice of Psalm 137 to rehearse, with its several references to singing and to the harp (the definitive instrument of Wales),[15] and with its strong identification of a culture with its musical tradition:

Whenas we sat in Babylon,
the rivers round about,
And in remembrance of Sion,
the tears for grief burst out:

We hang'd our harps and instruments,
the willow trees upon:
For in that place men for their use,
had planted many one.

Then they to whom we prisoners were
said to us tauntingly:
Now let us hear your Hebrew songs,
and pleasant melody.

Alas, said we, who can once frame,
his sorrowful heart to sing
The praises of our loving God,
thus, under a strange king. . . .[16]

Unlike the ultra-macho, blustery force of nature that was Glendower, Evans is Shakespeare's portrait of a modern, ostensibly domesticated Welshman, but with latent aggressive tendencies that find occasional (and always comic) expression, as in this scene when he remarks, "How melancholies I am" (3.1.13) and "I have a great dispositions to cry" (3.1.21), but amid these doldrums abruptly explodes, "I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard when I have good opportunities for the 'ork. Pless my soul!" (3.1.13-15). The parson's choice of Psalm 137, then, with its final call for revenge against the Babylonian enemy, its blessing proffered to that man who "takes thy children young: / To dash their bones against hard stones / which lie the streets among," serves (at least obliquely) to confirm the at times startlingly violent side of his nature.

Psalm 137 is also the archetypal Psalm of lament in exile. Evans is a Welshman living in a kind of voluntary (perhaps economically driven) exile in England. He seems relatively happy, and he is clearly committed to fitting in, but his outsider's status (continually pointed up by his awkward English) remains evident, and he does get regularly frustrated with what he perceives as the ignorance of the provincial townsfolk. In short, he shows a tendency to think of himself as better than his surroundings and the native inhabitants, much as the ancient Hebrews did, living among the Babylonians.

Of course, there is nothing unusual or essentially incongruous in a country parson's singing of a psalm, even a particularly violent one. (In fact, Psalm 137 seems to have been a favorite of the time, as the numerous surviving part-song settings of it attest.) It is Marlowe's amorous lyric that seems a much odder, less appropriate choice of reference for Evans—but again, his Welsh background and upbringing may partly account for it. After the acts of 1536 and 1543 effectively united England and Wales politically and administratively, the Welsh gentry sought to prepare their children for integration into the English system—and specifically for careers in law, government, and the church.[17] Evans would have been trained in a rigorous Welsh grammar school system that emphasized Latin and (to a lesser extent) English as the international languages.[18] His classical humanist education (which becomes, of course, satirically highlighted in the Latin lesson scene [4.1]) might help to explain his unconscious fixation on Marlowe's carpe diem, Ovidian lyric.[19] Obviously, this is no common ballad, but an art song, which, though inappropriately matched with the psalm, Evans might otherwise justify on scholarly or aesthetic grounds. In its learned, high culture associations, it suits this man of clear intellectual pretension.

By comparison with Evans, the Falstaff of *The Merry Wives* is a far less musical type. He is, I suspect, too lazy to transcend speech,[20] or to persist beyond the occasional quoting of an opening line or closing refrain. Nevertheless, his casual song allusions help to define certain of his habitual attitudes—especially about women. Ross W. Duffin observes that Falstaff closes his first interview with Master Ford (alias Brook) with repeated charges to "Come to me soon at night."[21] The directive echoes the refrain of a popular ballad of the time, "The Shepherd's Wooing of Dulcina," and thus must have prompted Shakespeare's original audience to explore meaningful connections.

In the ballad, the stand-offish Dulcina repeatedly dismisses her impatient would-be lover with the command, "*Forego me now, come to me soon.*" The drawn-out pattern of male solicitation and female evasion—carried through fourteen stanzas—seems initially reminiscent of the "Greensleeves" example discussed early, but there are a number of significant differences.[22] The ambivalent or mixed message of the refrain—at once rejecting and inviting—marks Dulcina as the kind of perpetual tease that Falstaff presumes all women are. He is convinced that women essentially want sex—want *him*, and that the phenomenon of their *forego-me-now*, stand-offish posturing is not the result of any genuine internal resistance or intrinsic moral scruples, but simply a matter of their fearing public exposure or shame. It is not that Dulcina doesn't wish to surrender to her wooer, but that she would not do so *by day*. And so she sends him away while soliciting his return by night. The first part of the ballad ends (in stanza 6) on an ambiguous note:

