



Bild: Simon Bosch

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Saknad 26-åring fyller 80

Tom Lehrer alltid aktuell (nu mer aktuell än på länge)

Hur blir man en kultfigur? Skriv ett par dussin morbida och satiriska sånger, bygg upp ett namn trots att inga radiostationer vill spela din musik, ta dig in på Billboards topp 20 – och sluta sedan tvärt. Ägna resten av livet åt vanligt arbete och underblås ryktet att du är död (för att undvika skrappost). Låt dig inte fotograferas. Ge intervjuer vart tionde år och droppa då i förbigående uttalanden som kan citeras för nästa decennium. Med andra ord: gör som Tom Lehrer.

Så är han aktuell igen, matematikern som tänjde på alla anständighetens gränser under 1950- och 1960-talen, iklädd smoking och ett piano. Tom Lehrer är i och för sig alltid aktuell för att han alltid är saknad. Men nu är han aktuell av två andra anledningar. Den första är att han fyller 80 år den 9e april – men eftersom han själv börjat räkna om sin ålder från Fahrenheit till Celsius, blir han möjligen bara 26. Den andra anledningen, som är lika mycket värd att fira för hans fans, är att det sedan en tid ligger liveupptagningar av konserter och andra spelningar ute på nätet, bl.a. på Youtube. Eftersom Lehrers sista större turné tog slut år 1960 är det först nu som merparten av hans fans kan se honom uppträda – och det är en omtumlande upplevelse. Lehrer skaffar sig dagligen, utan att visa sig ett dugg intresserad, en ny generation av fans, via ett medium som han föraktar.

En 80-årig underhållare borde ha en lång karriär som kräver en omständlig beskrivning: låtskrivande, konserter, giftermål, skandaler, priser, filmer. Lehrers är lätt sammanfattad: Efter studietiden vid Harvard med studentspex i slutet av 1940-talet och början av 1950-talet kom en skiva vart sjätte år (1953, 1959, 1965), samt konsertturnéer i anslutning till dessa. Allt som allt skrev Lehrer inte mer än ett femtiotal sånger, gav ett hundratal konserter och tappade sedan intresset för att skriva musik och för att kommentera sin samtid – han menade själv att satir inte längre var möjlig efter det att Kissinger fått fredspriset 1973. Matematiken och studenterna på universitetet var en intressantare utmaning. Så kan det gå, som Vonnegut (en broder i anden) skulle sagt.

Det finns förstås goda skäl till att Lehrer inte är glömd, trots den korta meritförteckningen. Hans intelligenta, satiriska och morbida sångtexter till glada melodier utmanade såväl etablissemang som god smak, samtidigt som de var hopsnickrade med absolut gehör för både text och musik. Från början trivialt och genialt – så småningom bara genialt. Han parodierade dominerande känslöstämningar inom musiken: sentimentalitet, nostalgi, klämökchhet. Han drev med dominerande grupper: militärer, politiker, kyrkliga ledare. Han angrep dumdryghet, maktfullkomlighet, hyckleri. Om satiren är de subversivas främsta vapen kom Lehrer att bli dess träffsäkraste krypskytt. Samtidigt tog han 50-talets ganska snälla crazy-humor till nya bisarra höjder, blev följaktligen inte spelad i radio och fick inga skivkontrakt. Långsamt spred sig hans första skiva, egenproducerad och egenförsäld, via Harvardstudenter runt i USA och så småningom till ryktbarhet. Den mindre moraliserande inställning till ('sjuk') humor som fanns i England gjorde Lehrer till en känd artist där, liksom i Australien och Canada och efterhand i resten av världen; så småningom även i USA utanför studentkretsarna och nattklubbarna. Den tredje skivan kom så att ges ut av ett stort bolag och blev en succé. Då slutade Tom Lehrer (dock med sporadiska återfall).

Lehrer slutade samtidigt som proteströrelserna växte sig starka och ilskan och marscherandet tog över. Det är lätt att föreställa sig vilken anakronism Lehrer utgjorde mot slutet av 60-talet, med sin intellektuella framtoning, salongsmässiga klädsel, satiriskt samhällskritiska texter och pianomusik som stilmässigt drog mot revy/kabare/music-hall. Det var en tid då välutbildade medelklassbarn snarare drog på sig flanellskjortor, utövade vänsterretorik och hamrade tre ackord på "88-strängade gitarrer" (ett uttryck som Lehrer använder i – den elaka – "The folk song army"). Säg vad man vill om vänsterrörelsen och om proggen – rolig var den inte. Musiken var högröstad och drivet bra, och varvat med demonstrationer och upprop var den en svårtyglad samhällskraft. Lehrer, å andra sidan, var inte bara rolig, utan lågmäld i tilltalet och elegant i framtoningen – som en ungdomlig Noel Coward, understruket av en närmast brittisk accent. Att han dessutom kunde sjunga, spela, komponera melodier och skriva texter gjorde honom till en utomjording i den dåtida progressiva rörelsen. Och kanske till en infiltratör i borgarklassen.

Tom Lehrers återgång till akademien var följdriktig, liksom saknaden bland fansen. Men själv uppfattar han det inte som ett dramatiskt beslut, eftersom han alltid betraktat sina insatser i underhållningsbranchen som tillfälliga. I en intervju år

2000 sa han: "It wasn't that I was writing and writing and writing and quit. Every now and then I wrote something, and every now and then I didn't. The second just outnumbered the first."

Slipstillverkarens son

Thomas Andrew Lehrer föddes 9 april 1928 och växte upp i New York, i vad man får förmoda var en ganska normal småborgerlig miljö (pappa ägde en slipsfabrik och sonen har dokumenterad slipsvana). Han lärde sig spela piano – "acceptabelt" enligt honom själv, i ett som vanligt alldeles för modest uttryck. Hans föräldrar tog med honom på Broadway-musikaler, där Danny Kaye blev en favorit. Han börjat studera vid Harvard (inskriven som 15-åring, masterexamen vid 19!) och samtidigt skriva musik och det var just två Kaye-inspirerade nummer som blev hans genombrott. "Lobachevsky" och "The Element Song" gav en tydlig indikation på att vad hans idoler gjorde, kunde han göra lika bra eller t.o.m. bättre. Men hans första publikation (*Scholastic Magazine*, 1943) var faktiskt en vers, nämligen inträdesprovet till Harvard, där han bl.a. skrev: "I will leave movie thrillers/And watch caterpillars/Get born and pupated and larva'd/And I'll work like a slave/And always behave/And maybe I'll get into Harva'd."

Lehrer har aldrig avslöjat mycket om sitt privatliv, men ett av hans framgångsrika livsprojekt har enligt honom själv bestått i "the attempt to prolong adolescence beyond all previous limits". Han har aldrig varit gift ("I've simply skipped a few divorces"), något han bl.a. tillskrivit sina koncentrationssvårigheter: "I have a notoriously short attention span. I can barely concentrate on [8-timmarsföreläsningen av] 'Nicholas Nickleby', let alone sustain a relationship". Han har heller inga barn ("not guilty on both accounts"). Hans liv har fr.a. varit undervisning och han verkar ha trivts i den akademiska miljön, som har plats för egenartade människor med juvenil läggning. Något av den inställningen anar man redan i hans tidiga "Bright College Days", även om den är ironiskt menad: "Oh, soon we'll be out amid the cold world's strife/ Soon we'll be sliding down the razor blade of life." Man kan bara gratulera kolleger och studenter till att Tom Lehrer inte antog den eggande utmaningen.

Lehrers sånger

Om man ska ge svenska referenspunkter för att beskriva Tom Lehrers sånger ligger Povel Ramel, Owe Törnqvist, Tage Danielsson, Stefan Demert och kanske Lennart Hellsing nära till hands (i nutid Ronny Eriksson). I en runa över Povel Ramel konstaterades att han var rolig och snäll samtidigt (fast man undrar vad Evert Taube egentligen tyckte om "Balladen om Eugen Cork"). Tom Lehrer visar hur man är rolig och elak samtidigt. Och även en inbiten Ramel-fan måste konstatera att det är mer effektivt att vara elak – när det är gjort med finess är det helt enkelt roligare. Men det är viktigt att skilja på att vara elak och arg. Lehrer själv har träffande sagt om Lenny Bruce att när han började bli arg slutade han att vara rolig. Och han har i en nylig intervju (2003) meddelat att något som avhåller honom från att skriva nutida satirer är att han antingen ser båda sidor i en konflikt eller att han bara blir arg: "I'm not tempted to write a song about George W. Bush. I couldn't figure out what kind of song I'd write. That's the problem. I don't want to satirize George Bush and his puppeteers; I want to vaporize them."

En vanlig beskrivning av Lehrers sånger är att de genomgick en utveckling, från de mer absurda och nonsensartade under 1950-talet till mer påtagligt politiska under första halvan av 1960-talet – själva syftet med TV-programmet *That was the week that was*, till vilken Lehrer skrev material, var också att kommentera dagsaktuella händelser. Det går dock att hitta ”samhällstillvända” texter även i hans 50-talsproduktion. Redan till den första skivan finns en sång om narkotikalangning (”The Old Dope Peddler”) och framför allt ”I wanna go back to Dixie” som ironiserar över sydstaternas rasåtskillnad. Lehrer presenterar den som en typisk Dixie, ”...all about the many delightful features of the South”, med bl.a. versraderna: ”I wanna talk with Southern gentlemen/And put my white sheet on again/I ain't seen one good lynchin' in years” (och han har sagt att han aldrig skulle kunnat turnera i sydstaterna efter denna sång).

Lehrer var också tidig med en satir över julen. Ingen julsång, menade han, försöker ens fånga julens sanna budskap: det kommersiella:

Relations, sparing no expense'll
 send some useless old utensil,
 or a matching pen and pencil.
 "Just the thing I need! How nice!"
 It doesn't matter how sincere it
 is, nor how heartfelt the spirit,
 Sentiment will not endear it:
 what's important is the price.

Men det korståg som Lehrer påbörjade på 50-talet och som kom att präglade hans mest hängivna sarkasmer, är det mot militarismen, eller snarare kombinationen politik-krigföring. Redan på första skivan fanns sången ”The Wild West is where I want to be”, en satir bl.a. över kärnvapenproven i USAs ökenområden. Lehrer var i det militära 1955-57 och på basis av dessa upplevelser, får man anta, ironiserar han på sin andra skiva över rekryteringen till militäryrket i ”It Makes a Fellow Proud to be a Soldier”. I introduktionen till den sången (på live-plattan) säger Lehrer att armén har drivit de amerikanska idealen om demokrati till sin yttersta spets: ”...not only do they prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, and color, but also on the grounds of ability”.

Men det riktiga mästerverket är ”We'll all go together when we go”, där referenserna till det tredje världskriget för första gången kommer. Även om poängen fortfarande giltig får sången ytterligare en dimension för dem som minns det kalla kriget och den uppskruvade stämningen runt Bomben (den kärnvapenutlösning som i ett slag kunde förinta planeten). I denna glada sång – Lehrer använder ofta kontrasten mellan musik och text för att understryka ironin – förmedlas den trösterika tanken att när vi dör kommer åtminstone ingen att vara förbi av sorg, eftersom alla lämnar in samtidigt:

We will all go together when we go.
 All suffuse with an incandescent glow.
 No one will have the endurance
 To collect on his insurance,
 Lloyd's of London will be loaded when they go.

I början av 1960-talet kom en serie sånger i samma genre. ”The MLF lullaby” (om tyskarnas deltagande i den multilaterala militärstyrkan i OECD), ”Wernher von Braun” (om den tyske raketingenjören som senare kom att leda NASAs verksamhet), ”So long, mom (Song for World War III)”, ”Send the Marines” (om amerikansk utrikespolitik, dvs. invasion som politiskt medel), samt ”Who’s next?” (om kärnvapenspridningen). Dessa är alla klassiker och representerar den svarta humor som vi känner från ”Dr. Strangelove” – fastän Lehrer i senare intervjuer nekat till att ha varit dystopiker på allvar.

Mest omtalad är nog sången om von Braun och det gick länge rykten (inte alls sanna) att Lehrer blivit stämd för förtal av von Braun, som utpekades som nazist, ansvarig för människors död under kriget (“...some think our attitude/ Should be one of gratitude/Like the widows and cripples in old London town/ Who owe their large pensions to Wernher von Braun”) och som driven helt utan moraliska skrupler (“Once the rockets are up, who cares where they come down? / That's not my department/ says Wernher von Braun.”).

Lehrer var också tidigt ute med en ironi om miljöförstöringen (“Pollution”), där en fiktiv turist i USA får goda råd:

Just go out for a breath of air,
And you'll be ready for Medicare.
The city streets are really quite a thrill.
If the hoods don't get you, the monoxide will.

Lehrers kritiska texter var av förståeliga skäl kontroversiella och hans sånger spelades ännu i början av 60-talet sällan på radio, trots att försäljningssiffrorna på skivorna började stiga. De större skivbolagen vägrade i det längsta att ge ut hans sånger, RCA t.ex. med motiveringen att försäljningen av andra produkter man sålde (kylskåp!) skulle lida av att bli sammankopplade med Lehrers texter. Men det kuriösa var att angreppen på amerikansk försvarspolitik eller personangreppen på kända amerikaner inte var det största problemet för det moraliska etablissemangen. Istället var det en sång om scouten (“Be Prepared”) som orsakade rabalder under en australienturné (“Keep that pot hidden where you're sure that it will not be found/And be careful not to turn on when the scoutmaster's around/ For he only will insist that it be shared/ Be prepared!”), liksom en sång om den katolska kyrkans försök att popularisera sin liturgi (“The Vatican Rag”).

Get in line in that processional,
Step into that small confessional,
There, the guy who's got religion'll
Tell you if your sin's original.
If it is, try playin' it safer,
Drink the wine and chew the wafer,
Two, four, six, eight,
Time to transsubstantiate!

Ännu värre var det med en tidig publikfriare om veneriskt överförda sjukdomar (“I got it from Sally”) som Lehrer skrev redan 1952 men som han valde att inte ge

ut på skiva eftersom texten skulle lett till bojkott och han dessutom ville undvika att bli stämplad som en lite ytlig partysångare. Det var först i det bejublade framträdandet i Michael Parkinsons TV-show år 1980 som han framförde sången (omdöpt till "I got it from Agnes") för en större publik. Referenser till homosexualitet, tidelag och incest var knappast en bra grund till kommersiell succé på 1950-talet, men framstår som ganska harmlösa idag.

"I got it from Agnes" och den pornograf-ironiserande "Smut" representerar den andra strömningen i Lehrers produktion, de absurda och/eller morbida sångerna. På de två första skivorna finns det ett antal sådana, den mest kända en glad trudelutt om "...one of the many delightful pastimes the coming of spring affords us all" nämligen "Poisoning pigeons in the park". En del av dessa absurditeter är pastischer, där Lehrer driver med olika musikgenrer, t.ex. folksånger ("The Irish Ballad"); sentimentala sånger om hembygden ("My Home Town"); kärlekssånger ("I hold your Hand in mine", "When You are Old and Grey", "She's my Girl" och "The Masochist Tango"); filmmusik ("Oedipus Rex").

En del av de absurda sångerna är akademiska och kan väl ses som en utlöpare från Lehrers allra första musikaliska äventyr. Lehrer var huvudpersonen bakom en revy som sattes upp vid Harvard åren 1951-52, *The Physical Revue* (namnet i sig en pastisch på en känd vetenskaplig tidskrift, *The Physical Review*). Otroligt nog hade en av de yngre professorerna på institutionen (Norman Ramsey, fick nobelpriset i fysik 1989!) inspelningsutrustning varför större delen av denna revy finns bevarad till eftervärlden – och numera allmänt tillgänglig efter Lehrers godkännande på nätet (<http://www.haverford.edu/physics/songs/lehrer/physrev.htm>).



Medan *The Physical Revue* fortfarande känns mest som ett (högklassiskt) studentspex, kom Lehrer att utveckla delar av showen och fortsätta på detta spår i sin fortsatta karriär. En stor favorit är sången om matematikern "Lobachevsky", också känd som "Plagiarize":

Plagiarize,
 Let no one else's work evade your eyes,
 Remember why the good Lord made your eyes,

So don't shade your eyes,
 But plagiarize, plagiarize, plagiarize -
 Only be sure always to call it please 'research'.

