

# GIAI THOẠI VỀ KHÚC NHẠC GIAO THỪA BÀI AULD LANG SYNE

Lê Văn Lân

Ở Hoa Kỳ, dân chúng vào nửa đêm giao thừa dương lịch thường thức khuya để xem TV Chương Trình đón năm mới ở Quảng Trường Time Square ở New York, chủ đích là coi cảnh dân chúng theo dõi quả cầu tụt xuống theo 12 tiếng chuông đồng hồ để rồi tung bừng hát mừng một năm mới bằng bài hát Auld Lang Syne.

Rất nhiều người Việt Nam thắc mắc chung quanh bài hát này vì họ quen nghe điệu hát quen thuộc này qua bài hát Tạm Biệt hay Ce n'est qu'un au-revoir! mỗi khi chia tay bãi trường hay tan Lửa Trại Hướng Đạo. Điệu hát này con nít Việt Nam nhạy ý đổi lời là: Ô e, con ma đánh đu, Tặc zăng nhảy dù Zorrô bắn súng!

Kỳ thực, bài này gốc gác từ xứ Tô Cách Lan nhưng lại mang rất nhiều cái lạ. Chữ Auld Lang Syne nếu dịch ra tiếng Anh là Times gone by nghĩa là nói theo tiếng Việt là Cái thừa năn xưa năm xưa, mà nói theo giọng Nam kỳ xứ Việt là Hồi Nấm.

Điều rất lạ thứ nhất là, dù là thiên hạ không biết chút xíu gì về tiếng Tô Cách Lan, nhưng điệu nhạc của nó bình dị quyến rũ nhưng thấm đẽ dàng vào tâm trí khiến người ta nghe vài lần là thuộc ngay, có thể nói hát mà không hiểu lời ca nhưng cảm thấy hay, điều này thật lạ lắm.

Cái lạ lớn thứ hai là bài hát này được phổ biến hầu như khắp hoàn cầu nhưng lại được hát vào những dịp khác nhau ?

Và cái lạ thứ ba là nguyên thủy của bài hát là dùng để "mừng đón" một điều vui mới đến, nhưng về sau nó lại được sử dụng để ngậm ngùi "tiễn đưa" một điều luyến tiếc.

Bài Auld Lang Syne ban đầu là do Thi Sĩ trữ danh của xứ Tô Cách Lan tên là Robert Burns chuyển ký và in ra dựa vào một bài du ca dân dã của xứ này. Robert Burns đưa ra một bản chép của bài ca nguyên thủy đến Viện Bảo Tàng Anh với câu ghi chú sau: Bài hát sau đây, một bài hát rất cổ, cổ nhất trong những bài xưa cổ và chưa bao giờ được in ra và ngay dù xuất hiện dưới dạng bản thảo cho đến lúc tôi ghi nó ra từ tiếng hát một cụ già, điều này đã đủ khiến cho người ta tin cậy. Nhưng điệu ca mà ông Burns chuyển ký ra không phải là điệu hát ngày nay.

Robert Burns là một Thi Hào nặng tình thần dân tộc của người dân Tô Cách Lan vào cỡ như Nguyễn Du ở Việt Nam. Ông sinh năm 1759, chết 1796 lúc 37 tuổi. Ảnh hưởng thi ca của ông ở Anh Cát Lợi kéo dài hai thế kỷ sau với tinh thần thi ca lãng mạng và ái quốc. Ngoài bài Auld Lang Syne, ông còn làm bài Scots Who Hae một thời được dân Tô Cách Lan dùng hát như bản quốc thiều vậy.

Thi Sĩ Robert Burns đã chuyển thổ âm Tô Cách Lan ra Anh ngữ như sau:

## **Auld Lang Syne**

by Robert Burns

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind ?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And *auld lang syne* ?

CHORUS:

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne,  
We'll tak a cup of kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne!  
And surely ye'll *be your pint-stowp*,  
And surely I'll be mine,  
And we'll tak a cup o kindness yet,

For auld lang syne!  
We *twa* hae run about the *braes*,  
And *pou'd* the *gowans* fine,  
But we've wander'd *monie* a weary *fit*,  
Sin auld lang syne.