> Did he relent, or she consent?
> Accepts he night, or grants she noon?
> Left he her a maid or no? She said,
> *forego me now, come to me soon.*[23]

But the affected suspense rings false, and the story proceeds to its foregone conclusion. The lady's yielding is simply a matter of time, and a matter of her learning to accept—and to accommodate (as a good wench should)—the inevitability of her own fall. "Yet, at the worst of my disgrace, / I am not first, nor shall be last" is finally the only consolation left to her. In short, "Dulcina" is founded on the misogynist myth of infinitely corruptible womanhood. It is a myth that I suspect this Falstaff—the Falstaff of *The Merry Wives*—wholeheartedly believes prior to his possible, though never confirmed, reform in the final chastening scene, for how else could one explain the seemingly nonsensical persistence of his seduction attempts?

At least two more of Falstaff's explicit song allusions in *The Merry Wives* are—predictably enough, like "Dulcina"—narratives of significantly challenged but essentially and/or ultimately successful male solicitation. At their first rendezvous, Falstaff greets Mistress Ford in the following pseudo-rhapsodic terms: "Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel? Why, now let me die, for I have lived long enough: this is the period of my ambition. O this blessed hour!" (3.3.38-40) At this point it should come as no surprise that the over-stuffed knight's pickup line is neither sincere nor original. Its source, "Have I Caught My Heavenly Jewel," a song from Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, describes the stealing of a kiss from a sleeping woman who emphatically would not grant it if awake—so it carries subtle (or not so subtle) rape connotations.[24] Of course, Sidney was the most celebrated courtier and model of modern knighthood in Elizabethan England, and Falstaff cites the title line at a point in the play when he is trying especially hard to impress Mistress Ford with his aristocratic status.

The full text of the poem contains a good deal of aggressive posturing, and employs conventional Petrarchan metaphors of the armed assault and the fort siege to dramatize (mock-heroically) the central male assertion/female resistance tension. In other words, it indulges in the rhetoric of the Miles Gloriosus type upon which Falstaff is founded. Moreover, it emphasizes the comic/ironic theme of actual cowardice amid affected bravery that is particularly central to Shakespeare's braggart soldier formulation. "Now will I invade the fort. / Coward['] s love with loss rewardeth. . . . Love fears nothing else but anger," Sidney's macho speaker declaims, rallying himself to action. But the one acknowledged fear (of *woman*'s anger, no less) proves decisive finally when, having succeeded in the initial assault—imposed the unwelcome kiss upon his sleeping victim/adversary, he slinks away at the first sign of her waking:

> Oh, sweet kiss! But ah, she's waking!
> low'ring beauty chast'neth me.
> Now will I for fear hence flee,
> fool, more fool for no more taking.[25]

In short, the scenario that the song's pseudo-martial lover relates is not ethically irrelevant to the dramatic situation—i.e., to what Falstaff is doing in act 3, scene 3. The essential cowardice of stealing a kiss from a defenseless sleeping woman parallels well enough the cowardice of sneaking behind a husband's back to make love to his unguarded wife, and the final flight described in the poem

anticipates Falstaff's hasty retreat to the infamous "buck-basket" at the news of Master Ford's approach.

But again, the predatory male objective—to fulfill male desire, to master at some level the resistant female, to secure the prohibited kiss—is apparently achieved in Sidney's song. Naturally, this is a narrative pattern that fits in well with the perpetual sexual fantasy world Falstaff inhabits. Later in the same scene, another variation on the rape or successful seduction story is evoked when Falstaff, flattering Mistress Ford with prospects of what a fine court lady she might make (and presumably will make if she yields to him—forms alliance with his aristocracy), remarks, "I see what thou wert if *Fortune thy foe* were not" (3.3.58-59—my emphasis). Once again, Falstaff draws his catch phrase from a popular ballad. "The Lover's Complaint for the Loss of His Love," or "Fortune My Foe" as it was more commonly called (based on its first line), begins as a typical man's lament over his apparent abandonment by a lady; but a sequel, "The Lady's Comfortable and Pleasant Answer," follows—in which she reassures him of success in his suit to reclaim her as long as he remains true and *persistent*.[26] Again, the point that I wish to emphasize here is that most of the songs that Falstaff references indulge the male fantasy of successful entreaty, seduction, or conquest.