Den mest avancerade sången i revyn är den som spridits mest på fotfolksnivå: ”The element song”. (Spridningen framgår av alla responser på videoklippen på Youtube liksom antal nedladdningar, som ligger runt 600.000 för alla versioner.) Det är helt enkelt det periodiska systemet, sjunget på en klassisk Sullivan-melodi. Lehrer har själv sagt att denna sång var den som tog honom längst tid att skriva, och det är lätt att förstå – han har klämt in de då 102 upptäckta grundämnena på en minut och tjugotre tungvrickande sekunder. Den rimmar också. Många kemilärare har använt sig av ”The element song” i sin undervisning, kanske mer för att visa att man kan göra något roligt med kemi snarare än som en del av inläringen (även om många försök på nätet vittnar om utmaningen att lära sig sången; ett hänfört fan hävdar att han träffade sin fru för att de båda kunde ”The Elements” utantill).

En senare publikfavorit av samma karaktär är ”New Math” där Lehrer driver med den nya matematiken (”So simple that only a child can do it”). En del av de sånger som gjordes för *The Physical Revue* och liknande material finns i en unik inspelning från 1997 som gjorts privat vid ett jubileum där Lehrer medverkar. Där finns också den elaka ”Sociology”, som t.o.m. en sociolog måste tycka är rolig, innerst inne.

Att hantera språket

Genomslaget för Lehrers beror dels på en förmåga att föra fram ett budskap eller en poäng, på klassiskt manér; dels på form. Han kan verkligen hantera språket, rimmen är halsbrytande och han får texten att passa in i musiken. I detta är Lehrer en mästare och han har själv tillskrivit egenskapen sin matematiska begåvning. På svar på frågan varför hans sånger håller än i dag (detta var för en chat år 1997), svarar han: ”I think there is a lingering desire for literacy and I pride myself on being literate to the point of pretentiousness”.

Lehrer utnyttjar skickligt det engelska språkets uttalslikheter, där orden inte alltid rimmar i stavning men i uttal. Frågeställarna hade vid ett tidigare tillfälle försökt utmana Lehrer genom att be honom hitta ett rim på ’orange’ – hans svar:

Eating an orange
 while making love
 Makes for bizarre enj-
 oyment thereof.

Fungerar bara med östkustdialekt, noterar han. Vidare diskuteras om det verkligen finns något rim på ’nostril’ och någon föreslår ’wastrel’. Lehrer åker hem och grannar på saken och skickar sedan repliken i ett fax till studion:

Anyone from here to Gloucester'll
 tell you there's no rhyme for 'nostril.'
 (P.S.: No one but a mere imposter'll
 claim that 'wastrel' rhymes with 'nostril'.)

I sångerna är de enkla, slagfärdiga rimmen ofta lika effektiva som de mer litterata (dvs. som innehåller svåra ord). I live-versionen av ”The Vatican Rag” skrattar publiken mest åt ”Ave Maria, Gee it’s good to see ya”. I andra fall är det mer avancerade rader som når fram. I ”So Long Mom” beskriver Lehrer – kusligt framsynt – hur nästa världskrig kommer att gå direkt i TV. På 50-talet var Chet Hunter och David Brinkley de två största nyhetsankarna i amerikansk TV (NBC), med en avslutning på nyheterna som blivit klassisk, nämligen att de säger godnatt till varandra (larvigt, tyckte Brinkley i en intervju). Lehrers frontsoldat upplyser sin mamma om att kriget sänds på TV:

While we're attacking frontally,
 watch Brinkally and Huntally,
 describing contrapuntally
 the cities we have lost.
 No need for you to miss a minute
 of the agonizing holocaust.

Och i visan om Alma Schindler, som lämnade tonsättaren Gustav Mahler för arkitekten Walter Gropius (och senare honom för poeten Franz Werfel) – i sig en fantastisk historia, speciellt som hennes första kärlek var konstnären Gustav Klimt – sjunger Lehrer:

While married to Gus, she met Gropius,
 And soon she was swinging with Walter.
 Gus died, and her teardrops were copious.
 She cried all the way to the altar.

Lehrer är alltså verserad och excellerar emellanåt i avancerat språk. Det gör att han har en speciell beundrarskara bland akademiker, T.S. Elliot-fans, liksom sådana som snöat in på Monty Python och Simpsons – två av de ytterst få moderna komedier som Lehrer säger sig tycka om. Dessa båda har det gemensamt med Lehrer att inget är heligt, och att satiren görs med elegans och med en viss grad av cynism (det är ingen tillfällighet att två av hans tidiga sånger återgavs i Mad år 1957, illustrerade av George Woodbridge). Hans kommentarer om dagens situation i humorbranschen är annars ganska uppgivna. Det är högröstat och plumpt, men: “irreverence is easy – what’s hard is wit”.

Ibland är Lehrer självironiskt excentrisk i sina formuleringar. I en intervju säger han om det litterära i dagens humor: “What we have now is a nimiety of scurrility with a concomitant exiguity of taste.” Han kommer att förbli de verbalt mer förslagnas företrädare inom satiren. Men denna utrotningshotade grupp behöver också en idol – och vem skulle passa bättre än Tom Lehrer?

Lehrers musik

Det skulle förstås inte fungera med enkelt tonsatta sånger, även om texterna är fantastiska. Lehrers musik (han skrev i stort sett allt utom ”The Elements” själv) är en lika viktig byggsten. Han har själv uttryckt sig ganska nedlåtande om en del av sina sånger, som mer är genre-musik (t.ex. parodier på folksånger, västernsånger etc.). Sanningen är att dessa är goda standardsånger, men att många

av de andra, speciellt de senare, är av anmärkningsvärd hög kvalitet. De fastnar också, som önskade landsplågor. Även om de är svåra att tänka bort från texterna skulle många sånger överlevt utan dem, i kraft av starka melodier.

För musikkonässörer är också Lehrers melodier späckade med små, ofta nästan omärkliga, anspelningar till andra sånger. På en Lehrer-nätsida (det finns ganska många) anordnades för någon tid sedan en tävling, där han själv agerade domare, i att hitta musikaliska referenser. Vinnaren hittade 29 stycken (alla korrekta svar finns på: <http://dmdb.org/lehrer/1997contest.html>). I sången om "Alma" lyckas Lehrer klämma in fyra olika bitar av Mahlers kompositioner. (Det behöver väl knappast nämnas att de insmugna snuttarna ofta är lika ironiska kommentarer som texterna.)

Medan Lehrer själv i intervjuer beklagar språkets förfall (han har ett Jonas Hallbergskt drag) säger han inte så mycket om melodiernas förfall, fast en åsikt skymtar i "The folk song army":

Hooray for the Folk Song Army
We will show you the way
'Cause we all hate poverty, war, and injustice
and chords that are too hard to play.

När det gäller musik och lyrik är han också ofta hyllande. Han talar varmt om Steven Sondheim, men också om Irving Berlin, Arthur Sullivan, Oscar Hammerstein med flera (men noterar att de flesta av dem han beundrar är döda). Han poängterar vikten av intressanta melodier för att man ska vilja höra sångerna flera gånger – men också vikten av bra texter. I populärmusiken förblir Tom Lehrer ändå ett undantag, där texterna kan läsas för sig och melodierna håller för många lyssningar. Samtidigt är det så att Lehrer aldrig flirtade med den 'moderna' musiken, t.ex. pop eller rock (fast barnsångerna, t.ex. "L-Y", är nära). Han kommer aldrig att dra stora lyssnarskaror, men alltid att ha en publik.

Lehrers skivkarriär

Tom Lehrer började skriva musik som ung – den första utgivna sången "Fight fiercely, Harvard", som fortfarande används som kampsång, skrev han som 17-åring år 1945. Ändå är hans skivkarriär snabbt beskriven. Den första (tiotums)skivan ("Songs by Tom Lehrer") kom 1953, den andra ("More of Tom Lehrer"; live-version "An Evening (Wasted) with Tom Lehrer") år 1959 och den tredje och sista ("That was the week that was" ("TW3")) år 1965. Om man betänker att hans låtar bara sällan överstiger två minuter är hans samlade produktion inte lång – men, som han noterar i "Poisoning pigeons in the park", det behövs inga stora mängder när det gäller stryknin.

Den kommersiella utvecklingen är notervärd. Han producerade och sålde själv sin första skiva, som har beskrivits inte bara som den kortaste (22 minuter) utan också som en av de mest lönsamma i historien – den tog en timme att spela in, till en kostnad av \$15 och har nu sålts i 370.000 exemplar. Han spelade även in sin andra skiva själv, dock i en professionell studio (den tog tre timmar att göra). Eftersom skivbolagen höll sig avvaktande hade han ett eget bolag och när försäljningen ökade hade han också en anställd. När den tredje skivan skulle

göras, år 1965, mjuknade dock skivbolagen – det är svårt att motstå försäljningssiffror. Warner/Reprise gav ut ”TW3” och återutgav de tidigare skivorna (det var Lehrers krav, han ville inte längre ha ansvar för sina gamla titlar). Skivan nådde 18e plats på Billboardlistan över mest sålda skivor med en totalförsäljning idag som överstiger 500.000 skivor, vilket är en enorm siffra för en humorskiva.



Grundmaterialet är alltså tre skivor, men det finns alltså ett antal andra skivor (åter)utgivna med samma sånger i lite andra versioner, bl.a. ”Tom Lehrer discovers Australia (and vice versa)” och ”Tom Lehrer revisited” (en del förvirring kommer av att Decca övertog ansvaret för skivutgivningen i England, varför det finns ett antal olika versioner av alla skivor).

För övrigt finns det också en del andra sånger. Hörvärda är de elva låtar, varav fyra insjungna av Lehrer själv, som ingick i barnprogrammet ”The Electric Company” 1971-72 (t.ex. ”L-Y”, ”N apostrophy T”, ”SN (Snore, Sniff, and Sneeze)” och ”The Mumble Song”). (Lehrers skivutgivning finns utförligt beskriven på <http://php.indiana.edu/%7Ejbmorris/FAQ/lehrer.disco.html>.)

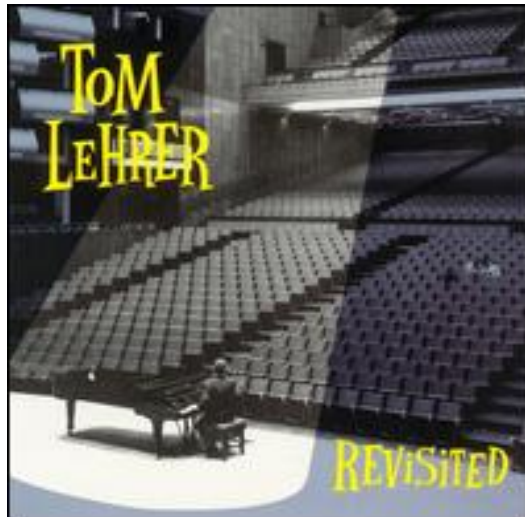
Den som vill göra det enkelt för sig köper samlings-CDn ”The Remains of Tom Lehrer” som kom år 2000, där det mesta finns, inklusive diskografi, texter och historik. Utgåvan finns på Rhino Records och innehåller bl.a. en intressant biografi över Lehrer, gjord av Barret Hansen, mer känd som Dr. Demento. Han har haft en stor betydelse för spridningen av Lehrers musik i USA, eftersom han sedan 1970-talet haft ett (så småningom) nationellt radioprogram där Lehrers musik både spelas och önskas (bara ”weird Al” är mer önskad).

Samlings-CDn ersätter de fyra tidigare CD-skivorna som gavs ut under 1990-talet (de tre live-skivorna 1990, de båda studioskivorna i en samling 1997, dessutom finns live-skivorna i en Decca-utgåva). Det är väl att ta i att säga att inget hem borde vara utan denna trippel-CD, men ett hem utan den är i alla fall ofullständigt. Även för den som redan har Lehrers skivor har CDn det goda med sig att man får en inblick i hans utveckling. Den första skivan, liksom en del av sångerna på den andra studioskivan är ganska återhållsamma. Live-skivorna är klart bäst och här lyser Lehrers självsäkerhet och rutin igenom. Självsäkerheten verkar vara ett personlighetsdrag, men kommer också av en fullständig kontroll av materialet.

Allt sitter. Även det (mycket roliga) mellansnacket förefaller vara intränat in i minsta detalj – ändå är allt utfört med spänst och timing och med perfekt artikulation (Lehrers diktion är en logopeders dröm).

Lehrers konserter och spelningar

Efter succén med revyn på Harvard år 1951-52 fick Lehrer ströspelningar på vad han betecknar som "intimate (i.e., hot, fetid, smoky, and uncomfortable)" night clubs" i New York och Boston 1952-54. År 1957-58 hade ryktet om honom spritts, bl.a. till Californien (efter en positiv skivrecension i LA Chronicle) och han gjorde under två år ett tjugotal spelningar runt om i USA och uppträdde dessutom på nattklubbar. Det finns inga kända bevarade filminspelningar från dessa tidiga framträdanden, men från konserterna i Cambridge, MA den 20-21 mars hämtades material för live-skivan "An Evening (Wasted) with Tom Lehrer". Lehrer ville inte ge ut skivorna först och därefter turnera, utan menade att de komiska poängerna byggde på att publiken inte hade hört sångerna förut. Han hade ingen speciell lust att turnera för att sälja redan utgivna skivor, utan använde live-framträdandena för att slipa sångerna och framförandena.



Lehrers publika karriär kunde ha tagit slut 1959, då han tröttnat, men han fick en inbjudan till Australien och Nya Zeeland och eftersom han gärna ville se en ny del av världen utsträcktes turnerandet. Han gjorde sig både impopulär (pga av sångernas innehåll) och populär i Australien – många uppskattade att han stannade i två månader istället för att bara riva av ett par snabba spelningar och åka hem, som andra artister. Avslutningen skedde på de brittiska öarna och slutpunkten sattes på Empress Theatre i Glasgow den 2a juli 1960. I alla fall är det en version man ofta hör. I själva verket lockades Lehrer än en gång till en ny del av världen, nämligen Skandinavien, år 1967 (då hade han också givit två konserter år 1965 i Santa Monica respektive London). Danskarna och norrmännen – men inte svenskarna – var framsynta nog att bjuda in Lehrer, som spelade i Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim och Köpenhamn (tre uppträdanden), där hans konsert på Falkonercentret den 12e september 1967 blev hans sista inför betald publik.

Lehrer på svenska

Just vid den sista konserten i Köpenhamn fanns två svenskar med ett speciellt intresse: de ville övertala Lehrer att godkänna ett skivprojekt där Lehrers sånger

översattes till svenska. Det hade börjat med att Simon Brehm, den notoriske kontrabasisten och orkesterledaren, började spela "I hold your hand in mine" på dansaftnar på Bel Palais år 1959. Per-Anders Boquist, senare grundare av Amigo Records, snappade upp detta, lånade skivan ("Songs by Tom Lehrer") av Brehm och blev biten. I Köpenhamn mötte Boquist Lehrer och fick publiceringsrätten till sångerna och började arbeta på översättningar – en heroisk idé, med tanke på hur komplicerade Lehrers texter är.

Den 3e oktober 1967 skickade Boquist tolv översättningar (åter-översatta till engelska) till Lehrer som lämnade en del kommentarer, men som i huvudsak var nöjd. Skivan spelades in under en dag i Europafilms studio i november med Leif Asp vid pianot och Lars Ekborg vid mikrofonen. I december släpptes skivan. Senare samma månad fick Boquist brev från Lehrer som gratulerade dem, berömde Ekborg och Asp ("...who has clearly spend much time listening to my records (poor fellow); he has inserted a number of lovely things into the accompaniments which I wish I had thought of first").