We *twa* hae *paidl'd* in the *burn*  
Frae *morning sun* till *dine*,  
But seas between us *braid* hae roar'd  
Sin auld lang syne.

And there's a hand my trusty *fiere*,  
And gie's a hand o thine,  
And we'll tak a right *guid-willie waught*,  
For auld lang syne.

(And now for the English translation:)

### **Times Long Gone**

By Robert Burns

Should old acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind  
Should old acquaintance be forgot,  
And days of long ago  
CHORUS:  
For old long ago, my dear  
For old long ago,  
We will take a cup of kindness yet  
For old long ago  
We two have run about the hillsides  
And pulled the daisies fine,  
But we have wandered many a weary foot  
For old long ago

We two have paddled in the stream  
From noon until dinner time,  
But seas between us broad have roared  
Since old long ago  
And there is a hand, my trusty friend,  
And give us a hand of yours,  
And we will take a goodwill draught  
For old long ago

And surely you will pay for your pint,  
And surely I will pay for mine  
And we will take a cup of kindness yet  
For old long ago

Đây là một loại dân ca hay ca dao Tô Cách Lan (ballad) gồm 5 đoạn, mỗi đoạn 4 câu và câu cuối luôn luôn kết thúc bằng câu For Auld Lang Syne. Hát xong một đoạn là trở về điệp khúc để rồi hát đến đoạn kế. Cứ hát hoài như vậy.

Tôi thấy điệu này giống như Việt Nam ta có điệu hát nhi đồng về Chuyện Con Voi. Bài này được Nhạc Sĩ Nguyễn Xuân Khoái phổ nhạc với lời như sau mà tôi từng nghe Ca Sĩ Hoài Trung của Ban Thăng Long trình diễn ở Sài Gòn

Con vôi, ý ý con vôi.  
Cái vôi ý ý đi trước.  
Hai chân trước ịch di ịch trước  
Hai chân sau ịch di ịch sau  
Còn cái đuôi thì đi sau rớt  
Tôi ngồi, tôi kể nốt cái chuyện con voi  
Con vôi, ý ý con vôi  
Cái vôi ý ý đi trước

....

Auld Lang Syne dịch theo từng chữ Tô Cách Lan ra Anh ngữ là Old long since, được Robert Burns dịch là Times gone by. Nói theo tiếng Việt, tôi nghĩ thích hợp hơn cả dịch là "Năm xưa, năm xưa, năm xưa".

Đại ý của bài Ca Dao Tô Cách Lan này là hai người bạn thân rất lâu không gặp nhau rồi rủ nhau nhậu bia, nhậu rượu, nhưng với điều kiện tiền ai nấy trả. Hai ông cùng lè nhè nhắc lại bao nhiêu chuyện cũ thuở năm xưa năm xưa như: Nào là cùng nhau leo đồi, nào là cùng nhau lội suối...Cứ nhắc xong một kỷ niệm thì họ lại cùng nâng ly nốc cạn. Uống cho đến say thì thôi.

Tôi mạo muội dịch ý bài này ra thơ lục bát Việt cho vui, cố gắng lột tinh thần vui nhộn của nguyên văn về hai ông bạn vốn là bọm nhậu lưu tồn cố hữu bằng cách lập lại chữ "Năm Xưa như trong nguyên văn nhắc lại chữ For old long ago:

NĂM XƯA NĂM XƯA NĂM XƯA  
Điệp khúc:  
Năm xưa năm xưa năm xưa,  
Ta cùng nhắc lại cho vừa lòng nhau  
Bạn bè bạc tóc bạc râu  
Gặp nhau ôn lại hồi đầu chuyện xưa!

Bốn đoạn đồng thanh  
Năm xưa năm xưa năm xưa  
Xưa sao xưa đến bây giờ thật xưa  
Cùng nhau nâng chén ta ư  
Nhắc lại hồi năm, nhắc bữa chuyện xưa  
Hai ta leo khắp núi đồi  
Hoa đồng cỏ dại hái thôi đã đời  
Lang thang chân mỏi rã rời  
Nhắc lại hồi năm với hồi năm xưa!

Hai ta lặn lội muôn bề  
Từ trưa đến tối không về ăn cơm  
Biển đời trời rộng muôn phương  
Từ hồi năm năm con đường năm xưa!