For the most part, the vocal music lyrics spoken or sung by Shakespearean characters simply reveal what we already know about them—confirm aspects of their natures or personalities formerly established through more organic and reliable means of character development. Still, I would contend that the full realization of a character as vital, as complex and multi-dimensional, as richly nuanced as Falstaff depends on more than just his direct speech and actions. Some will protest that I make too much of these ballad and psalm references. My critics will no doubt remind me that Shakepeare's vocal music allusions are essentially casual and incidental; they will perhaps justly insist that, in so far as popular song quotes represent a form of public, communal, usually anonymous discourse, their function as a tool of individual characterization must prove dubious at best, and that certainly they should not be treated as reflecting the original thought or expression of the mouthpiece characters. I would largely accept such objections as reasonable and constructively cautionary. Nevertheless, stage characters are defined not only by their most personal and autonomous utterances, and by their most dramatic actions, but also (as the products of so subtle and sophisticated an author as Shakespeare) by their smallest, most seemingly-spontaneous-and-

random choices. They are also peripherally, but still significantly, defined by external elements—by what other characters say about them (even by others' false conceptions, or preconceptions, or prejudices), by the clothes they wear, by the props they carry, and, for Shakespeare, at least, not the least by the songs they (consciously, or unconsciously, choose to) sing.

Notes

1. Citations from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* are based on Giorgio Melchiori's (third series) Arden edition (Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, UK: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 2000); quotations from all other plays are keyed to the texts found in *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

2. For a discussion of the significance of Shakespeare's songs and music references emphasizing their dramatic function (as opposed to their revelation of character), see David Lindley's "Shakespeare's Provoking Music," in *The Well Enchanting Skill: Music, Poetry, and Drama in the Culture of the Renaissance*, ed. John Caldwell, Edward Olleson, and Susan Wollenberg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 79-90.

3. Before proceeding further, I should like to acknowledge my debt to Ross W. Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004). The Case Western Reserve musicologist has performed a much-needed and long-overdue service by researching all of the (mostly anonymous and now arcane) song lyrics to which Shakespeare makes even casual reference and reprinting them in full text. In addition, he provides the period tunes to which the words were explicitly (or might be speculatively) linked in simple, accessible modern notation. I first conceived the idea for this paper through scrutiny of Professor Duffin's work, and I have built my interpretive argument more or less directly on the foundation of his objective scholarship.

As a source for commentary on Shakespeare's original and/or fully articulated songs, I have found Peter J. Seng's *The Vocal Songs in the Plays of Shakespeare: A Critical History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) particularly useful. Other works consulted for general background include John H. Long's *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Final Comedies* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1961); John Stevens's "Shakespeare and the Music of the Elizabethan Stage: An Introductory Essay," in *Shakespeare in Music*, ed. Phyllis Hartnoll (London: Macmillan/New York: St. Martin's, 1964), 3-48; F. W. Sternfeld's *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963; New York: Dover, 1967); E. D. Mackerness's *A Social History of English Music* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1964; repr. 1976); and Winifred Maynard's *Elizabethan Lyric Poetry and Its Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

4. Hyder E. Rollins's "The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad," *PMLA* 34, no.2 (1919): 258-339, remains an indispensable introductory source on the subject, and his selected broadside (reprint) collections still provide the most convenient means of sampling the wide range of ballad sub-genres. The two volumes most relevant to Shakespeare's time and context are *A*

Pepysian Garland: Black-letter Broadside Ballads of the years 1595-1639, chiefly from the collection of Samuel Pepys (Cambridge, England: The Cambridge University Press, 1922; repr. 1971) and *The Pack of Autolycus; or, strange and terrible news of ghosts, apparitions, monstrous births, showers of wheat, judgments of God, and other fearful happenings as told in broadside ballads of the years, 1624-1693* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1927; repr. 1969). Some 30,000 English ballads (in facsimile) can also be accessed online through the Bodleian Library at www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ballad/. For more recent in-depth commentary on English broadside culture, see Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Natascha Würzbach, *The Rise of the English Street Ballad, 1550-1650*, trans. Gayna Walls (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Carol Rose Livingston, *British Broadside Ballads of the Sixteenth Century: A Catalogue of Extant Sheets and an Essay* (New York: Garland, 1991).