Skivan, "Lars Ekborg i Tom Lehrers vackra värld", är överraskande bra, med tanke på de svåra omständigheterna. Lars Ekborg var ingen stor sångare, men det fungerar tack vare att musiken drar mot kabaréhållet. Texterna är ofta fyndiga, pianospelet högklassiskt (men kanske lite pretentiöst emellanåt). Problemet med skivan är snarast Tom Lehrer. Det går liksom inte att göra det bättre än vad han gör. Det går knappast att göra det ens nästan lika bra. Det är i de svenska versionerna som man starkast upplever hur tajta kopplingar det är mellan text-musik-poänger i originalversionerna. En paradoxal skillnad mellan Lehrer och Ekborg är att Lehrer är mer uttrycksfull, speglar ett större register av stämningar och förmår bättre lyfta fram de komiska poängerna (det paradoxala består förstås i att Ekborg var tränad och firad skådespelare, Lehrer universitetslektor).

Ekborg och Boquist var viktiga för introduktionen av Lehrer i Sverige, men när skivan kom var Lehrer redan känd i intellektuella kretsar och bland musiker. Strax innan skivan spelades in gavs ytterligare draghjälp, när Olof Palme refererade Lehrers "Pollution" i ett tal.

...och nu live på din dator!

Konserterna år 1965 och de i Norge och Danmark år 1967 har kommit att bli intressanta av en speciell anledning. En My Space/Youtube-medlem (kulturbärare, skulle Lehrers fans säga) har lagt ut videoinspelningar av elva sånger från en av dessa spelningar, sannolikt en hel konsert. Numren saknar mellanspel – annars excellerade Lehrer i kärnfulla komiska inledningar till sina sånger – men är ganska säkert gjorda vid samma tillfälle (åtminstone samma plats). Sångerna innehåller ett par 1959-klassiker som "Poisoning pigeons in the park" men huvudsakligen sånger från "That was the week that was" 1965 (bl.a. "Vatican Rag", "Send the Marines" och "National Brotherhood Week").



Att se Tom Lehrer framföra sina sånger är ingenting mindre än en omvälvande upplevelse. Man borde kanske varit förvarnad från live-skivorna, men pregnansen i framförandet är inte bara diktning och timing (båda perfekta) utan också mimik, scennärvaro, karisma. Han behärskar scenen intill nonchalans. I de svart-vita bilderna ger Lehrer intrycket av en ung och återhållsam Groucho Marx. Kontrasten mellan hans vackra baryton, flyhänta pianospel, och närmast prudentliga yttre å ena sidan och de knivskarpa och absurda texterna å den andra, är hänförande. Trots att filmbilderna kommer från en sen konsert kan man inte ana att han känner sig uttråkad av att uppträda. När han blivit tillfrågad om varför han slutade har han bl.a. sagt att han tyckte om det, ”men jag tyckte om grundskolan också utan att vilja gå om den”. Han har också givit uttryck för det underliga att sjunga sina sånger gång på gång, ”det är som att en författare skulle läsa sina romaner högt kväll efter kväll” och han har betonat att han inte har behov av erkännande (“I do not require anonymous affection, such as that manifested by the applause of large groups of strangers. (I love it when they buy the records, however.)”). Sällan har ett förhållande mellan artist och publik varit mer assymetriskt – publiken älskar honom, själv kan han inte förstå poängen med applåder i mörkret.

Trots att Lehrer slutade uppträda var det inte alldeles slut. Han gjorde ett bejublat framträdande i Michael Parkinsons TV-show i England år 1980, där han sjöng ”I got it from Agnes” (Finns på Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKZR3Bcj4jw&NR=1>). Intrycket från den videon är likadant: perfektion i utförandet, fjäderlätt och klockrent tilltal.

Det var ingen tillfällighet att Lehrer uppträdde i TV 1980. Han var aktuell med anledning av att demonproducenten Cameron Mackintosh hade satt upp en revy baserad på Tom Lehrers musik (han trodde att det skulle bli billigt eftersom han antog att Lehrer var död). Revyn – ”Tomfoolery” – blev en framgång, som Mackintosh sedan följde upp med ”Cats” och ett antal lika stora succéer, och Lehrer kom i ropet igen. Han gjorde en del förändringar i texterna, några tillägg och samarbetade i upplägget av revyn. Den mest anmärkningsvärda förändringen gällde ”When you are old and gray”, där han ironiserar över kärlekssånger där

paret lovar älska varandra så länge de lever ("Another example of stark realism in the popular song"):

An awful debility,
 A lessened utility,
 A loss of mobility
 Is a strong possibility.
 In all probability
 I'll lose my virility
 And you your fertility
 And desirability,
 And this liability
 Of total sterility
 Will lead to hostility
 And a sense of futility,
 So let's act with agility
 While we still have facility,
 For we'll soon reach senility
 And lose the ability.

Detta, ett av hans mest bejublade rimäventyr, som vilken annan textförfattare som helst skulle försvarat till sista blyertsstiftet, byter Lehrer ledigt ut (tillsammans med melodin), eftersom iscensättningen i *Tomfoolery* ändrats till en relation mellan en äldre och yngre man:

While enjoying our compatibility,
 I am cognisant of its fragility,
 And I question the advisability
 Of relying on its durability.
 You're aware of my inflexibility
 And my quintessential volatility
 And the total inconceivability
 Of my showing genuine humility.
 Though your undeniable nobility
 May excuse a certain puerility,
 Your alleged indispensability
 Underestimates my versatility,
 And your boyish irresponsibility
 And what now is charming juvenility
 Will in time lose its adorability
 And appear much more like imbecility.

Man kan inte komma ifrån tanken att han vill retas, visa att han kan göra vad som helst; den segern kan man unna honom.

Alla trodde att framträdandet i Parkinsons show var det sista av Tom Lehrer, men lyckliga omständigheter har givit oss ytterligare två. Den 19e mars 1997 firades matematikern Irving Kaplanskys 80-årsdag och Lehrer bjöds in och sjöng fem sånger (fyra akademiskt inspirerade varav tre från *The Physical Revue*). Som en gudagåva tog någon med sig en videokamera. Därför kan vi njuta av en åldrande

Tom Lehrer, när han uppträder mer informellt i en lektionssal, inför en publik bestående av studenter och forskare. Filmen finns på: <http://www.archive.org/details/lehrer> och <http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&VideoID=1064382>. Hela föreställningen, inklusive andra anföranden finns i originalvideon på: <http://www.archive.org/details/lecture11842>.



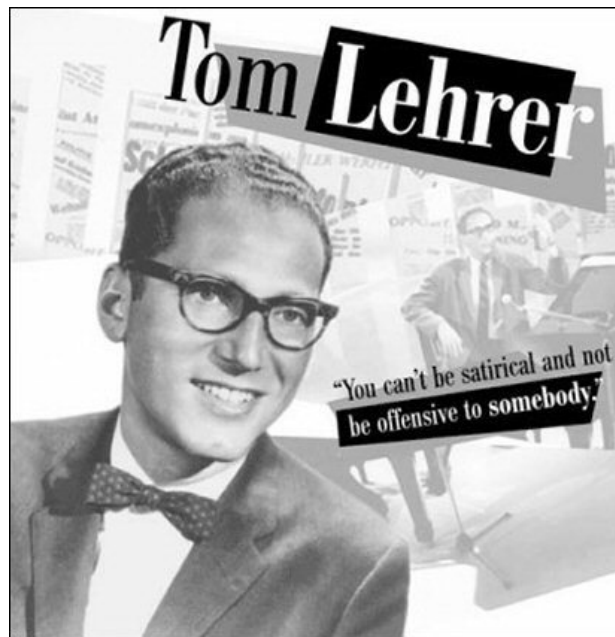
Året därpå celebrerades Cameron Mackintosh 30-åriga karriär genom (välgörenhets)föreställningen "Hey, Mr. Producer", och Lehrer tackade överraskande ja till en inbjudan, mer än 25 år sedan sitt sista scenframträdande. Påannonsen görs av Stephen Sondheim, om vilken Lehrer i en intervju sagt: "He is the greatest lyricist that the English language has ever produced. That is a fact, not an opinion", och som – osannolikt nog – lärde känna Lehrer redan som barn på sommarläger 1937 (Lehrers kommentar efter introduktionen: "I often wondered what became of him"). Denna Lehrers senaste (och troligen sista) publika konfrontation, skedde på Lyceum Theatre i London inför drottning Elisabeth II, 8e juni 1998. Lehrer är iklädd 'black tie', dvs. frack och fluga. En av hans kommentarer om Mackintosh: "While I went from adolescence to senility, trying to bypass maturity, he went from rags to riches – I must say though that even then, he had exquisite taste in rags". Hela showen spelades in och släpptes år 2007 på DVD. Lehrers framträdande – han sjunger "Poisoning pigeons in the park" – finns också på Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89yf-utLVfA>

Det gläder Lehrer-fans att konstatera att han åldras med både grace och mycket försiktigt – kanske är han mer fortfarande mer juvenil än senil. Hans scennärvaro är fortfarande påtaglig och hans sångröst och pianospel njutbara. Och han är rolig. Det är fortfarande en Lehrersk gåta att han själv vantrivs med att främträda för publik – det är inte ofta man ser någon behärska en stor scen utan fler attiraljer än en flygel och han är nästan oförskämt självklar i sitt uppträdande.

Lehrer till historien

Eftersom Lehrers produktion delvis var politisk, sett i en vid mening, tas frågan ofta upp om hans och andra samhällskritiska artisters inflytande på opinioner eller skeenden. Själv trodde han inte på att han eller andra humorister kunde göra någon skillnad, det var mest att predika för redan troende. I en intervju i australisk

radio år 2006 sa han: "I think all of my songs, basically, all of this type of song is really not even preaching to the converted, it's titillating the converted." Här är nog Lehrer onödigt försiktig. Han har sålt mer än en och en halv miljon skivor och hans budskap måste vara oerhört spritt – och speciellt spritt bland välutbildade som får förmodas ha ganska stor påverkan på allmänhetens åsikter och därmed åtminstone indirekt på politiken. Lehrer har tillfört en personlig och väljudande röst i en större kör som varnat för kapprustning, miljöförstöring och som mer generellt velat verka för ett liberalare samhälle. Att förlöjliga det konventionella och pretentiösa är ofta ett effektivt sätt att desarmera det på. Dessutom har han gjort världen lite mer uthärdlig, som alla goda komiker, något som han själv sätter större värde på.



Tom Lehrer kommer förstås för en lång tid – oöverskådlig, är nog en rimlig tidsbestämning – att kommas ihåg för sina sånger. Men som kuriosa kan nämnas två andra nedslag i historien. Under sin militärtid uppfann han och en kollega jello shot, alltså vad vi numera, på någon slags svenska, kallar för godis-shots. Sprit var förbjudet i militärförläggningarna och till en julfest konstruerades drinkar i gelatin som därmed kunde föras in (apelsin och vodka är den bästa kombinationen, säger Lehrer).

En kanske mindre överraskande bedrift är att Lehrer finns representerad i en encyklopedi över (slang)uttryck. Det är i introduktionen till en sång just om militärtiden ("It Makes a Fellow Proud to be a Soldier") som han myntar uttrycket "copious free time" (ung. 'kopiösa fritid'), förstås ett ironiskt uttryck för att militärtiden inte innehöll någon sådan (eller, som uppslagsverket uttrycker det: "A mythical schedule slot for accomplishing tasks held to be unlikely or impossible. Sometimes used to indicate that the speaker is interested in accomplishing the task, but believes that the opportunity will not arise", se <http://catb.org/~esr/jargon/html/C/copious-free-time.html>).

Till slut: Vem vann?

Det finns få artister om vilken det spekulerats så envist som Tom Lehrer, kanske naturligt med tanke på hur lite information som kommer från honom själv eller hans skivbolag. Spekulationerna och diskussionerna – numera otaliga på internet – är ganska enahanda. Man undrar varför han slutade och man undrar om han kommer att göra comeback. Naturliga frågor kan tyckas, men vid närmare eftertanke bara om vi ser Lehrers karriär från nöjesbranchens eller fansens perspektiv. Om vi tar Lehrers egen utgångspunkt är inte frågorna lika självklara. Han ville inte vara stjärna och han hade ett civilt jobb som han tyckte om. Han föredrog att ha ett privatliv – skälet till att han inte ville uppträda i TV eller sprida fotografier på sig själv var att han inte ville bli igenkänd på stan. Han vill tjäna pengar dock; Lehrer är inte antikommersiell, utan håller snarare en låg profil.

I alla intervjuer med honom framkommer en bild av en person som med stor integritet och närmast total kontroll lotsat sig fram genom livet – och haft en rolig, liksom behaglig resa. Han har uppträtt när han känt för det, skrivit låtar när det känts angeläget, givit ett fåtal intervjuer när det behövts för marknadsföringen. Han har en bra ekonomi, bor halva året på östkusten, halva i Californien ("those Eastern winters, I can't endure 'em/so every year I pack my gear/and come out here for Purim"). Han tycks leva ett intressant och socialt liv – det framskymtar att han inte har något emot att vara partystjärna i slutna sällskap (han beskrivs som lika vänlig som kvick av dem som träffat honom). Han verkar få bekräftelse på andra sätt än genom att vara i rampljuset – och därmed blir han varken bitter eller känner sig övergiven av fans eller publik. Trots att Lehrers texter är kontroversiella och trots att han uttalar sig frispråkigt om kolleger (ganska sällan i positiv bemärkelse) verkar ingen ha något negativt att säga om honom. Han har heller inte gjort de där halvdåliga plattorna eller sett publiken svika (eller gått ett tragiskt öde till mötes som Allan Sherman). Istället är han hyllad och saknaden efter honom är närmast total. Frågan är om Tom Lehrer i själva verket är en av de fåtaliga artisterna som besekrat nöjesindustrin. Han valde sitt liv: hur många kan säga det?

Nu fyller Tom Lehrer 80 år och många önskar honom en angenäm ålderdom. Och att han kan hålla sig från att mata duvorna i parken.



Tom Lehrers texter



Check this out, for lyrics, discography, and much more:
<http://dmdb.org/lehrer/>

Tom Lehrer Revisited

Decca Records (U.K.) LK 4375, 1960 [mono only]

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [I Wanna Go Back To Dixie](#)
3. [The Wild West Is Where I Want To Be](#)
4. [The Old Dope Peddler](#)
5. [Fight Fiercely, Harvard!](#)
6. [Lobachevsky](#)
7. [The Irish Ballad](#)
8. [The Hunting Song](#)
9. [My Home Town](#)
10. [When You Are Old And Gray](#)
11. [The Wiener Schnitzel Waltz](#)
12. [I Hold Your Hand In Mine](#)
13. [Be Prepared](#)

Introduction

I'd like to introduce now the featured artist of this evening's... ordeal. I'm sure that you'll all agree without any hesitation that Tom Lehrer is the most brilliant creative genius that America has produced in almost 200 years, so perhaps a few words of biographical background might not be amiss. Endowed by nature with perhaps the most glorious baritone voice to be heard on an American stage since the memorable concert debut in 1835 of Millard Fillmore; endowed also with twelve incredibly agile fingers; Mr. Lehrer has had a long and varied career in the field of entertainment starting with nine years at Harvard University... where it was that he first decided to devote his life to what has since become a rather successful scientific project -- namely, the attempt to prolong adolescence beyond all previous limits.

Even before he came to Harvard, however, he was well known in academic circles for his masterly translation into Latin of *The Wizard of Oz*, which remains even today the standard Latin version of that work. A few years ago he was inducted... forcibly... into the United States Army and spent most of his indenture in Washington as sort of Army liaison to the Office of Naval Contemplation. About his service record he is justifiably modest, but it is known that in a short time he rose to the rank of brigadier general. However, before he could acquire a tenure, he was discharged, and owing to nepotism and intrigue, he emerged with only the rank of specialist 3rd class, which was roughly equivalent to the rank of corporal without portfolio.

But to return to his career in show business: for several years he toured vaudeville theaters with an act consisting of impressions of people in the last throws of various diseases. I'm sure that many of you here tonight still recall with pleasure his memorable diphtheria imitation. He is generally acknowledged to be the dean of living American composers, and is currently working on a musical comedy based on the life of Adolf Hitler. Without further ado -- Tom Lehrer...