Tay tôi, bạn hãy nắm đi  
Rồi đưa tay bạn tôi ghi một khi  
Thôi ta nốc cạn ly bia  
Để mừng tái ngộ nhớ về năm xưa  
Ly tôi, tôi trả tiền tôi

Ly anh, anh trả...chớ đòi đải nhau  
Ta cùng nhậu quất cần câu  
Cùng nhau kể lại hồi đầu năm xưa.

Sự lập đi lập lại "Năm xưa năm xưa năm xưa" đã nhại cái tật lè nhè của các bợm nhậu. Dân Tô Cách Lan là dân hà tiện nên cùng đi uống rượu thì tiền ai nấy trả, nghe vui thiệt.

Lời ca Việt tếu Ò e con ma đánh đu nghe không ngờ lại đúng âm điệu nguyên thủy vì người Tô Cách Lan đã dùng cây kèn bagpipe để thổi.

Theo phong tục cổ truyền của xứ Tô Cách Lan, người dân đã hát bài này vào dịp Giao Thừa Năm Mới hay Hogmanay.

Người đã phổ biến bài này bằng cách chơi nó vào dịp Giao Thừa Tết Dương Lịch trong những buổi phát thanh thường niên kể từ năm 1929 là Nhạc Trưởng Guy Lombardo. Tuy nhiên, ông này không phải là người tiên khởi tạo ra tục lệ. Bằng cứ vào hồ sơ lưu trữ của tờ báo ProQuest thì trong những bài đăng báo ngược dòng lên đến năm 1896 thì dân chúng ăn mừng Giao Thừa ở hai bờ Đại Tây Dương đã từng hát nó thành một tục lệ rồi. Hai ví dụ điển hình:

Tờ New York Times, số January 5.1896 trang 10 đăng bài nhan đề là HOLIDAY PARTIES AT LENOX (Mass...) viết: ...Đám người tham dự nắm tay nhau trong phòng nhạc sảnh lớn và hát "Auld Lang Syne" đúng vào lúc tiếng chuông chót của 12 giờ đêm và Năm Mới đã đến.

Tờ Washington Post, ngày 2 tháng...1910 Bài NEW YEAR' EVE IN LONDON. Phong tục cổ truyền quen thuộc được mọi tầng lớp người dân vẫn giữ: Ở Luân Đôn cuộc tiễn năm cũ được cử hành như thường lệ. Những cư dân gốc Tô Cách Lan tụ họp bên ngoài Nhà Thờ Thánh Paul và hát bài "Auld Lang Syne" vào tiếng chuông chót của 12 tiếng chuông lớn.

Bài Auld Lang Syne rõ ràng tỏ sự vui mừng gặp lại nhau sau bao nhiêu năm xa cách bèn nâng ly nhắc lại chuyện xưa. Áp dụng vào tiệc rượu Tất Niên Giao Thừa thì rất đúng, vì đây là dịp sum họp bè bạn. Nhưng khi nó lan truyền ra các xứ khác, thì nó được hát với sự áp dụng rất khác nhau.

Ở Đài Loan, bài này hát vào dịp sinh viên tốt nghiệp và đám tang, tượng trưng cho sự chấm dứt hay vĩnh biệt.

Ở Nhật, vài tiệm siêu thị chơi bản này để nhắc nhở khách hàng giờ đóng cửa.

Ở Anh Quốc, bài này cử vào lúc bế mạc của Đại Hội thường niên về Mậu Dịch.

Ở Hàn Quốc, trước khi có bài Quốc Thiều Aegukga (Ái Quốc Ca) hiện nay, thì họ dùng điệu này làm Quốc Thiều với lời tiếng Hàn.

Trường hợp xứ Maldives cũng giống vậy: Đó là bản Gaumii salaam nhạc Auld Lang Syne với lời đặt theo thổ ngữ.

Ở Ấn Độ, trong Quân Lực xứ này, khi tiễn toán quân Tân Binh tuyển mộ diễn hành rời khán đài, thì bài này cử lên và toán lính phải đi thật chậm.

Dân Việt Nam còn nhớ bài Auld Lang Syne cũng được vào phim ảnh như là nhạc chủ đề như cuốn phim La Vase dans l'ombre với kếp Robert Taylor và đào Vivien Leigh.