5. John M. Ward, "'And Who But Ladie Greensleeves?'" in *The Well Enchanting Skill: Music, Poetry, and Drama in the Culture of the Renaissance*, ed. John Caldwell, Edward Olleson, and Susan Wollenberg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, 181-211. Multiple variations were often true of both text *and melody*. In his exhaustive account of the history of "Greensleeves" and its multitudinous transmutations, Ward remarks that "describing . . . the tune . . . as written down during the decades around 1600 is not easy, for no two versions are note-for-note the same. Like almost all Elizabethan popular music, the tune was multiform, circulated without the constraints of print" (182).

6. Ward further observes that in the course of a single year after "A newe northern Dittye of ye Ladye Greene Sleves" was entered in the Stationers' Company register (in September 1580), "the young man's 'Courtly Sonet' had been answered by the lady, 'moralized to the Scripture' by an anonymous broadside poet, reprehended by another, and Green Sleeves described by a third ballad poet as 'worne awaie'" (181).

7. Bruce Pattison, *Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance* (London: Methuen, 1970), 160. Pattison observes that "a good deal of Renaissance verse was . . . directly controlled by music, for it was actually written to existing tunes."

8. Roy Lamson, Jr., "English Broadside Ballad Tunes of the 16th and 17th Centuries," *American Musicological Society: Congress Report New York, 1939*, ed. Arthur Mendel et al. (New York, 1944). Lamson counted no less than eighty broadside ballads set to the "Greensleeves" melody before 1700 (cited in Ward, 190 n.).

9. Winifred Maynard, *Elizabethan Lyric Poetry and Its Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 181. The interior quotation is drawn from a popular sixteenth-century pious ballad anthology entitled "*Ane Compendious buik of godlie Psalmes and spirituall Sangis collectit furthe of sindrie partis of the Scripture, with diueris utheris Ballattis changeit out of prophane Sangis in*[*to*] *godlie sangis, for the auoyding of sin and harlatrie*" (Maynard,181n).

10. "Greensleeves," stanzas 3, 7, 8, 9; Duffin, *Songbook*, 177-178.

11. Space limitations prevent my reprinting of the complete text here, but the following selected early and late stanzas (together with those middle stanzas cited earlier) should give readers a sense of the song's overall trajectory:

[stanza 1] Alas my love, you do me wrong
to cast me off discourteously:
And I have loved you so long,
delighting in your company.
Greensleeves was all my joy
Greensleeves was my delight:
Greensleeves was my heart of gold,
and who but my lady Greensleeves.

[stanza 2] I have been ready at your hand
to grant whatever you would crave.
I have both waged life and land
your love and good will for to have. / *Greensleeves. . . .*

[stanza 4] I bought thee petticoats of the best,
the cloth so fine as it might be:
I gave thee jewels for thy chest,
and all this cost I spent on thee. / *Greensleeves. . . .*

[stanza 6] Thy girdle of gold so red,
with pearls bedecked sumptuously:
The like no other lasses had,
and yet thou would'st not love me. / *Greensleeves. . . .*

[stanza 16] And who did pay for all this gear,
that thou did'st spend when pleased thee?
Even I that am rejected here,
and thou disdain'st to love me. / *Greensleeves. . . .*

[stanza 17] Well, I will pray to God on high
that thou my constancy may'st see:
And that yet once before I die,
thou will vouchsafe to love me. / *Greensleeves. . . .*

(Duffin, *Songbook*, 177-179)

12. In fact, the tradition of psalm singing seems to have developed at least partly as a means to offset the supposedly insidious influence of secular ballads. Rollins ("The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad," 259) notes that "in 1549, Sternhold . . . versified fifty-one of the Psalms, that they might be sung 'in private houses, for godly solace and comfort, and for the laying apart all ungodly songs and ballads'; and John Baldwin wished to God that his own *Canticles or Balades of Solomon* (1549) 'might once drive out of office . . . bawdy ballads of lecherous love.'"