I Wanna Go Back To Dixie

Well, what I like to do on formal occasions like this is to take some of the various types of songs that we all know and presumably love, and, as it were, to kick them when they're down. I find that if you take the various popular song forms to their logical extremes, you can arrive at almost anything from the ridiculous to the obscene, or -- as they say in New York -- sophisticated. I'd like to illustrate with several hundred examples for you this evening, first of all, the southern type song about the wonders of the American south. But it's always seemed to me that most of these songs really don't go far enough. The following song, on the other hand, goes too far. It's called *I Wanna Go Back To Dixie*.

I wanna go back to Dixie,
 Take me back to dear ol' Dixie,
 That's the only li'l ol' place for li'l ol' me.
 Ol' times there are not forgotten,
 Whuppin' slaves and sellin' cotton,
 And waitin' for the Robert E. Lee.
 (It was never there on time.)
 I'll go back to the Swanee,
 Where pellagra makes you scrawny,
 And the jasmine and the tear gas smell just fine.
 I really am a-fixin'
 To go home and start a-mixin'
 Down below that Mason-Dixon line.

Oh, poll tax, how I love ya, how I love ya,
 My dear old poll tax.

Won'tcha come with me to Alabammy,
 Back to the arms of my dear ol' Mammy,

Her cookin's lousy and her hands are clammy,
 But what the hell, it's home.
 Yes, for paradise the Southland is my nominee.
 Jes' give me a ham hock and a grit of hominy.

I wanna start relaxin'
 Down in Birmingham or Jackson
 When we're havin' fun, why no one interferes.
 I wanna talk with Southern gentlemen
 And put my white sheet on again,
 I ain't seen one good lynchin' in years.
 The land of the boll weevil,
 Where the laws are medieval,
 Is callin' me to come and nevermore roam.
 I wanna go back to the Southland,
 That "y'all" and "shet-ma-mouth" land,
 Be it ever so decadent,
 There's no place like home.

The Wild West Is Where I Want To Be

Now if I may indulge in a bit of personal history, a few years ago I worked for a while at the Los Alamos scientific laboratory in New Mexico. I had a job there as a spy. No, I guess you know that the staff out there at that time was composed almost exclusively of spies... of one persuasion or another. And, while I was out there, I came to realize how much the Wild West had changed since the good old days of Wyatt Earp and *Home on the Range*, and here then is a modern cowboy ballad commemorating that delightful metamorphosis called *The Wild West Is Where I Wanna Be*.

Along the trail you'll find me lopin'
 Where the spaces are wide open,
 In the land of the old A.E.C. (yea-hah!)
 Where the scenery's attractive,
 And the air is radioactive,
 Oh, the wild west is where I wanna be.

Mid the sagebrush and the cactus,
 I'll watch the fellas practice
 Droppin' bombs through the clean desert breeze.
 I'll have on my sombrero,
 And of course I'll wear a pair o'
 Levis over my lead B.V.D.'s.

Ah will leave the city's rush,
 Leave the fancy and the plush,
 Leave the snow and leave the slush
 And the crowds.
 Ah will seek the desert's hush,

Where the scenery is lush,
How I long to see the mush-
room clouds.

'Mid the yuccas and the thistles
I'll watch the guided missiles,
While the old F.B.I. watches me. (yea-hah!)
Yes, I'll soon make my appearance
(Soon as I can get my clearance),
'Cause the wild west is where I wanna be.

Noter: B.V.D.'s är ett amerikanskt uttryck för kalsonger, från ett företag grundat av [Bradley, Voorhees & Day](#)

The Old Dope Peddler

You are no doubt familiar with songs about the old lamplighter and the old umbrella man and the old garbage collector and all these lovable old characters who go around spreading sweetness and light to their respective communities. But, it's always seemed to me that there is one member of this happy band who does an equally splendid job, but who has never been properly recognized in song or story, and this is an attempt to remedy, at least in part, that deplorable situation.

When the shades of night are falling,
Comes a fellow ev'ryone knows,
It's the old dope peddler,
Spreading joy wherever he goes.
Ev'ry evening you will find him,
Around our neighborhood.
It's the old dope peddler
Doing well by doing good.

He gives the kids free samples,
Because he knows full well
That today's young innocent faces
Will be tomorrow's clientele.
Here's a cure for all your troubles,
Here's an end to all distress.
It's the old dope peddler
With his powdered ha-happiness.

Fight Fiercely, Harvard!

I know it's very bad form to quote one's own reviews, but I would like to mention something that the New York Times said about me a year ago which I've always treasured -- they said: "Mr. Lehrer's muse is not fettered by such inhibiting factors as taste".

Now we come to that peculiar bit of Americana known as the football fight song. I was reminded not too long ago, upon returning from my lesson with the Scrabble pro at the Harvard club in Boston, of the days of my undergraduacy long ago when there used to be these very long Saturday afternoons in the fall with nothing to do -- the library was closed -- just waiting around for the cocktail parties to begin. And on occasions like that, some of us used to wander over to the... I believe it was called the stadium, to see if anything might be going on over there. And one did come to realize that the football fight songs that one hears in comparable stadia have a tendency to be somewhat uncouth, and even violent, and that it would be refreshing, to say the least, to find one that was a bit more genteel. And here it is, dedicated to my own alma mater, and called *Fight Fiercely, Harvard*.

Fight fiercely, Harvard,
 fight, fight, fight!
 Demonstrate to them our skill.
 Albeit they possess the might,
 Nonetheless we have the will.
 How we shall celebrate our victory,
 We shall invite the whole team up for tea
 (How jolly!)
 Hurl that spheroid down the field, and
 Fight, fight, fight!

Fight fiercely, Harvard,
 fight, fight, fight!
 Impress them with our prowess, do!
 Oh, fellows, do not let the crimson down,
 Be of stout heart and thru.
 Come on, chaps, fight for Harvard's glorious name,
 Won't it be peachy if we win the game?
 (Oh, goody!)
 Let's try not to injure them, but
 Fight, fight, fight!
 And do fight fiercely!
 Fight, fight, fight!

Lobachevsky

For many years now, Mr. Danny Kaye, who has been my particular idol since childbirth, has been doing a routine about the great Russian director Stanislavsky and the secret of success in the acting profession. And I thought it would be interesting to steal... to adapt this idea to the field of mathematics. I always like to make explicit the fact that before I went off not too long ago to fight in the trenches, I was a mathematician by profession. I don't like people to get the idea that I have to do this for a living. I mean, it isn't as though I had to do this, you know, I could be making, oh, 3000 dollars a year just teaching. Be that as it may, some of you may have had occasion to run into mathematicians and to wonder therefore how they got that way, and here, in partial explanation

perhaps, is the story of the great Russian mathematician Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky.

Who made me the genius I am today,
The mathematician that others all quote,
Who's the professor that made me that way?
The greatest that ever got chalk on his coat.

One man deserves the credit,
One man deserves the blame,
And Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name.
Hi!
Nicolai Ivanovich Lobach-

I am never forget the day I first meet the great Lobachevsky.
In one word he told me secret of success in mathematics:
Plagiarize!

Plagiarize,
Let no one else's work evade your eyes,
Remember why the good Lord made your eyes,
So don't shade your eyes,
But plagiarize, plagiarize, plagiarize -
Only be sure always to call it please 'research'.

And ever since I meet this man
My life is not the same,
And Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name.
Hi!
Nicolai Ivanovich Lobach-

I am never forget the day I am given first original paper
to write. It was on analytic and algebraic topology of
locally Euclidean parameterization of infinitely differentiable
Riemannian manifold.
Bozhe moi!
This I know from nothing.
But I think of great Lobachevsky and get idea - ahah!

I have a friend in Minsk,
Who has a friend in Pinsk,
Whose friend in Omsk
Has friend in Tomsk
With friend in Akmolinsk.
His friend in Alexandrovsk
Has friend in Petropavlovsk,
Whose friend somehow
Is solving now
The problem in Dnepropetrovsk.

And when his work is done -
 Ha ha! - begins the fun.
 From Dnepropetrovsk
 To Petropavlovsk,
 By way of Iliysk,
 And Novorossiysk,
 To Alexandrovsk to Akmolinsk
 To Tomsk to Omsk
 To Pinsk to Minsk
 To me the news will run,
 Yes, to me the news will run!

And then I write
 By morning, night,
 And afternoon,
 And pretty soon
 My name in Dnepropetrovsk is cursed,
 When he finds out I publish first!

And who made me a big success
 And brought me wealth and fame?
 Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name.
 Hi!
 Nicolai Ivanovich Lobach -

I am never forget the day my first book is published.
 Every chapter I stole from somewhere else.
 Index I copy from old Vladivostok telephone directory.
 This book was sensational!
 Pravda - well, Pravda - Pravda said: (Russian double-talk)
 It stinks.
 But Izvestia! Izvestia said: (Russian double-talk)
 It stinks.
 Metro-Goldwyn-Moskva buys movie rights for six million rubles,
 Changing title to 'The Eternal Triangle',
 With Brigitte Bardot playing part of hypotenuse.

And who deserves the credit?
 And who deserves the blame?
 Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name.
 Hi!

En bra videoillustration finns på Youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNC-aj76zI4>

♫ The Irish Ballad

Now I'd like to turn to the folk song, which has become in recent years the particularly fashionable form of idiocy among the self-styled intellectual. We find that people who deplore the level of current popular songs -- although I admit they do seem to be recording almost anything these days. Have you heard Sesue Hayakawa's record of *Remember Pearl Harbor*? These same people who deplore the level of current popular songs and yet will sit around enthralled singing *Jimmy crack corn and I don't care* or *Green Grow The Rushes, Oh!* -- whatever that means. At any rate, for this elite I have here an ancient Irish ballad, which was written a few years ago, and which is replete with all the accoutrements of this art form. In particular, it has a sort of idiotic refrain, in this case *rickety-tickety-tin* you'll notice cropping up from time to time, running through, I might add, interminable verses. The large number of verses being a feature expressly designed to please the true devotees of the folk song who seem to find singing fifty verses of *On Top Of Old Smokey* is twice as enjoyable as singing twenty-five.

This type of song also has what is known technically in music as a modal tune, which means -- for the benefit of any layman who may have wandered in this evening -- that I play a wrong note every now and then.

[piano]

This song though does differ strikingly from the genuine folk ballad in that in this song the words which are supposed to rhyme - actually do.

[piano]

I, ah, I really should say that - I do not direct these remarks against the vast army of folk song lovers, but merely against that peculiar hard core who seem to equate authenticity with artistic merit and illiteracy with charm.

[piano]

Oh, one more thing. One of the more important aspects of public folk singing is audience participation, and this happens to be a good song for group singing. So if any of you feel like joining in with me on this song, I'd appreciate it if you would leave -- right now.

About a maid I'll sing a song,
Sing rickety-tickety-tin,
About a maid I'll sing a song
Who didn't have her family long.
Not only did she do them wrong,
She did ev'ryone of them in, them in,
She did ev'ryone of them in.

One morning in a fit of pique,
Sing rickety-tickety-tin,
One morning in a fit of pique,
She drowned her father in the creek.
The water tasted bad for a week,
And we had to make do with gin, with gin,
We had to make do with gin.

Her mother she could never stand,
 Sing rickety-tickety-tin,
 Her mother she could never stand,
 And so a cyanide soup she planned.
 The mother died with a spoon in her hand,
 And her face in a hideous grin, a grin,
 Her face in a hideous grin.

She set her sister's hair on fire,
 Sing rickety-tickety-tin,
 She set her sister's hair on fire,
 And as the smoke and flame rose high'r,
 Danced around the funeral pyre,
 Playin' a violin, -olin,
 Playin' a violin.

She weighted her brother down with stones,
 Rickety-tickety-tin,
 She weighted her brother down with stones,
 And sent him off to Davy Jones.
 All they ever found were some bones,
 And occasional pieces of skin, of skin,
 Occasional pieces of skin.

One day when she had nothing to do,
 Sing rickety-tickety-tin,
 One day when she had nothing to do,
 She cut her baby brother in two,
 And served him up as an Irish stew,
 And invited the neighbors in, -bors in,
 Invited the neighbors in.

And when at last the police came by,
 Sing rickety-tickety-tin,
 And when at last the police came by,
 Her little pranks she did not deny,
 To do so she would have had to lie,
 And lying, she knew, was a sin, a sin,
 Lying, she knew, was a sin.

My tragic tale, I won't prolong,
 Rickety-tickety-tin,
 My tragic tale I won't prolong,
 And if you do not enjoy the song,
 You've yourselves to blame if it's too long,
 You should never have let me begin, begin,
 You should never have let me begin.

♪ The Hunting Song

Almost every day during the hunting season you see at least one item in the newspapers about somebody who has shot somebody else, under the impression that he was a deer with a red hat perhaps, maybe a large flesh-colored squirrel. At any rate, it seems to me that this marks an encouraging new trend in the field of blood sports, and deserves a new type of hunting song which I present herewith.

I always will remember,
 'Twas a year ago November,
 I went out to hunt some deer
 On a mornin' bright and clear.
 I went and shot the maximum the game laws would allow,
 Two game wardens, seven hunters, and a cow.

I was in no mood to trifle,
 I took down my trusty rifle
 And went out to stalk my prey.
 What a haul I made that day.
 I tied them to my fender, and I drove them home somehow,
 Two game wardens, seven hunters, and a cow.

The law was very firm, it
 Took away my permit,
 The worst punishment I ever endured.
 It turned out there was a reason,
 Cows were out of season,
 And one of the hunters wasn't insured.

People ask me how I do it,
 And I say, "There's nothin' to it,
 You just stand there lookin' cute,
 And when something moves, you shoot!"
 And there's ten stuffed heads in my trophy room right now,
 Two game wardens, seven hunters, and a pure-bred Guernsey cow.

♪ My Home Town

Next we have the dear-hearts-and-gentle-people's school of songwriting, in which the singer tells you that, no matter how much sin and vice and crime go on where he comes from, it's still the best place in the world because it's home, you know. Sort of gets you. This example is called *My Home Town*.

I really have a yen
 To go back once again,
 Back to the place where no one wears a frown,
 To see once more those super-special just plain folks

In my home town.

No fellow could ignore
The little girl next door,
She sure looked sweet in her first evening gown.
Now there's a charge for what she used to give for free
In my home town.

I remember Dan, the druggist on the corner, 'e
Was never mean or ornery,
He was swell.
He killed his mother-in-law and ground her up real well,
And sprinkled just a bit
Over each banana split.

The guy that taught us math,
Who never took a bath,
Acquired a certain measure of renown,
And after school he sold the most amazing pictures
In my home town.

That fellow was no fool
Who taught our Sunday School,
And neither was our kindly Parson Brown.
(Hum)
In my home town.

I remember Sam, he was the village idiot.
And though it seems a pity, it
Was so.
He loved to burn down houses just to watch the glow,
And nothing could be done,
Because he was the mayor's son.

The guy that took a knife
And monogrammed his wife,
Then dropped her in the pond and watched her drown.
Oh, yes indeed, the people there are just plain folks
In my home town.

When You Are Old And Gray

The most popular type of popular song is of course the love song, and I'd like to illustrate several subspecies of this form during the evening. First of all, the type of love song where the fellow tells the girl that although the years ahead will almost certainly destroy every vestige of her already dubious charms, that nonetheless his love for her will shine on forever through the years, you know. Another example of stark realism in the popular song.

This particular example is called *When You Are Old And Grey*, and I'd like to dedicate it to anyone in the audience who is still in love with each other.

Since I still appreciate you,
Let's find love while we may.
Because I know I'll hate you
When you are old and gray.

So say you love me here and now,
I'll make the most of that.
Say you love and trust me,
For I know you'll disgust me
When you're old and getting fat.

An awful debility,
A lessened utility,
A loss of mobility
Is a strong possibility.
In all probability
I'll lose my virility
And you your fertility
And desirability,
And this liability
Of total sterility
Will lead to hostility
And a sense of futility,
So let's act with agility
While we still have facility,
For we'll soon reach senility
And lose the ability.

Your teeth will start to go, dear,
Your waist will start to spread.
In twenty years or so, dear,
I'll wish that you were dead.

I'll never love you then at all
The way I do today.
So please remember,
When I leave in December,
I told you so in May.