Trước đó, It's a Wonderful Life làm một phim có dùng bài này với sự diễn xuất của James Stewart và Donna Reed rất cảm động cao điểm và hồi kết cuộc.

Bài Auld Lang Syne đúng là một điệu hát rất hay, rất lạ và cực kỳ thân quen với hầu như với tất cả mọi người, dùng sao về nó cũng thích hợp: Đón mừng và buồn tiễn nhau đi. tuy nhiên mấy ai mà hiểu sự kỳ bí hấp dẫn của nó. Đây là bài nhạc trứ danh mà chẳng ai hiểu gì về nó cả như câu nói của người Anh: "the song that nobody knows".

## Auld Lang Syne

"**Auld Lang Syne**" (Scots pronunciation: [ˈɔːld lɑŋˈsəɪn]: note "s" rather than "z") (1) is a Scottish poem written by Robert Burns in 1788 (2) and set to the tune of a traditional folk song (Roud # 6294). It is well known in many English-speaking (and other) countries and is often sung to celebrate the start of the New Year at the stroke of midnight. By extension, its use has also become common at funerals, graduations, and as a farewell or ending to other occasions.

The song's Scots title may be translated into English literally as "old long since", or more idiomatically, "long long ago" (3), "days gone by" or "old times". The phrase "Auld Lang Syne" is also used in similar poems by Robert Ayton (1570–1638), Allan Ramsay (1686–1757), and James Watson (1711) as well as older folk songs predating Burns. (4) Matthew Fitt uses the phrase "In the days of auld lang syne" as the equivalent of "Once upon a time..." in his retelling of fairy tales in the Scots language.

### History

Robert Burns sent a copy of the original song to the Scots Musical Museum with the remark, "The following song, an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man". (5) Some of the lyrics were indeed "collected" rather than composed by the poet; the ballad "Old Long Syne" printed in 1711 by James Watson shows considerable similarity in the first verse and the chorus to Burns' later poem, (4) and is almost certainly derived from the same "old song". It is a fair supposition to attribute the rest of the poem to Burns himself. (5)

There is some doubt as to whether the melody used today is the same one Burns originally intended, but it is widely used both in Scotland and in the rest of the world. (6)

Singing the song on Hogmanay or New Year's Eve very quickly became a Scots custom that soon spread to other parts of the British Isles. As Scots (and other Britons) emigrated around the world, they took the song with them.

Canadian band leader Guy Lombardo is often credited with popularising the use of the song at New Year's celebrations in America, through his annual broadcasts on radio and television, beginning in 1929. The song became his trademark. In addition to his live broadcasts, Lombardo recorded the song more than once. His first recording was in 1939. A later recording on September 29, 1947 was issued as a single by Decca Records as catalog #24260. (7)

However, earlier newspaper articles describe revellers on both sides of the Atlantic singing the song to usher in the New Year:

"Holiday Parties at Lenox" (Massachusetts, USA) (1896) – *The company joined hands in the great music room at midnight and sang "Auld Lang Syne" as the last stroke of 12 sounded and the new year came in.* (8)

"New Year's Eve in London" (London, England) (1910) – *Usual Customs Observed by People of All Classes...The passing of the old year was celebrated in London much as usual. The Scottish residents gathered outside of St. Paul's Church and sang "Auld Lang Syne" as the last stroke of 12 sounded from the great bell.* (9)

A manuscript of "Auld Lang Syne" is held in the permanent collection of The Lilly Library at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.(10)

#### Lyrics

As detailed above, *auld lang syne* literally means "old long since", but a more idiomatic English translation would be something like "long long ago", (3) "days of long ago", or "olden days". "For old times' sake," or "to the (good) old days," or "To days(or times) gone by" may be modern-day expressions, in common use as toasts, that capture the spirit of "for auld lang syne". The song begins by posing the question whether it is right that old times be forgotten, and is generally interpreted as a call to remember long-standing friendships. (11)

Thomson's *Select Songs of Scotland* was published in 1799 in which the second verse about greeting and toasting was moved to its present position at the end. (11)

Most common use of the song involves only the first verse and the chorus. The last lines of both of these are often sung with the extra words "For the sake of" or "And days of", rather than Burns' simpler lines. This allows one note for each word, rather than the slight melisma required to fit Burns' original words to the melody. The following table of lyrics includes the first few stanzas of the James Watson poem, probably derived from the same folk song as Burns used as the basis for his poem.