13. The full text of the amorous lyric from which Evans quotes here, Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," reads thus:

Come live with me and be my love,
and we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
woods, or steepie mountains yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
and a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,
embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool,
which from our pretty lambs we pull,
Fair lined slippers for the cold:
with buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw, and ivy buds,
with coral clasps and amber studs.
And if these pleasures may thee move,
come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing,
for thy delight each May-morning,
If these delights thy mind may move;
then live with me, and be my love.

(Duffin *Songbook*, 103-104)

14. Of course, this last notion was far from an empty stereotype. For a detailed account of the rich late-medieval Welsh traditions of poetry and music, see Glanmor Williams's chapter on "Learning and the Arts," in *Recovery, Reorientation, and Reformation: Wales c. 1415-1642* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 143-164.

15. Williams, 147.

16. Psalm 137 (trans. Sternhold and Hopkins), Duffin, *Songbook*, 438-439. The remainder of text reads thus:

But yet if I Jerusalem,
out of my heart let slide,
Then let my fingers quite forget
the warbling harp to guide.

And let my tongue within my mouth
be tied forever fast,
If that I joy before I see
thy full deliverance past.

Therefore, O Lord, remember now
the cursed noise and cry
That Edom's sons against us made
when they razed our city.

Remember, Lord, their cruel words,
when as with one accord,
They cried on sack, and raze the walls,
in despite of their Lord.

Even so shalt thou, O Babylon,
at length to dust be brought:
And happy shall that man be call'd
that our revenge hath wrought.

Yea, blessed shall that man be call'd
  that takes thy children young:
To dash their bones against hard stones
  which lie the streets among.

17. For detailed accounts of the rise of formal education in sixteenth-century Wales, see G. Dyfnallt Owen, *Elizabethan Wales: The Social Scene* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964), 198-215, and Williams, 429-450.

18. Owen reports that "the curriculum adopted in the [Welsh] grammar schools was based on the intensive, sometimes the exclusive, teaching of Latin, since familiarity with that language was considered indispensable to any professional career" (202). Likewise, in "Anglo-Welsh Relations in *Cymbeline*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 33-66, Ronald J. Boling claims that "to early modern Welshmen fluent Latin meant admission to the international humanist commonwealth and possession of an alternative discourse for resisting cultural anglicizing " (60); still, he adds, "implicit in the Act of 'Union' was the necessity for the creation of a Welsh ruling class fluent in English" (61); and Williams observes that "the closer contacts of every kind coming into existence between Welsh and English, the increased emphasis on the capacity to speak and read English, the relative ease with which it could be learnt, and the tendency of many Welshmen to go to England and into English-speaking towns in Wales to find advancement all contributed to the wider knowledge of the English tongue" (438).

19. In his exposition of late-medieval Welsh poetry, Williams remarks the culture's enthusiasm for "*Canu serch* [love-poetry]": "Even priests wrote love-poems," he observes, "and one of them, Siôn Leia, claimed that Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* took precedence over the mass book in his thoughts" (155-156).

20. John P. Cutts, however, entertains the notion of a singing Falstaff in "Falstaff's 'Heauenlie Iewel': Incidental Music for *The Merry Wives of Windsor*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11 (1960): 89-92.

21. Duffin, *Songbook*, 130. The actual play passage reads thus [folio—my emphasis]: "*FALSTAFF* . . . . Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt lie with his wife. *Come to me soon at night.* Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style: thou, Master Brook shalt know him for a knave and a cuckold. *Come to me soon at night*" (2.2.267-271). The highlighted command appears four times in the quarto texts.

22. Again, space concerns preclude my printing the full text here, but I will excerpt some of the most relevant stanzas:

[stanza 1]
As at noon Dulcina rested
  in a sweet and shady bower,
Came a shepherd and requested,
  in her lap to sleep an hour.
But from her look a wound he took,
  so deep that for a farther boon,
The nymph he pray'd, whereto she said,
  forego me now, come to me soon.

[stanza 4]
He demands, what time or leisure
  can there be more fit than now.

She says night gives love that pleasure
which the day cannot allow.
The sun's clear light shineth more bright,
quoth he, more fairer than the moon.
For her to praise, he loves; she says,
forego me now, come to me soon.