Live 1967 på Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NOZH0y7VxE>

♩ The Wiener Schnitzel Waltz

Now to continue with the love song, here we have the Viennese waltz type of the Franz Lehar/Johann Strauss school, conjuring up images of gaily waltzing couples and probably stale champagne drunk from sweaty slippers. This example is called *The Wiener Schnitzel Waltz*.

Do you remember the night I held you so tight,
 As we danced to the Wiener Schnitzel Waltz?
 The music was gay, and the setting was Viennese,
 Your hair wore some roses (or perhaps they were peonies),
 I was blind to your obvious faults,
 As we danced 'cross the scene
 To the strains of the Wiener Schnitzel Waltz.

Oh, I drank some champagne from your shoe.
 I was drunk by the time I got through.
 I didn't know as I raised that cup,
 It had taken two bottles to fill the thing up.

It was I who stepped on your dress.
 The skirts all came off, I confess.
 Revealing for all of the others to see
 Just what it was that endeared you to me.

I remember the night I held you so tight,
 As we danced to the Wiener Schnitzel Waltz.
 Your lips were like wine (if you'll pardon the simile),
 The music was lovely and quite Rudolf Frimly.
 I drank wine, you drank chocolate malts,
 And we both turned quite green
 To the strains of the Wiener Schnitzel Waltz.

I Hold Your Hand In Mine

One more love song. I generally like to include at least one or two love songs in the evening's program, partly perhaps to convince people that even at the Harvard University Graduate School, that hotbed of celibacy that I used to call home, we did have our moments. This one is a tender ballad entitled simply *I Hold Your Hand In Mine*.

I hold your hand in mine, dear,
I press it to my lips.
I take a healthy bite
From your dainty fingertips.

My joy would be complete, dear,
If you were only here,
But still I keep your hand
As a precious souvenir.

The night you died I cut it off.
I really don't know why.
For now each time I kiss it
I get bloodstains on my tie.

I'm sorry now I killed you,
For our love was something fine,
And till they come to get me
I shall hold your hand in mine.

Be Prepared

You know: of all the songs I've ever sung, that is the one I've had the most requests not to.

I have time for one more here. This one is a little song dedicated to the Boy Scouts of America. [applause] We seem to have a convention here tonight. The Boy Scouts of America, those noble little... bastions of democracy, and the American Legion of tomorrow. Their motto is... I would like to state at this time that I am not now and have never been... a member of the Boy Scouts of America. Their motto is, as you know, *Be Prepared!* and that is the name of this song.

Be prepared! That's the Boy Scout's marching song,
Be prepared! As through life you march along.
Be prepared to hold your liquor pretty well,
Don't write naughty words on walls if you can't spell.

Be prepared! To hide that pack of cigarettes,
Don't make book if you cannot cover bets.
Keep that pot hidden where you're sure

that it will not be found,
And be careful not to turn on
when the scoutmaster's around,
For he only will insist that it be shared.
Be prepared!

Be prepared! That's the Boy Scouts' solemn creed,
Be prepared! And be clean in word and deed.
Don't solicit for your sister, that's not nice,
Unless you get a good percentage of her price.

Be prepared! And be careful not to do
Your good deeds when there's no one watching you.
If you're looking for adventure of a
new and different kind,
And you come across a Girl Scout who is
similarly inclined,
Don't be nervous, don't be flustered, don't be scared.
Be prepared!

An Evening Wasted With Tom Lehrer

Lehrer Records TL-202/202S, 1959

Decca Records (U.K.) LK 4332/SKL 4097, 1960

Reprise Records R/RS 6199, 1966

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11. [We Will All Go Together When We Go](#)

Poisoning Pigeons In The Park

I'd like to take you now on wings of song, as it were, and try and help you forget perhaps for a while your drab, wretched lives. Here's a song all about spring-time in general, and in particular, about one of the many delightful pastimes the coming of spring affords us all.

Spring is here, a-suh-puh-ring is here.
 Life is skittles and life is beer.
 I think the loveliest time of the year is the spring.
 I do, don't you? 'Course you do.
 But there's one thing that makes spring complete for me,
 And makes ev'ry Sunday a treat for me.

All the world seems in tune
 On a spring afternoon,
 When we're poisoning pigeons in the park.
 Ev'ry Sunday you'll see
 My sweetheart and me,
 As we poison the pigeons in the park.

When they see us coming, the birdies all try an' hide,
 But they still go for peanuts when coated with cyanide.
 The sun's shining bright,
 Ev'rything seems all right,
 When we're poisoning pigeons in the park.

Lalaalalalaladoodiedieedoodoodoo

We've gained notoriety,
 And caused much anxiety
 In the Audubon Society
 With our games.
 They call it impiety,
 And lack of propriety,
 And quite a variety
 Of unpleasant names.
 But it's not against any religion
 To want to dispose of a pigeon.

So if Sunday you're free,
 Why don't you come with me,
 And we'll poison the pigeons in the park.
 And maybe we'll do
 In a squirrel or two,
 While we're poisoning pigeons in the park.

We'll murder them all amid laughter and merriment.
 Except for the few we take home to experiment.
 My pulse will be quickenin'
 With each drop of strychnine
 We feed to a pigeon.
 It just takes a smidgin!
 To poison a pigeon in the park.

Live 1967 på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhuMLpdnOjY&feature=related>

Live 1998, 8e juni, Lehrers sista konsertframträdande för "Hey, Mr Producer" (för producenten Cameron Mackintosh), Lyceum Theatre, London (också Lehrers enda framträdande inför drottning Elisabeth II), på Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89yf-utLVfA>

Bright College Days

Thank you, for my first encore I'd like to turn to a type of song that people like myself find ourselves subjected to with increasing frequency as time goes on, and that is the college alma mater. You'll find yourself at a reunion of grads, and old undergrads, and eh... somebody will start proking out one of these things and everyone will gradually join in. Each in his own key, of course. Until the place is just soggy with nostalgia. Well, a typical such song might be called *Bright College Days*, and might go like this.

Bright college days, oh, carefree days that fly,
 To thee we sing with our glasses raised on high.

[Här höjer Lehrer sina glasögon högt över huvudet, därav skrattsalvorna]
 Let's drink a toast as each of us recalls
 Ivy-covered professors in ivy-covered halls.

Turn on the spigot,
 Pour the beer and swig it,
 And Gaudeamus Igitur.

Here's to parties we tossed,
 To the games that we lost,
 We shall claim that we won them some day.

To the girls young and sweet,
 To the spacious back seat
 Of our roommate's beat up Chevrolet.

To the beer and benzedrine,
 To the way that the dean
 Tried so hard to be pals with us all.

To excuses we fibbed,
 To the papers we cribbed
 From the genius who lived down the hall.

To the tables down at Morey's (wherever that may be)
 Let us drink a toast to all we love the best.
 We will sleep through all the lectures,
 And cheat on the exams,
 And we'll pass, and be forgotten with the rest.

Oh, soon we'll be out amid the cold world's strife.
 Soon we'll be sliding down the razor blade of life.

But as we go our sordid sep'rate ways,
 We shall ne'er forget thee, thou golden college days.

Hearts full of youth,
 Hearts full of truth,
 Six parts gin to one part vermouth.

Note: Denna sång är en parafra på en *Gaudamus Igitur*, en sång som förr sjöngs vid högtidliga tillfällen vid universiteten (vid examina t.ex.) men som i något förvandlad form vanligen används som studentikos dryckesvisa. På länken <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/gaudeamu.html> finns texterna. Lehrer använder temata från 'originaltexten' och skämtet om 'undergraduates' knyter också an till denna text.

A Christmas Carol

One very familiar type of song is the Christmas carol. Although it is perhaps a bit out of season at this time. However, I'm informed by my "disk jockey" friends – of whom I have none – that in order to get a song popular by Christmas time, you have to start plugging it well in advance. So here goes. It has always seemed to me after all that Christmas, with its spirit of giving, offers us all a wonderful opportunity each year to reflect on what we all most sincerely and deeply believe in. I refer of course, to money. And yet none of the Christmas carols that you hear on the radio or in the street, even attempt to capture the true spirit of Christmas as we celebrate it in the United States. That is to say the commercial spirit. So I should like to offer the following Christmas carol for next year, as being perhaps a bit more appropriate.

Christmas time is here, by golly,
 Disapproval would be folly,
 Deck the halls with hunks of holly,
 Fill the cup and don't say "when."
 Kill the turkeys, ducks and chickens,
 Mix the punch, drag out the Dickens,
 Even though the prospect sickens,
 Brother, here we go again.

On Christmas Day you can't get sore,
 Your fellow man you must adore,
 There's time to rob him all the more
 The other three hundred and sixty-four.

Relations, sparing no expense'll
 Send some useless old utensil,
 Or a matching pen and pencil.
 "Just the thing I need! How nice!"
 It doesn't matter how sincere it
 Is, nor how heartfelt the spirit,
 Sentiment will not endear it,
 What's important is the price.

Hark the Herald Tribune sings,
 Advertising wondrous things.
 God rest ye merry, merchants,
 May you make the Yuletide pay.
 Angels we have heard on high
 Tell us to go out and buy!

So let the raucous sleigh bells jingle,
 Hail our dear old friend Kris Kringle,
 Driving his reindeer across the sky.
 Don't stand underneath when they fly by.

Actually I did rather well myself, this last Christmas. The nicest present I received was a gift certificate "good at any hospital for a lobotomy". Rather thoughtful.

The Elements

Now, if I may digress momentarily from the main stream of this evening's symposium, I'd like to sing a song which is completely pointless but which is something I picked up during my career as a scientist. This may prove useful to somebody some day perhaps, in a somewhat bizarre set of circumstances. It's simply the names of the chemical elements set to a possibly recognizable tune.

There's antimony, arsenic, aluminum, selenium,
 And hydrogen and oxygen and nitrogen and rhenium,
 And nickel, neodymium, neptunium, germanium,
 And iron, americium, ruthenium, uranium,
 Europium, zirconium, lutetium, vanadium,
 And lanthanum and osmium and astatine and radium,
 And gold and protactinium and indium and gallium,
 <gasp>
 And iodine and thorium and thulium and thallium.

There's yttrium, ytterbium, actinium, rubidium,
 And boron, gadolinium, niobium, iridium,
 And strontium and silicon and silver and samarium,
 And bismuth, bromine, lithium, beryllium, and barium.

Isn't that interesting?

<laughter>

I knew you would.

I hope you're all taking notes, because there's going to be a short quiz next period.

There's holmium and helium and hafnium and erbium,
 And phosphorus and francium and fluorine and terbium,
 And manganese and mercury, molybdenum, magnesium,
 Dysprosium and scandium and cerium and cesium.
 And lead, praseodymium, and platinum, plutonium,
 Palladium, promethium, potassium, polonium,
 And tantalum, technetium, titanium, tellurium,
 <gasp>
 And cadmium and calcium and chromium and curium.

There's sulfur, californium, and fermium, berkelium,
 And also mendelevium, einsteinium, nobelium,
 And argon, krypton, neon, radon, xenon, zinc, and rhodium,
 And chlorine, carbon, cobalt, copper, tungsten, tin, and sodium.

These are the only ones of which the news has come to Harvard,
 And there may be many others, but they haven't been discovered.

Now, may I have the next slide please?
Got carried away there.

Det finns många videos av "Elements song" på Youtube. Bland de bästa är:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYZ6sCDkooA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNfx0FO4hzs&feature=related>

Från live-versionen:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmwlzwGMMwc&feature=related>

Kanske den allra bästa är denna, ej Youtube:

<http://www.privatehand.com/flash/elements.html>

Oedipus Rex

It seems that most of the songs that you hear these days on the radio played by the disc-jockeys, apart from Rock-n-Roll and other childrens' records, tend to be motion-picture title-songs. Apparently producers feel that we will not attend their movies unless we have the titles well drilled into our heads in advance. Of course, we don't go anyway, but at least this way they make back on the song some of what they've lost on the picture. With the rise of the motion-picture title-song, we've had such hits in the past few years as *The Ten Commandments Mambo*, *Brothers Karamaza Cha-Cha*, *Incredible Shrinking Man*, *I Love You*. I'm sure you're all familiar with these, but a few years ago a motion picture version appeared of Sophocles' immortal tragedy *Oedipus Rex*. This picture played only in the so-called art theaters, and it was not a financial success. And I maintain that the reason it was not a financial success...

<laughter>

(You're away ahead of me.) ...was, that it did not have a title tune, which the people could hum and which would make them actually eager to attend this particular play. So, I have attempted to supply this and here then is the prospective title song from *Oedipus Rex*.

From the Bible to the popular song,
There's one theme that we find right along.
Of all ideals they hail as good,
The most sublime is Motherhood.

There was a man, oh, who it seems,
Once carried this ideal to extremes.
He loved his mother and she loved him,
And yet his story is rather grim.

There once lived a man named Oedipus Rex.
You may have heard about his odd complex.

His name appears in Freud's index
'Cause he loved his mother.

His rivals used to say quite a bit,
That as a monarch he was most unfit.
But still in all they had to admit
That he loved his mother.

Yes he loved his mother like no other.
His daughter was his sister and his son was his brother.
One thing on which you can depend is,
He sure knew who a boy's best friend is!

When he found what he had done,
He tore his eyes out one by one.
A tragic end to a loyal son
Who loved his mother.

So be sweet and kind to Mother,
Now and then have a chat.
Buy her candy or some flowers or a brand new hat.
But maybe you had better let it go at that!

Or you may find yourself with a quite complex complex,
And you may end up like Oedipus.
I'd rather marry a duck-billed platypus,
Than end up like old Oedipus Rex.

The out-patients are out in force tonight, I see.

In Old Mexico

Now, I'm sure you're all aware that this week is national gall-bladder week. So as sort of an educational feature at this point I thought I would acquaint you with some of the results of my recent researches into the career of the late doctor Samuel Gall, inventor of the gall-bladder. Which certainly ranks as one of the more important technological advances since the invention of the joy-buzzer and the dribble-glass. Doctor Gall's faith in his invention was so dramatically vindicated last year, as you no doubt recall, when, for the first time in history, in a nation-wide poll the gall-bladder was voted among the top ten organs. His educational career began interestingly enough in agricultural school, where he majored in animal husbandry, until they caught him at it one day. Whereupon he switched to the field of medicine in which field he also won renown as the inventor of gargling. Which prior to that time had been practiced only furtively by a remote tribe in the Andes who passed the secret down from father to son as part of their oral tradition. He soon became a specialist, specializing in diseases of the rich. He was therefore able to retire at an early age. To the land we all dream about, sunny Mexico of course. The last part of which is completely irrelevant, as

with the whole thing I guess, except, it's a rather sneaky way of getting into this next type of popular song which is one of those things about that magic, and romantic land south of the border.

When it's fiesta time in Guadalajara,
Then I long to be back once again
In Old Mexico.
Where we lived for today,
Never giving a thought to tomara.
To the strumming of guitars,
In a hundred grubby bars
I would whisper "Te amo."

The mariachis would serenade,
And they would not shut up till they were paid.
We ate, we drank, and we were merry,
And we got typhoid and dysentery.

But best of all, we went to the Plaza de Toros.
Now whenever I start feeling morose,
I revive by recalling that scene.
And names like Belmonte, Dominguin, and Manolete,
If I live to a hundred and eighty,
I shall never forget what they mean.

(For there is surely nothing more beautiful in this world than the sight of a lone man facing singlehandedly a half a ton of angry pot roast!)

Out came the matador,
Who must have been potted or
Slightly insane, but who looked rather bored.
Then the picadors of course,
Each one on his horse,
I shouted "Ole!" ev'ry time one was gored.

I cheered at the bandilleros' display,
As they stuck the bull in their own clever way,
For I hadn't had so much fun since the day
My brother's dog Rover
Got run over.

(Rover was killed by a Pontiac. And it was done with such grace and artistry that the witnesses awarded the driver both ears and the tail - but I digress.)

The moment had come,
I swallowed my gum,
We knew there'd be blood on the sand pretty soon.
The crowd held its breath,

Hoping that death
Would brighten an otherwise dull afternoon.

At last, the matador did what we wanted him to.
He raised his sword and his aim was true.
In that moment of truth I suddenly knew
That someone had stolen my wallet.