#### **Complete lyrics**

##### ***Old Long Syne, by James Watson (1711)***

Should Old Acquaintance be forgot,  
and never thought upon;  
The flames of Love extinguished,  
and fully past and gone:  
Is thy sweet Heart now grown so cold,  
that loving Breast of thine;  
That thou canst never once reflect  
on Old long syne.

#### CHORUS:

On Old long syne my Jo,  
in Old long syne,  
That thou canst never once reflect,  
on Old long syne.  
My Heart is ravisht with delight,  
when thee I think upon;  
All Grief and Sorrow takes the flight,  
and speedily is gone;  
The bright resemblance of thy Face,  
so fills this, Heart of mine;  
That Force nor Fate can me displease,  
for Old long syne.

#### CHORUS:

Since thoughts of thee doth banish grief,  
when from thee I am gone;  
will not thy presence yield relief,  
to this sad Heart of mine:  
Why doth thy presence me defeat,  
with excellence divine?  
Especially when I reflect

on Old lang syne

CHORUS:

(several further stanzas)

**Burns' original Scots verse (3)**

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
and never brought to mind ?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
and auld lang syne ?

CHORUS:

For auld lang syne, my jo,  
for auld lang syne,  
we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,  
for auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp !  
and surely I'll be mine !

And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,  
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We twa hae run about the braes,  
and pu'd the gowans fine ;  
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot,  
sin auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We twa hae paidl'd i' the burn,  
frae morning sun till dine ;  
But seas between us braid hae roar'd  
sin auld lang syne.

CHORUS

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere !  
and gie's a hand o' thine !  
And we'll tak a right gude-willy waught,  
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

**English translation**

(minimalist)

Should *old* acquaintance be forgot,  
and never brought to mind ?

Should *old* acquaintance be forgot,  
and *old* lang syne ?

CHORUS:

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
for auld lang syne,  
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,  
for auld lang syne.

And surely you'll *buy* your pint *cup* !  
and surely I'll *buy* mine !

And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,  
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We *two* have run about the *slopes*,  
and *picked* the *daisies* fine ;  
But we've wandered *many* a weary *foot*,  
*since* auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We *two* have *paddled* in the *stream*,  
*from* morning sun till *dine*<sup>†</sup> ;  
But seas between us *broad* have *roared*  
*since* auld lang syne.

CHORUS

And there's a hand my trusty *friend* !  
And *give us* a hand o' thine !  
And we'll *take* a right *good-will draught*,  
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

### **Scots pronunciation guide**

(as Scots speakers would sound)

Shid ald akwentans bee firgot,  
an nivir brocht ti mynd?  
Shid ald akwentans bee firgot,  
an ald lang syn?

CHORUS:

Fir ald lang syn, ma jo,  
fir ald lang syn,  
wil tak a cup o kyndnes yet,  
fir ald lang syn.  
An sheerly yil bee yur pynt-staup!  
an sheerly al bee myn!  
An will tak a cup o kyndnes yet,  
fir ald lang syn.

CHORUS

We twa hay rin aboot the braes,  
an pood the gowans fyn;  
Bit weev wandert monae a weery fet,  
sin ald lang syn.

CHORUS

We twa hay pedilt in the burn,  
fray mornin sun til dyn;  
But seas between us bred hay roard  
sin ald lang syn.

CHORUS

An thers a han, my trustee feer!  
And we'll tak a richt gude-willie-waucht,  
fir ald lang syn.

CHORUS

<sup>†</sup> dine = dinner time

### **Melody**

The tune to which "Auld Lang Syne" is now universally sung is a pentatonic Scots folk melody, probably originally a sprightly dance in a much quicker tempo. (11)



English composer William Shield seems to quote the "Auld Lang Syne" melody briefly at the end of the overture to his opera *Rosina*, which may be its first recorded use. The contention that Burns borrowed the melody from Shield is for various reasons highly unlikely, although they may very well both have taken it from a common source, possibly a strathspey called *The Miller's Wedding* or *The Miller's Daughter*. The problem is that tunes based on the same set of dance steps necessarily have a similar rhythm, and even a superficial resemblance in melodic shape may cause a very strong apparent similarity in the tune as a whole. For instance, Burns' poem *Coming Through the Rye* is sung to a tune that might also be based on the *Miller's Wedding*. The origin of the tune of *God Save the Queen* presents a very similar problem and for just the same reason, as it is also based on a dance measure. (See the note in the William Shield article on this subject.)