[stanza 6] How at last agreed those lovers,
she was fair and he was young.
Tongue can tell what eye discovers,
joys unseen are never sung.
Did he relent, or she consent?
Accepts he night, or grants she noon?
Left he her a maid, or no? She said,
forego me now, come to me soon.

[stanza 12] Sweet he said, as I did promise,
I am now return'd again.
Long delay you know breeds danger
and to lovers bringeth pain.
The nymph said then, above all men,
still welcome shepherd morn and noon.
The shepherd prays, Dulcina says,
Shepherd, I doubt y'are come too soon.

[stanza 13] Come you now to over throw me
out alas I am betray'd.
Dear, is this the love you shew me
to betray a silly maid?
Help, help, ay me, I dare not speak.
I dare not cry, my heart will break.
What, all alone? Nay then, I find
men are too strong for womenkind.

[stanza 14] Out upon the wench that put me
to this plunge to be alone.
Yet, she was no fool to shut me
where I might be seen of none.
Hark, hark, ay me; what noise is that?
O now I see it is my cat.
Come puss, I know, thou wilt not tell
if all be so, all shall be well.

[stanza 15] O silly fool, why doubt I telling
when I doubted not to trust.
If my belly fall a-swelling,
there's no help, but out it must.
Ay me, the grief. Ay me, the shame
when I shall bear the common name,
Yet, at the worst of my disgrace
I am not first, nor shall be last.

(Duffin, *Songbook*, 128-130)

23. Duffin, *Songbook*, 129.

24. The full text of Sidney's "Song" reads as follows:

> Have I caught my heavenly jewel
> teaching sleep most fair to be?
> Now will I teach her that she,
> while she wakes is too, too cruel.
>
> Since sweet sleep her eyes have charmed,
> the two only darts of Love,
> Now will I with that boy prove
> some play while he is disarmed.
>
> Her tongue, waking, still refuseth,
> giving frankly niggard No.
> Now will I attempt to know
> what No her tongue, sleeping, useth.
>
> See the hand which waking guardeth,
> sleeping grants a free resort.
> Now will I invade the fort.
> Cowards love with loss rewardeth.
>
> But, O fool, think on the danger
> of her just and high disdain.
> How will I, alas, refrain?
> Love fears nothing else but anger.
>
> Yet those lips so sweetly swelling
> do invite a stealing kiss.
> How will I but venture this?
> Who will read must first learn spelling.
>
> Oh, sweet kiss! But ah, she's waking!
> low'ring beauty chast'neth me.
> Now will I for fear hence flee,
> fool, more fool for no more taking.

(Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook*, 187)

25. Duffin, *Songbook*, 187.

26. An abridged version of "The Lover's Complaint for the Loss of His Love" and its sequel follows:

> [stanza 1] Fortune, my foe, why dost thou frown on me?
> And will thy favors never better be?
> Wilt thou, I say, forever breed my pain?
> And wilt thou not restore my joys again?
>
> [stanza 2] Fortune hath wrought my grief and great annoy,
> Fortune hath falsely stol'n my love away,
> My love and joy, whose sight did make me glad;
> Such great misfortunes never young man had.
>
> [stanza 3] Had fortune took my treasure and my store,
> Fortune had never griev'd me half so sore,
> But taking her whereon my heart did stay,
> Fortune thereby hath took my life away.
>
> [stanza 5] In vain I sigh, in vain I wail and weep;
> In vain mine eyes refrain from quiet sleep:
> In vain I shed my tears both night and day,
> In vain my love, my sorrows do bewray.

[stanza 6] My love doth not my piteous plaint espy,
Nor feels my love what griping grief I try
Full well may I false Fortune's deeds reprove,
Fortune, that so unkindly keeps my love.

"The Lady's Comfortable and Pleasant Answer"

[stanza 1] Ah, silly soul, art thou so afraid?
Mourn not, my dear, nor be not so dismay'd.
Fortune cannot, with all her power and skill,
Enforce my heart to think thee any ill.

[stanza 2] Blame not thy chance, nor envy at thy choice,
No cause hast thou to curse, but to rejoice,
Fortune shall not thy joy and love deprive,
If by my love it may remain alive.

(Duffin, *Songbook*, 152-153)