Now it's fiesta time in Akron, Ohio,
But it's back to old Guadalajara I'm longing to go.
Far away from the strikes of the A.F. of L. and C.I.O.
How I wish I could get back
To the land of the wetback,
And forget the Alamo,
In Old Mexico. Ole!

Note: A.F. of L. (American Federation of Labor) och C.I.O. (Congress of Industrial Organization) är amerikanska fackföreningar (de slogs ihop 1955 till AFL-CIO).

“*Wetback*” är ett förklenande uttryck för mexikaner (kommer från den vanliga flyktvägen till USA, simmande över Rio Grande). Lehrer ändrade senare denna vers till: “For though try, as I may, I can never repay all that I owe/ To the land of mañana/ And cheap marijuana/(It's so easy to grow.)”.

Alamo, i Texas, var ett fort som blev belägrat och föremål för ett berömt slag år 1836 där mexikanerna dödade ett par hundra Texas-rebeller (däribland Davy Crockett). Lehrers uttryck ”forget the Alamo” refererar antagligen till ”Remember the Alamo”, en spridd folksång.

Clementine

I should like to consider the folk song, and expand briefly on a theory I have held for some time, to the effect that the reason most folk songs are so atrocious is that they were written by the people. If professional songwriters had written them instead, things might have turned out considerably differently. For example, consider the old favorite, with which, I'm sure, you're all familiar, "Clementine", you know:

In a cavern, in a canyon,
dadada dadadada...

A song with no recognizable merit whatsoever, and imagine what might have happened if, for example, Cole Porter had tried writing this song. The first verse might have come out like this:

In a cavern, in a canyon,
Excava-ha-ha-hating for a mine,
Far away from the boom-boom-boom of the city
She was so pretty, what a pity, Clementine.

Oh Clementine, can't you tell from the howls of me
 This love of mine calls to you from the bowels of me.
 Are you discerning the returning
 Of this churning, burning, yearning for you-oo-oo... ah-ah...

Well, supposing at this point that Mozart (or one of that crowd) had tried writing a
 verse, the next one might have come out as a baritone aria from an Italian opera,
 somewhat along these lines:

Era legera e come un fairy
 E suo shoes numero nine,
 Herring bo-ho-ho-hoxes senza to-ho-ho-hopses,
 Sandalae per Clementina si, per Clementina si,
 Per Clementina sandalae, per Clementina sandalae, per Clementine.
 Clehementina, Clehementina, Clehe-he-mentina...

Herring boxes senza topses sandalae per Clementina,
 Herring boxes senza topses sandalae per Clementina,
 [??] Clementina, [??] Clementina, cara Clementina, cara
 Clementina-na-na-na-na-na-na-na!

Supposing at this rather dramatic juncture in the narrative, one of our modern
 "cool school" of composers had tried writing a verse, the next one might have
 come out like this:

Drove those ducklings to the water
 Yeah brach! doddley doo doo uh ah!
 Ev'ry morning like 9am
 Ooh pah! de do de do do do, biddley da!
 Got hung up on a splinter, got a-hung up on a splinter
 Cloo ge mop! Huh huh!
 Do de do de do do do
 Fell into the foamy brine, dig that crazy Clementine, man!

To end on a happy note, one can always count on Gilbert and Sullivan for a
 rousing finale, full of words and music – and signifying nothing.

That I missed her depressed her
 young sister named Esther,
 This mister to pester she'd try.
 Now her pestering sister's
 a festering blister,
 You'd best to resist her,
 say I.

The mister resisted,
 the sister persisted,
 I kissed her, all loyalty slipped.
 When she said I could have her,

her sister's cadaver
 Must surely have turned in its crypt.
 Yes, yes, yes, yes!

But I love she and she loves me.
 Enraptured are the both of we.
 Yes I love she and she loves I
 And will through all eternity!

See what I mean?

It Makes A Fellow Proud To Be A Soldier

I have only comparatively recently emerged from the United States army so that I am now of course in the radio-active reserve and, the usual jokes about the army aside, one of the many fine things one has to admit is the way that the army has carried the American democratic ideal to its logical conclusion in the sense that not only do they prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, and color, but also on the grounds of ability. Be that as it may some of you may recall the publicity a few years ago about the army's search for an official army song to be the counterpart of the navy's *Anchors Away* and the airforce's *Up In The Air Junior Birdman* songs. I was in basic training at the time and I recall our platoon sergeant, who was an unfrocked marine. Actually, the change of service had come as quite a blow to him because it meant that he had to memorize a new serial number which took up most of his time. At any rate I recall this sergeant's informing me and my "room-mates" of this rather deplorable fact the army didn't have any official, excuse me, didn't have no official song and suggested that we work on this in our copious free time. Well, I submitted the following song which is called *It Makes A Fellow Proud To Be A Soldier* which, I think, demonstrates the proper spirit you'll agree. However, the fact that it did not win the contest, I can ascribe only to blatant favoritism on the part of the judges.

The heart of every man in our platoon must swell with pride,
 For the nation's youth, the cream of which is marching at his side.
 For the fascinating rules and regulations that we share,
 And the quaint and curious costumes that we're called upon to wear.

Now Al joined up to do his part defending you and me.
 He wants to fight and bleed and kill and die for liberty.
 With the hell of war he's come to grips,
 Policing up the filter tips,
 It makes a fella proud to be a soldier!

When Pete was only in the seventh grade, he stabbed a cop.
 He's real R.A. material and he was glad to swap
 His switchblade and his old zip gun
 For a bayonet and a new M-1.
 It makes a fella proud to be a soldier!

After Johnny got through basic training, he
 Was a soldier through and through when he was done.
 It's effects were so well rooted,
 That the next day he saluted
 A Good Humor man, an usher, and a nun.

Now Fred's an intellectual, brings a book to every meal.
 He likes the deep philosophers, like Norman Vincent Peale.
 He thinks the army's just the thing,
 Because he finds it broadening.
 It makes a fella proud to be a soldier!

Now Ed flunked out of second grade, and never finished school.
 He doesn't know a shelter half from an entrenching tool.
 But he's going to be a big success.
 He heads his class at OCS.
 It makes a fella proud to be a soldier!

Our old mess sergeant's taste buds had been shot off in the war.
 But his savory collations add to our esprit de corps.
 To think of all the marvelous ways
 They're using plastics nowadays.
 It makes a fella proud to be a soldier!

Our lieutenant is the up-and-coming type.
 Played with soldiers as a boy you just can bet.
 It is written in the stars
 He will get his captain's bars,
 But he hasn't got enough box tops yet.

Our captain has a handicap to cope with, sad to tell.
 He's from Georgia, and he doesn't speak the language very well.
 He used to be, so rumor has, the Dean of Men at Alcatraz.
 It makes a fella proud to be,
 When as a kid I vowed to be,
 One ought to be allowed to be
 A soldier. (At ease!)

She's My Girl

And now to the love song. I'm sure you're familiar with love songs on the order of *He's Just My Bill*, my man, my Joe, my Max, and so on where the girl who sings them tells you that, although the man she loves is anti-social, alcoholic, physically repulsive, or just plain unsanitary, nevertheless she is his because he is hers, or something like that. But as far as I know there has never been a popular song from the analogous male point of view, that is to say, of a man who finds himself in love with, or in this case married to, a girl who has nothing whatsoever to recommend her. I have attempted to fill this need. The song is called *She's My Girl*.

Sharks gotta swim, and bats gotta fly,
 I gotta love one woman till I die.
 To Ed or Dick or Bob
 She may be just a slob,
 But to me, well,
 She's my girl.

In winter the bedroom is one large ice cube,
 And she squeezes the toothpaste from the middle of the tube.
 Her hairs in the sink
 Have driven me to drink,
 But she's my girl, she's my girl, she's my girl,
 And I love her.

The girl that I lament for,
 The girl my money's spent for,
 The girl my back is bent for,
 The girl I owe the rent for,
 The girl I gave up Lent for
 Is the girl that heaven meant for me.

So though for breakfast she makes coffee that tastes like sham-poo,
 I come home for dinner and get peanut butter stew,
 Or if I'm in luck,
 It's broiled hockey puck,
 But, oh well, what the hell,
 She's my girl,
 And I love her.

The Masochism Tango

Another familiar type of lovesong is the passionate or fiery variety, usually in tango tempo, in which the singer exhorts his partner to haunt him and taunt him and, if at all possible, to consume him with a kiss of fire. This particular illustration of this genre is called *The Masochism Tango*.

I ache for the touch of your lips, Dear,
 But much more for the touch of your whips, Dear.
 You can raise welts
 Like nobody else,
 As we dance to the Masochism Tango.

Let our love be a flame, not an ember,
 Say it's me that you want to dismember.
 Blacken my eye,
 Set fire to my tie,
 As we dance to the Masochism Tango.

At your command

Before you here I stand,
My heart is in my hand. Ecch!
It's here that I must be.
My heart entreats,
Just hear those savage beats,
And go put on your cleats
And come and trample me.
Your heart is hard as stone or mahogany,
That's why I'm in such exquisite agony.

My soul is on fire,
It's aflame with desire,
Which is why I perspire
When we tango.

You caught my nose
In your left castanet, Love,
I can feel the pain yet, Love,
Ev'ry time I hear drums.
And I envy the rose
That you held in your teeth, Love,
With the thorns underneath, Love,
Sticking into your gums.

Your eyes cast a spell that bewitches.
The last time I needed twenty stitches
To sew up the gash
That you made with your lash,
As we danced to the Masochism Tango.

Bash in my brain,
And make me scream with pain,
Then kick me once again,
And say we'll never part.
I know too well
I'm underneath your spell,
So, Darling, if you smell
Something burning, it's my heart.
Excuse me!

Take your cigarette from its holder,
And burn your initials in my shoulder.
Fracture my spine,
And swear that you're mine,
As we dance to the Masochism Tango.

Live 1967 på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TytGOeiW0aE&feature=related>

🎵 We Will All Go Together When We Go

I am reminded at this point of a fellow I used to know who's name was Henry, only to give you an idea of what an individualist he was he spelt it HEN3RY. The 3 was silent, you see. Henry was financially independent having inherited his father's tar-and-feather business and was therefore able to devote his full time to such intellectual pursuits as writing. I particularly remember a heart-warming novel of his about a young necropheliac who finally achieved his boy-hood ambition by becoming coroner. (The rest of you can look it up when you get home.)

In addition to writing he indulged in a good deal of philosophizing. Like so many contemporary philosophers he especially enjoyed giving helpful advice to people who were happier than he was. One particular bit of advice which I recall, which is the reason I bring up this whole, dreary story is something he said once before they took him away to the Massachussetts state home for the bewildered. He said: "Life is like a sewer: what you get out of it depends on what you put into it." It's always seems to me that this is precisely the sort of dynamic, positive thinking that we so desperately need in these trying times of crisis and universal broo-haha, and so with this in mind I have here a modern positive dynamic uplifting song in the tradition of the great old revival hymns. This one might more accurately be termed a *survival* hymn.

When you attend a funeral,
It is sad to think that sooner or
Later those you love will do the same for you.
And you may have thought it tragic,
Not to mention other adjec-
Tives, to think of all the weeping they will do.
But don't you worry.
No more ashes, no more sackcloth.
And an armband made of black cloth
Will some day never more adorn a sleeve.
For if the bomb that drops on you
Gets your friends and neighbors too,
There'll be nobody left behind to grieve.

And we will all go together when we go.
What a comforting fact that is to know.
Universal bereavement,
An inspiring achievement,
Yes, we all will go together when we go.

We will all go together when we go.
All suffuse with an incandescent glow.
No one will have the endurance
To collect on his insurance,
Lloyd's of London will be loaded when they go.

Oh we will all fry together when we fry.

We'll be french fried potatoes by and by.
 There will be no more misery
 When the world is our rotisserie,
 Yes, we will all fry together when we fry.

Down by the old maelstrom,
 There'll be a storm before the calm.

And we will all bake together when we bake.
 There'll be nobody present at the wake.
 With complete participation
 In that grand incineration,
 Nearly three billion hunks of well-done steak.

Oh we will all char together when we char.
 And let there be no moaning of the bar.
 Just sing out a Te Deum
 When you see that I.C.B.M.,
 And the party will be "come as you are."

Oh we will all burn together when we burn.
 There'll be no need to stand and wait your turn.
 When it's time for the fallout
 And Saint Peter calls us all out,
 We'll just drop our agendas and adjourn.

You will all go directly to your respective Valhallas.
 Go directly, do not pass Go, do not collect two hundred dolla's.

And we will all go together when we go.
 Ev'ry Hottentot and ev'ry Eskimo.
 When the air becomes uranious,
 And we will all go simultaneous.
 Yes we all will go together
 When we all go together,
 Yes we all will go together when we go.

Noter: I.C.B.M. är en förkortning av "intercontinental ballistic missile", ungefär "interkontinental kryssningsrobot" (som bär en sprängladdning).

Live 1967 på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frAEmhqdlFs>

Den bästa videoillustrationen (dock med en förkortad och orkestrerad version av sången) finns på:

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=9029056183261020960>

En bra version, med hela sången, live, finns på:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpnfnPu92Qw&feature=related>

That Was the Year That Was

Reprise Records R/RS 6179, 1965

Pye/Reprise Records (U.K.) R 6179, 1965

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-

National Brotherhood Week

One week of every year is designated National Brotherhood Week. This is just one of many such weeks honoring various worthy causes. One of my favorites is National Make-fun-of-the-handicapped Week which Frank Fontaine and Jerry Lewis are in charge of as you know. During National Brotherhood Week various special events are arranged to drive home the message of brotherhood. This year, for example, on the first day of the week Malcolm X was killed which gives you an idea of how effective the whole thing is. I'm sure we all agree that we ought to love one another and I know there are people in the world that do not love their fellow human beings and I **hate** people like that. Here's a song about National Brotherhood Week.

Oh, the white folks hate the black folks,
 And the black folks hate the white folks.
 To hate all but the right folks
 Is an old established rule.

But during National Brotherhood Week, National Brotherhood Week,
 Lena Horne and Sheriff Clark are dancing cheek to cheek.
 It's fun to eulogize
 The people you despise,
 As long as you don't let 'em in your school.

Oh, the poor folks hate the rich folks,
 And the rich folks hate the poor folks.

All of my folks hate all of your folks,
It's American as apple pie.

But during National Brotherhood Week, National Brotherhood Week,
New Yorkers love the Puerto Ricans 'cause it's very chic.
Step up and shake the hand
Of someone you can't stand.
You can tolerate him if you try.

Oh, the Protestants hate the Catholics,
And the Catholics hate the Protestants,
And the Hindus hate the Moslems,
And everybody hates the Jews.

But during National Brotherhood Week, National Brotherhood Week,
It's National Everyone-smile-at-one-another-hood Week.
Be nice to people who
Are inferior to you.
It's only for a week, so have no fear.
Be grateful that it doesn't last all year!

Live 1967 på Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIJ8ZCs4jY>

(Dock en något annorlunda version: det är Cassius Clay och Mrs. Wallace som dansar)

Noter: *Lena Horne* var (eller är, hon är född 1917 men fortfarande i livet) färgad amerikansk musikalartist, sångerska och aktris, känd också som medborgarrättsaktivist. Hon gjorde för övrigt ett 'anti-Lehrer'-karriärdrag när hon under 1990-talet var aktiv med nya framträdanden och inspelningar drygt 80 år gammal (det är förstås inte för sent för Lehrer heller). *Sheriff (Jim) Clarke* var en ovanligt brutal och rasistisk polischef i Selma, Alabama, där viktiga medborgarrättskamper ägde rum 1963. Clarke lät, förutom den sedvanliga misshandeln av svarta, låta fotografera och hota svarta som köade för att registrera för röstning. Till slut gick han dock för långt och den svarta medborgarrättsrörelsen vann en viktig seger mycket pga upproren i Alabama när president Johnson skrev under en ny vallag år 1965. *Mrs. (Lurleen) Wallace*, var hustru till George Wallace som var guvernör i Alabama vid den tiden och starkt konservativ – hans mest berömda ord kommer från hans tillträde: "In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever". Mrs. Wallace efterträdde sin make som guvernör år 1967 när han kandiderade till president, men dog året efter. (George kandiderade fyra gånger till president men förlorade, blev förlamad efter ett mordförsök 1972, så småningom också troende och enligt uppgift ångerfull för sin tidigare inställning till segregering.)