Songwriter George M. Cohan quotes the first line of the "Auld Lang Syne" melody in the second to last line of the chorus of *You're a Grand Old Flag*. It is plain from the lyrics that this is deliberate.

### **At New Year**

"Auld Lang Syne" is traditionally sung at the conclusion of a gathering in Scotland and around the world, especially in English speaking countries.

It is common practice that everyone joins hands with the person next to them to form a great circle around the dance floor. At the beginning of the last verse, everyone crosses their arms across their breast, so that the right hand reaches out to the neighbour on the left and vice versa. When the tune ends, everyone rushes to the middle, while still holding hands. When the circle is re-established, everyone turns under the arms to end up facing outwards with hands still joined.

In countries other than Scotland the hands are often crossed from the beginning of the song at variance with Scottish custom. The Scottish practice was demonstrated by the Queen at the Millennium Dome celebrations for the year 2000. The English press berated her for not "properly" crossing her arms, unaware that she was correctly following the Scottish tradition. (12) (13)

### **Other than New Year**

As well as celebrating the New Year, *Auld Lang Syne* is very widely used to symbolise other "endings/new beginnings" - including farewells, funerals, graduations, the end of a (non-New Year) party or a Boy Scout gathering, and even the closing of a retail store. The melody is also widely used for other words, especially the songs of sporting and other clubs, and even national anthems. In Scotland and other parts of Britain, in particular, it is associated with celebrations and memorials of Robert Burns. The following list of specific uses is far from comprehensive.

In the English speaking world

In Scotland, it is often sung at the end of a céilidh or a dance.

In many Burns Clubs, it is sung at the end of the Burns supper.

In the United Kingdom, it is played at the close of the annual Congress (conference) of the Trades Union Congress.

The song is sung at the end of the *Last Night of the Proms* by the audience (rather than the performers) and so it is not often listed on the official programme.

The song is played at the Passing Out Parade of Young Officers in the Royal Navy as the march up the steps of the Britannia Royal Naval College. The song is played at the beat of slow march after the tune "Will ye no come back?". The song is also played at the Graduation Parade of the Royal Military College of Canada and the Royal Military College (Malaysia). It is also played at the beat of slow march,

while cadets at the National Defence Academy (India) (<http://nda.nic.in>), Indian Military Academy (India) Gentleman Cadets Passing out as Commissioned Officers graduate out of the portals of the Chetwode Drill square after successful completion of Military service training.

In the United States, the song is used as a song of remembrance at memorial events. The University of Virginia's alma mater ("The Good Old Song") is also sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne".

Since 2007, the melody has been used as an introduction to the mass chorus of America the Beautiful that is played by the twelve finalist corps at the Finals Retreat at the Drum Corps International World Championships. Coincidentally, "Auld Lang Syne" and "America the Beautiful" have the same metre, and the lyrics can be sung interchangeably.

In politics it is also sung to make the passing of a government and the election of new leaders.

In Nigeria, it is used at the end of Passing Out Parades (Military Graduation Ceremony).

### **In non-English speaking countries**

In Myanmar (Burma), the graduation of military academies are concluded with the cadets marching out of the Parade Grounds to Auld Lang Syne.

In Thailand, the song Samakkhi Chumnum (Together in unity), which is set to the familiar melody, is sung after sports, and at the end of Boy Scout jamborees as well as for the New Year. The meaning is about the King and national unity. There, it is commonly believed to be a Thai traditional song.

In Poland the *Braterski krąg* (Brotherly Circle) song is set to the same tune. It is traditionally sung by the members of the Polish scouting movement as the penultimate song during their meetings. The lyrics, loosely based on the original, are widely known for their last two verses that could be translated as *By another campfire on another night we'll see each other again*.