MLF Lullaby

A considerable amount of commotion was stirred up during the past year over the prospect of a Multi-Lateral Force, known to the headline writers as MLF. Much of this discussion took place during the baseball season so the chronicle may not have covered it but it did get a certain amount of publicity, and the basic idea was that a bunch of us nations, the good guys, would get together on a joint nuclear deterrent force including our current friends, like France, and our traditional friends, like Germany. Here's a song about that called the MLF lullaby.

Sleep, baby, sleep, in peace may you slumber,
No danger lurks, your sleep to encumber,
We've got the missiles, peace to determine,
And one of the fingers on the button will be German.

Why shouldn't they have nuclear warheads?
England says no, but they are all soreheads.
I say a bygone should be a bygone,
Let's make peace the way we did in Stanleyville and Saigon.

Once all the Germans were warlike and mean,
But that couldn't happen again.
We taught them a lesson in nineteen eighteen,
And they've hardly bothered us since then.

So sleep well, my darling, the sandman can linger,
We know our buddies won't give us the finger.
Heil--hail--the Wehrmacht, I mean the Bundeswehr,
Hail to our loyal ally!
MLF
Will scare Brezhnev,
I hope he is half as scared as I.

Live 1967 på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wB7PRY1Aqds&NR=1>

George Murphy

During the last election we had a good deal of fun back east following your senatorial contest out here. I'm from Massachusetts and I feel we have a certain right to gloat over the other states because Massachusetts is after all the only state with three senators. Anyway, here's a salute to your new junior senator.

Hollywood's often tried to mix
Show business with politics,
From Helen Gahagan
To Ronald Reagan,
But Mister Murphy is the star
Who's done the best by far.

Oh gee, it's great,
 At last we've got a Senator who can
 Really sing and dance!
 We can't expect America
 To win against its foes
 With no one in the Senate who
 Can really tap his toes.

The movies that you've seen
 On your television screen
 Show his legislative talents at a glance.
 Should Americans pick crops? George says "No,
 'Cause no one but a Mexican would stoop so low."
 And after all, even in Egypt, the pharaohs
 Had to import
 Hebrew braceros.

Think of all the musicals we have in store.
 Imagine: "Broadway Melody of Nineteen Eighty-Four."
 Yes, now that he's a Senator, he's really got the chance
 To give the public
 A song and dance!

Note: George Murphy (1902-92) var en berömd sång- och dansman som blev politiker, invald i senaten år 1965. Wikipedia ger utförlig information: "George Murphy was the subject of a song by satirist [Tom Lehrer](#) celebrating his appointment in which Lehrer declared in mock vaudeville style: "Oh, gee it's great, at last we've got a senator who can really sing and dance." Lehrer also alluded sarcastically to an infamous remark Murphy once made during a debate about the [bracero](#) program that granted temporary work visas to Mexican migrant farmhands:

Should Americans pick crops?
 George says no;
 'Cuz no one but a Mexican would stoop so low.
 And after all, even in Egypt, the Pharaohs
 Had to import—Hebrew *braceros*.

Murphy had stated that Mexicans were genetically suited to farm labor; because they were "built lower to the ground", it was supposedly "easier for them to stoop". Oddly, some years earlier, in 1949, Murphy himself had starred next to Mexican actor [Ricardo Montalban](#) in the film *Border Incident*, which cast the exploitation of the braceros in a deservedly negative light. Murphy's move from the screen to politics paved the way for the successful transitions of actors such as [Ronald Reagan](#) and later [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#). Indeed, Reagan's nascent rise was also pondered by an incredulous Lehrer, in the opening lines of the same 1965 song:

*Hollywood's often tried to mix
 Show business with politics.
 From [Helen Gahagan](#)
 To . . . Ronald Reagan ?*

The Folk Song Army

One type of song that has come into increasing prominence in recent months is the folk-song of protest. You have to admire people who sing these songs. It takes a certain amount of courage to get up in a coffee-house or a college auditorium and come out in favor of the things that everybody else in the audience is against like peace and justice and brotherhood and so on. The nicest thing about a protest song is that it makes you feel so good. I have a song here which I realise should be accompanied on a folk instrument in which category the piano does not alas qualify so imagine if you will that I am playing an 88 string guitar.

We are the Folk Song Army.
 Everyone of us cares.
 We all hate poverty, war, and injustice,
 Unlike the rest of you squares.

There are innocuous folk songs.
 Yeah, but we regard 'em with scorn.
 The folks who sing 'em have no social conscience.
 Why they don't even care if Jimmy Crack Corn.

If you feel dissatisfaction,
 Strum your frustrations away.
 Some people may prefer action,
 But give me a folk song any old day.

The tune don't have to be clever,
 And it don't matter if you put a coupla extra syllables into a line.
 It sounds more ethnic if it ain't good English,
 And it don't even gotta rhyme--excuse me--rhyne.

Remember the war against Franco?
 That's the kind where each of us belongs.
 Though he may have won all the battles,
 We had all the good songs.

So join in the Folk Song Army,
 Guitars are the weapons we bring
 To the fight against poverty, war, and injustice.
 Ready! Aim! Sing!

Smut

I do have a cause though. It is obscenity. I'm for it. Unfortunately the civil liberties types who are fighting this issue have to fight it owing to the nature of the laws as a matter of freedom of speech and stifling of free expression and so on but we no what's really involved: dirty books are fun. That's all there is to it. But you can't get up in a court and say that I suppose. It's simply a matter of freedom of pleasure, a right which is not guaranteed by the Constitution unfortunately. Anyway, since people seem to be marching for their causes these days I have here a march for mine. It's called...

Smut!
Give me smut and nothing but!
A dirty novel I can't shut,
If it's uncut,
and unsubt-
le.

I've never quibbled
If it was ribald,
I would devour where others merely nibbled.
As the judge remarked the day that he
acquitted my Aunt Hortense,
"To be smut
It must be ut-
terly without redeeming social importance."

Por-
nographic pictures I adore.
Indecent magazines galore,
I like them more
If they're hard core.

(Bring on the obscene movies, murals, postcards, neckties,
samplers, stained-glass windows, tattoos, anything!
More, more, I'm still not satisfied!)

Stories of tortures
Used by debauchers,
Lurid, licentious, and vile,
Make me smile.
Novels that pander
To my taste for candor
Give me a pleasure sublime.
(Let's face it, I love slime.)

All books can be indecent books
Though recent books are bolder,
For filth (I'm glad to say) is in
the mind of the beholder.

When correctly viewed,
 Everything is lewd.
 (I could tell you things about Peter Pan,
 And the Wizard of Oz, there's a dirty old man!)

I thrill
 To any book like Fanny Hill,
 And I suppose I always will,
 If it is swill
 And really filthy.

Who needs a hobby like tennis or philately?
 I've got a hobby: rereading Lady Chatterley.
 But now they're trying to take it all
 away from us unless
 We take a stand, and hand in hand
 we fight for freedom of the press.
 In other words,

Smut! (I love it)
 Ah, the adventures of a slut.
 Oh, I'm a market they can't glut,
 I don't know what
 Compares with smut.

Hip hip hooray!
 Let's hear it for the Supreme Court!
 Don't let them take it away!

En ganska kul videoillustration på Youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klME1mtuTOY>

Send the Marines

What with President Johnson practicing escalation on the Vietnamese and then the Dominican crisis on top of that it has been a nervous year and people have begun to feel like a Christian scientist with appendicitis. Fortunately in times of crisis just like this America always has this number one instrument of diplomacy to fall back on. Here's a song about it.

When someone makes a move
 Of which we don't approve,
 Who is it that always intervenes?
 U.N. and O.A.S.,
 They have their place, I guess,
 But first send the Marines!

We'll send them all we've got,
 John Wayne and Randolph Scott,
 Remember those exciting fighting scenes?
 To the shores of Tripoli,
 But not to Mississippoli,

What do we do? We send the Marines!
 For might makes right,
 And till they've seen the light,
 They've got to be protected,
 All their rights respected,
 'Till somebody we like can be elected.

Members of the corps
 All hate the thought of war,
 They'd rather kill them off by peaceful means.
 Stop calling it aggression,
 O we hate that expression.
 We only want the world to know
 That we support the status quo.
 They love us everywhere we go,
 So when in doubt,
 Send the Marines!

Live 1967 på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHhZF66C1Dc&NR=1>

Note: Sången börjar med en introduktion från *The Marine Corps Battle Theme* som börjar "From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli". Den första insatsen som USA:s marina styrkor gjorde var mot pirater i Medelhavet som krävde tullar för frakter från USA till Europa (det här var 1801 och 1815). Raden "...but not to Mississippoli" syftar på att federala trupper vägrade ingripa vid University of Mississippi år 1962 där medborgarrättsrörelsen krävde att de nya anti-segregeringslagarna (som bl.a. gav svarta tillträde till högre utbildning) skulle upprätthållas.

Pollution

Time was when an American about to go abroad would be warned by his friends or the guidebooks not to drink the water. But times have changed and now a foreigner coming to this country might be offered the following advice.

If you visit American city,
 You will find it very pretty.
 Just two things of which you must beware:
 Don't drink the water and don't breathe the air.

Pollution, pollution,
 They got smog and sewage and mud.
 Turn on your tap and get hot and cold running crud.

See the halibuts and the sturgeons
 Being wiped out by detergents.
 Fish gotta swim and birds gotta fly,
 But they don't last long if they try.

Pollution, pollution,
 You can use the latest toothpaste,
 And then rinse your mouth with industrial waste.

Just go out for a breath of air,
 And you'll be ready for Medicare.
 The city streets are really quite a thrill.
 If the hoods don't get you, the monoxide will.

Pollution, pollution,
 Wear a gas mask and a veil.
 Then you can breathe, long as you don't inhale.

Lots of things there that you can drink,
 But stay away from the kitchen sink.
 The breakfast garbage that you throw in to the Bay,
 They drink at lunch in San Jose.

So go to the city, see the crazy people there.
 Like lambs to the slaughter,
 They're drinking the water
 And breathing <cough> the air.

Live 1967 på Youtube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPrAuF2f_oI&feature=related

(Något annorlunda textversion i versen "Lots of things there you can drink...", som Lehrer bl.a. anpassade efter var konserten hölls)

So Long, Mom (A Song for World War III)

This year we've been celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Civil War and the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of World War I and the twentieth anniversary of the end of World War II so all in all it's been a good year for the war buffs and a number of LPs and television specials have come out capitalizing on all this "nostalgia" with particular emphasis on the songs of the various wars. I feel that if any songs are going to come out of World War III we'd better start writing them now. I have one here. You might call it a bit of pre-nostalgia. This is the song that some of the boys sang as they went bravely of to World War III.

So long, Mom,
 I'm off to drop the bomb,
 So don't wait up for me.

But while you swelter
Down there in your shelter,
You can see me
On your TV.

While we're attacking frontally,
Watch Brinkally and Huntally,
Describing contrapuntally
The cities we have lost.
No need for you to miss a minute
Of the agonizing holocaust. (Yeah!)

Little Johnny Jones he was a U.S. pilot,
And no shrinking vi'let was he.
He was mighty proud when World War Three was declared,
He wasn't scared,
No siree!

And this is what he said on
His way to Armageddon:

So long, Mom,
I'm off to drop the bomb,
So don't wait up for me.
But though I may roam,
I'll come back to my home,
Although it may be
A pile of debris.

Remember, Mommy,
I'm off to get a commie,
So send me a salami,
And try to smile somehow.
I'll look for you when the war is over,
An hour and a half from now!

Live 1967 på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkIr0UD9eSo&feature=related>

En videoillustration, som inkluderar Brinkley och Hunt:

<http://www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/193516>

Whatever Became of Hubert?

I wonder how many people here tonight remember Hubert Humphrey. He used to be a senator. From time to time you read something about him pinning a medal on somebody or making a speech, or every now and then you read something in one of those "Where Are They Now?" columns. Whatever became of Deanna Durbin and Hubert Humphrey and so on. This became quite an issue last winter at the time of Winston Churchill's funeral when President Johnson was too ill to go and

somebody suggested that he send Hubert and he said "Hubert who?" And all America was singing...

Whatever became of Hubert?
Has anyone heard a thing?
Once he shone on his own,
Now he sits home alone,
And waits for the phone to ring.

Once a fiery liberal spirit,
Ah, but now when he speaks he must clear it.
Second fiddle's a hard part, I know,
When they don't even give you a bow.

"We must protest his treatment," Hubert,
Says each newspaper reader.
As someone remarked to Schubert,
"Take us to your *Lieder*."

(Sorry about that)

Whatever became of Hubert?
We miss you, so tell us please.
Are you sad? Are you cross? Are you gathering moss
While you wait for the boss to sneeze?

Does Lyndon, recalling when he was VP,
Say, "I'll do unto you like they did unto me?"
Do you dream about staging a coup?
Hubert, what happened to you?

New Math

Some of you who have small children may have perhaps been put in the embarrassing position of being unable to do your child's arithmetic homework because of the current revolution in mathematics teaching known as the New Math. So as a public service here tonight I thought I would offer a brief lesson in the New Math. Tonight we're going to cover subtraction. This is the first room I've worked for a while that didn't have a blackboard so we will have to make due with more primitive visual aids, as they say in the "ed biz." Consider the following subtraction problem, which I will put up here: $342 - 173$. Now remember how we used to do that. 3 from 2 is 9 carried to 1 and if you're under 35 or went to a private school you say 7 from 3 is 6, but if you're over 35 and went to a public school you say 8 from 4 is 6, carried to 1 so we have 169, but in the new approach, as you know, the important thing is to understand what you're doing rather than to get the right answer. Here's how they do it now.

You can't take three from two,
Two is less than three,

So you look at the four in the tens place.
 Now that's really four tens,
 So you make it three tens,
 Regroup, and you change a ten to ten ones,
 And you add them to the two and get twelve,
 And you take away three, that's nine.
 Is that clear?

Now instead of four in the tens place
 You've got three,
 'Cause you added one,
 That is to say, ten, to the two,
 But you can't take seven from three,
 So you look in the hundreds place.

From the three you then use one
 To make ten ones...
 (And you know why four plus minus one
 Plus ten is fourteen minus one?
 'Cause addition is commutative, right?)
 And so you've got thirteen tens,
 And you take away seven,
 And that leaves five...

Well, six actually.
 But the idea is the important thing.

Now go back to the hundreds place,
 And you're left with two.
 And you take away one from two,
 And that leaves...?

Everybody get one?
 Not bad for the first day!

Hooray for new math,
 New-hoo-hoo-math,
 It won't do you a bit of good to review math.
 It's so simple,
 So very simple,
 That only a child can do it!

Now that actually is not the answer that I had in mind, because the book that I got this problem out of wants you to do it in base eight. But don't panic. Base eight is just like base ten really - if you're missing two fingers. Shall we have a go at it?
 Hang on.

You can't take three from two,
 Two is less than three,
 So you look at the four in the eights place.

Now that's really four eights,
 So you make it three eights,
 Regroup, and you change an eight to eight ones,
 And you add them to the two,
 and you get one-two base eight,
 Which is ten base ten,
 And you take away three, that's seven.

Now instead of four in the eights place
 You've got three,
 'Cause you added one,
 That is to say, eight, to the two,
 But you can't take seven from three,
 So you look at the sixty-fours.

"Sixty-four? How did sixty-four get into it?" I hear you cry.
 Well, sixty-four is eight squared, don't you see?
 (Well, you ask a silly question, and you get a silly answer.)

From the three you then use one
 To make three eights.
 And you add those eights to the three,
 And you get one-three base eight,
 Or, in other words,
 In base ten you have eleven,
 And you take away seven,
 And seven from eleven is four.
 Now go back to the sixty-fours,
 And you're left with two,
 And you take away one from two,
 And that leaves...?

Now, let's not always see the same hands.
 One, that's right!
 Whoever got that one can stay after the show and clean the erasers.

Hooray for new math,
 New-hoo-hoo-math,
 It won't do you a bit of good to review math.
 It's so simple,
 So very simple,
 That only a child can do it!

Come back tomorrow night. We'll be covering fractions.

Now I've often thought I'd like to write a mathematics text book because I have a title that I know will sell a million copies. I'll call it Tropic of Calculus.

Ingen videoillustration, men en av Lehrer bemyndigad länk med text, finns på: <http://curvebank.calstatela.edu/newmath/newmath.htm>

En hyfsad illustration på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a81YvrV7Vv8&feature=related>

Alma

Last December 13th, there appeared in the newspapers the juiciest, spiciest, raciest obituary that has ever been my pleasure to read. It was that of a lady name Alma Mahler Gropius Werfel who had, in her lifetime, managed to acquire as lovers practically all of the top creative men in central Europe, and, among these lovers, who were listed in the obituary, by the way, which was what made it so interesting, there were three whom she went so far as to marry. One of the leading composers of the day: Gustav Mahler, composer of *Das Lied von der Erde* and other light classics. One of the leading architects: Walter Gropius of the Bauhaus school of design. And one of the leading writers: Franz Werfel, author of the song of Bernadette and other masterpieces. It's people like that who make you realize how little you've accomplished. It is a sobering thought, for example, that when Mozart was my age he had been dead for two years. It seemed to me, I'm reading this obituary, that the story of Alma was the stuff of which ballads should be made so here is one.

The loveliest girl in Vienna
Was Alma, the smartest as well.
Once you picked her up on your antenna,
You'd never be free of her spell.

Her lovers were many and varied,
From the day she began her -- beguine.
There were three famous ones whom she married,
And God knows how many between.

Alma, tell us!
All modern women are jealous.
Which of your magical wands
Got you Gustav and Walter and Franz?

The first one she married was Mahler,
Whose buddies all knew him as Gustav.
And each time he saw her he'd holler:
"Ach, that is the fräulein I moost have!"

Their marriage, however, was murder.
He'd scream to the heavens above,
"I'm writing *Das Lied von der Erde*,
And she only wants to make love!"

Alma, tell us!
All modern women are jealous.
You should have a statue in bronze
For bagging Gustav and Walter and Franz.

While married to Gus, she met Gropius,
 And soon she was swinging with Walter.
 Gus died, and her teardrops were copious.
 She cried all the way to the altar.

But he would work late at the Bauhaus,
 And only came home now and then.
 She said, "What am I running? A chow house?
 It's time to change partners again."

Alma, tell us!
 All modern women are jealous.
 Though you didn't even use Ponds,
 You got Gustav and Walter and Franz.

While married to Walt she'd met Werfel,
 And he too was caught in her net.
 He married her, but he was carefull,
 'Cause Alma was no Bernadette.

And that is the story of Alma,
 Who knew how to receive and to give.
 The body that reached her embalma'
 Was one that had known how to live.

Alma, tell us!
 How can they help being jealous?
 Ducks always envy the swans
 Who get Gustav and Walter,
 you never did falter,
 With Gustav and Walter and Franz.

I know some people feel that marriage as an institution is dying out, but I disagree and the point was driven home to me rather forcefully not long ago by a letter I received which said: "Darling, I love you and I cannot live without you. Marry me, or I will kill myself." Well, I was a little disturbed at that until I took another look at the envelope and saw that it was addressed to occupant. Speaking of love, one problem that recurs more and more frequently these days in books, and plays, and movies on, is the inability of people to communicate with the people they love. Husbands and wives who can't communicate; children who can't communicate with their parents, and so on. And the characters in these books, and plays, and so on, and in real life, I might add, spend hours bemoaning the fact that they can't communicate. I feel that if a person can't communicate the very least he can do is to **shut up**.

🎵 Who's Next?

One of the big news items of the past year concerned the fact that China, which we call "Red China," exploded a nuclear bomb, which we call a "device". Then Indonesia announced that it was going to have one soon, and proliferation became the word of the day. Here's a song about that:

First we got the bomb, and that was good,
 'Cause we love peace and motherhood.
 Then Russia got the bomb, but that's okay,
 'Cause the balance of power's maintained that way.
 Who's next?

France got the bomb, but don't you grieve,
 'Cause they're on our side (I believe).
 China got the bomb, but have no fears,
 They can't wipe us out for at least five years.
 Who's next?

Then Indonesia claimed that they
 Were gonna get one any day.
 South Africa wants two, that's right:
 One for the black and one for the white.
 Who's next?

Egypt's gonna get one too,
 Just to use on you know who.
 So Israel's getting tense.
 Wants one in self defense.
 "The Lord's our shepherd," says the psalm,
 But just in case, we better get a bomb.
 Who's next?

Luxembourg is next to go,
 And (who knows?) maybe Monaco.
 We'll try to stay serene and calm
 When Alabama gets the bomb.
 Who's next?
 Who's next?
 Who's next?
 Who's next?

Live 1967 på Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FgMTAj4f_o

Wernher von Braun

And what is it that put America in the forefront of the nuclear nations? And what is it that will make it possible to spend 20 billion dollars of your money to put some clown on the moon? Well, it was good old American know-how, that's what. As provided by good old Americans like Dr. Wernher von Braun.

Gather round while I sing you of Wernher von Braun,
A man whose allegiance
Is ruled by expedience.
Call him a Nazi, he won't even frown.
"Ha, Nazi Schmalzy," says Wernher von Braun.

Don't say that he's hypocritical,
Say rather that he's apolitical.

"Once the rockets are up, who cares where they come down?
That's not my department," says Wernher von Braun.

Some have harsh words for this man of renown,
But some think our attitude
Should be one of gratitude,
Like the widows and cripples in old London town
Who owe their large pensions to Wernher von Braun.

You too may be a big hero,
Once you've learned to count backwards to zero.
"In German oder English I know how to count down,
Und I'm learning Chinese," says Wernher von Braun.

Live 1967 på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEJ9HrZq7Ro&NR=1>

En fantastisk videoillustration, med 'riktiga' WvB-bilder:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVPjuiABp_E

The Vatican Rag

Another big news story of year concerned the ecumenical council in Rome, known as Vatican II. Among the things they did in an attempt to make the church more commercial was to introduce the vernacular into portions of the mass, to replace Latin, and to widen somewhat the range of music permissible in the liturgy, but I feel that if they really want to sell the product, in this secular age, what they ought to do is to redo some of the liturgical music in popular song forms. I have a modest example here. It's called *The Vatican Rag*.

First you get down on your knees,
Fiddle with your rosaries,
Bow your head with great respect,
And genuflect, genuflect, genuflect!

Do whatever steps you want, if
You have cleared them with the Pontiff.
Everybody say his own
Kyrie eleison,
Doin' the Vatican Rag.

Get in line in that processional,
Step into that small confessional,
There, the guy who's got religion'll
Tell you if your sin's original.
If it is, try playin' it safer,
Drink the wine and chew the wafer,
Two, four, six, eight,
Time to transubstantiate!

So get down upon your knees,
Fiddle with your rosaries,
Bow your head with great respect,
And genuflect, genuflect, genuflect!

Make a cross on your abdomen,
When in Rome do like a Roman,
Ave Maria,
Gee it's good to see ya,
Gettin' ecstatic an'
Sorta dramatic an'
Doin' the Vatican Rag!

Live 1967 på Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f72CTDe4-0&feature=related>

Miscellaneous Tom Lehrer Songs

Lite mer utvidgad version finns på:

<http://dmdb.org/lyrics/lehrer.misc.html>

1. [Everybody Eat](#)
 2. [Silent E](#)
 3. [I Got It From Agnes](#)
 4. [L-Y](#)
 5. [Thanksgiving](#)
 6. [That's Mathematics](#)
 7. [The Derivative Song](#)
 8. [The Professor's Song](#)
 9. [There's A Delta For Every Epsilon](#)
-

Everybody Eat

Everybody eat!

Every niece and every nephew even if you're deaf you'll hear them digest.
Kiddie's by the dozen from local zoos
Someone's second cousin but god knows whose.

Everybody feed

For example there's an uncle who when he's drunk'll be a real pest.
And cousin Julia is actin' childish to put it mildish.
Hey you kids I don't know who just did that but it's gross
Then Al begins to smoke and tells a dirty joke when Grandma's comatose.

Oh everybody's swill.

And put up with uncle Gordon video recordin' everyone here.
Now they've all gone away
And we're so happy to say
They won't be back for a year.

Silent E

Who can turn a can into a cane?
Who can turn a pan into a pane?
It's not too hard to see
It's Silent E

Who can turn a cub into a cube?
 Who can turn a tub into a tube?
 It's elementary
 For Silent E

He took a pin and turned it into pine
 He took a twin and turned him into twine

Who can turn a cap into a cape?
 Who can turn a tap into a tape?
 A little glob becomes a globe instantly
 If you just add Silent E

He turned a dam - Alikazam! - into a dame
 But my friend Sam stayed just the same

Who can turn a man into a mane?
 Who can turn a van into a vane?
 A little hug becomes huge instantly
 Don't add W, don't add X, and don't add Y or Z,
 Just add Silent E

Bra videoillustration på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TKDcHEcE8Q&feature=related>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVC9TayQIh8&NR=1>

I Got It From Agnes

I love my friends and they love me
 We're just as close as we can be
 And just because we really care
 Whatever we get, we share!

I got it from Agnes
 She got it from Jim
 We all agree it must have been
 Louise who gave it to him

Now she got it from Harry
 Who got it from Marie
 And ev'rybody knows that Marie
 Got it from me

Giles got it from Daphne
 She got it from Joan
 Who picked it up in County Cork
 A-kissin' the Blarney Stone

Pierre gave it to Shiela
 Who must have brought it there
 He got it from Francois and Jacques
 Aha, lucky Pierre!

Max got it from Edith
 Who gets it ev'ry spring
 She got it from her Daddy
 Who just gives her ev'rything

She then gave it to Daniel
 Whose spaniel has it now
 Our dentist even got it
 And we're still wondering how

But I got it from Agnes
 Or maybe it was Sue
 Or Millie or Billie or Gillie or Willie
 It doesn't matter who

It might have been at the pub
 or at the club, or in the loo
 And if you will be my friend, then I might ...
 (Mind you, I said "might" ...)
 Give it to you!

Live från The Michael Parkinson Show, England, 4 Oct 1980, på Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKZR3Bcj4jw&NR=1>

(Intervjun gjordes in anslutning till scenuppsättningen av Tomfoolery. Den cigarettökande mannen på videon är Robin Ray, en engelsk skådespelare som spelade i den revyn)

L-Y

You're wearing your squeaky shoes
 And right there taking a snooze
 Is a tiger, so how do you walk on by?
 Silently ... silently ... silent ... L-Y

You're a secret agent man
 Who's after the secret plan
 How do you act so they don't know you're as spy?
 Normally ... normally ... normal ... L-Y

At an eating contest you boast
 That you can eat the most
 How do you down your fiftieth piece of pie?
 Eagerly ... eagerly ... eager ... L-Y

On the lake your boat upset
 And your clothes got soaking wet
 How do you stand and wait for them to dry?
 D-d-d-d-d patiently ... d-d-d-d-d patiently ... patient ... L-Y

In the public library
 You fall and you hurt your knee
 But the isgn says "quiet please," so how can you cry?
 Quietly quietly quiet ... L-Y

As you walk along the street
 A porcupine you meet
 How do you shake his hand when he says hi?
 Carefully ... carefully careful ... L-Y

You enter a very dark room
 And sitting there in the gloom
 Is Dracula! Now how do you say goodbye?
 Immediately ... immediately ... immediate ... L-Y
 Bye Bye!

En underbar animation från Electric Company på Youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxVoHqgemWE>

Thanksgiving

We gather together to ask the lord's blessing
 For turkey and dressing and cranberry sauce.
 It was slightly distressing but now we're convalescing
 So sing praises to his name and forget not to floss.
 Our nearest and dearest we don't want confessing
 It's sort of depressing to have them so near.
 Our feelings supressing for lightly acquiescing
 And perfectly professing we're glad they were here.
 We gathered together and got the lord's blessing
 Of course we're just guessing 'cause how can you tell?
 Our stomach's are bloating
 Our kidneys nearly floating
 Hellos are very nice but goodbyes can be swell

That's Mathematics

(Originally) to the tune of "That's Entertainment."
 Counting sheep
 When you're trying to sleep,

Being fair
When there's something to share,
Being neat
When you're folding a sheet,
That's mathematics!

When a ball
Bounces off of a wall,
When you cook
From a recipe book,
When you know
How much money you owe,
That's mathematics!

How much gold can you hold in an elephant's ear?
When it's noon on the moon, then what time is it here?
If you could count for a year, would you get to infinity,
Or somewhere in that vicinity?

When you choose
How much postage to use,
When you know
What's the chance it will snow,
When you bet
And you end up in debt,
Oh try as you may,
You just can't get away
From mathematics!

Andrew Wiles gently smiles,
Does his thing, and voila!
Q.E.D., we agree,
And we all shout hurrah!
As he confirms what Fermat
Jotted down in that margin,
Which could've used some enlargin'.

Tap your feet,
Keepin' time to a beat,
Of a song
While you're singing along,
Harmonize
With the rest of the guys,
Yes, try as you may,
You just can't get away
From mathematics!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfZWYUXn3So>

The Derivative Song

To "There'll be Some Changes Made".
 You take a function of x and you call it y ,
 Take any x -nought that you care to try,
 You make a little change and call it Δx ,
 The corresponding change in y is what you find Δy ,
 And then you take the quotient and now carefully
 Send Δx to zero, and I think you'll see
 That what the limit gives us, if our work all checks,
 Is what we call dy/dx ,
 It's just dy/dx .

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfZWYyUXn3So>

The Professor's Song

To "If You Give Me Your Attention."
 If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am.
 I'm a brilliant math'matician - also something of a ham.
 I have tried for numerous degrees, in fact I've one of each;
 Of course that makes me eminently qualified to teach.
 I understand the subject matter thoroughly, it's true,
 And I can't see why it isn't all as obvious to you.
 Each lecture is a masterpiece, meticulously planned,
 Yet everybody tells me that I'm hard to understand,
 And I can't think why.

My diagrams are models of true art, you must agree,
 And my handwriting is famous for its legibility.
 Take a word like "minimum" (to choose a random word),
This was performed at a blackboard, and the professor wrote:
 ^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^
 For anyone to say he cannot read that, is absurd.
 The anecdotes I tell get more amusing every year,
 Though frankly, what they go to prove is sometimes less than clear,
 And all my explanations are quite lucid, I am sure,
 Yet everybody tells me that my lectures are obscure,
 And I can't think why.

Consider, for example, just the force of gravity:
 It's inversely proportional to something - let me see -
 It's r^3 - no, r^2 - no, it's just r , I'll bet -
 The sign in front is plus - or is it minus, I forget -
 Well, anyway, there is a force, of that there is no doubt.
 All these formulas are trivial if you only think them out.
 Yet students tell me, "I have memorized the whole year through

Ev'rything you've told us, but the problems I can't do."
And I can't think why!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfZWYUXn3So>

There's A Delta For Every Epsilon

There's a delta for every epsilon,
It's a fact that you can always count upon.
There's a delta for every epsilon
And now and again,
There's also an N.

But one condition I must give:
The epsilon must be positive
A lonely life all the others live,
In no theorem
A delta for them.

How sad, how cruel, how tragic,
How pitiful, and other adjectives
That I might mention.
The matter merits our attention.
If an epsilon is a hero,
Just because it is greater than zero,
It must be mighty discouragin'
To lie to the left of the origin.

This rank discrimination is not for us,
We must fight for an enlightened calculus,
Where epsilons all, both minus and plus,
Have deltas
To call their own.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfZWYUXn3So>

Electric Company Songs by Tom Lehrer

The Hound Song:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArWOZY6AgQw&feature=related>

The Mumble Song: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXVblZkBmLQ>

The Menu Song:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzFE6fE703A&feature=related>

Silent E: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVC9TayQIh8>

L-Y song: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxVoHqgemWE&feature=related>

S-N song: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNhL9zwXeNY&feature=related>

N apostrophe T:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h66eInAb3TQ&feature=related>

Fight Song [only sound]: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4PiyXMxE8s>

Finch and Dench: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1vHPF4Ey4w>