In Pakistani Military, the band plays this song during the graduating parade of the recruits, and in Pakistan generally it is sung (or the melody played) at farewell events.

In Bangladesh and Bengali parts of India, the melody was the direct inspiration for the popular Bengali song "Purano shei diner kotha" (Memories of the Good Old Days) composed by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, and forms one of the more recognizable tunes in *Rabindra Sangeet* (Rabindra's Songs), a body of work of 2,230 songs and lyrical poems that form the backbone of Bengali music.

Japanese version of Auld Lang Syne. This song is called 蛍の光 in Japan (read as "Hotaru no Hikari" means "lights of fireflies"). 1m00s

In Japan, the Japanese students' song *Hotaru no hikari* ("Glow of a Firefly") uses the "Auld Lang Syne" tune. The words describe a series of images of hardships that the industrious student endures in his relentless quest for knowledge, starting with the firefly's light, which the student uses to keep studying when he has no other light sources. It is commonly heard in graduation ceremonies and at the end of the school day. Many stores and restaurants play it to usher customers out at the end of a business day. The national broadcaster, NHK, also plays this during New Year celebrations.

Before the composition of Aegukga, the lyrics of Korea's national anthem were sung to the tune of this song until composer Ahn Eak-tai composed a new melody to the existing lyrics. Like Japan and Taiwan, it is now used in South Korea as a graduation song and a farewell song to friends or at funerals.

Before 1972, it was the tune for the Gaumii salaam anthem of The Maldives (with the current words).

In Denmark, the song was translated in 1927 by the famous Danish poet Jeppe Aakjær. Much like Robert Burns' use of dialect, Aakjær translated the song into the Danish dialect *sallingbomål*, a dialect from the northern part of western Jutland, south of the Limfjord, often hard for other Danes to understand. The song *Skuld gammel venskab rejn forgo* ("Should auld acquaintance be forgot" — Scots / "Should old acquaintance be forgotten" — English), is an integral part of the Danish Højskole tradition, and often associated with more rural areas and old traditions. Also, the former Danish rock group Gasolin modernised the melody in 1974 with their pop ballad *Stakkels Jim* ("Poor Jim").

In Zimbabwe, the melody is sung in Shona as a funeral farewell song, "Famba zvinyoronyoro, tichasanganiswa muroa ra Jesu", literally, go well, we will be united in the blood of Christ.

In Chile, the melody is sung in Spanish as a funeral farewell song, specially in the Catholic church: "Llegó la hora de decir adiós, digamos, al partir, nuestra canción". ("It's time to say goodbye, let's sing, while we leave, this song". In fact, the melody is known as "Canción del adiós" ("Farewell Song").

In Greece it is very commonly sung translated by the Scouts of Greece. It has the name "Τραγούδι Αποχωρισμού" meaning "Song of Farewell" and it is part of the ending ceremony of scouting Camping trips [lyrics url <http://www.9sna.gr/songs.php>].

In {Sudan} it is translated into Arabic by MR Ahmed Mohammed Saad in (Bakhat ALridha) institute in 1951. And it is commonly used in new year ceremonies or graduation ceremonies (**Ahmed Arbaji**)

#### **Use in films**

It has been used in a number of films, with its first use in the 1937 Shirley Temple film "Wee Willie Winkie". Shirley sings the song to a Scottish soldier on his death bed.

It was also used in the 1942 re-release of the Charlie Chaplin film *The Gold Rush* with added sound, the song is sung at a New Year's Eve party. It is not certain if the same song was sung when the original silent film was released in 1925.

The song has been used in the film *Waterloo Bridge*— under the name of *The Farewell Waltz* – (1940), starring Vivien Leigh and Robert Taylor.

It was also used in the *Triad Trilogy* *Infernal Affairs* uses the tune in the second film when a triad has finished killing a gang boss.

The song is sung in many of the films produced by Frank Capra, including *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

The song is sung in the comedy *Elf* by Buddy's (Will Ferrell)'s girlfriend Jovie as Buddy opens gifts with his father and stepmother on Christmas day.

The W.S. Van Dyke film, *I Take This Woman* (1940), starring Spencer Tracy and Hedy Lamarr uses the song at the film's finale, with the patients and staff of a clinic singing it a cappella; the finale of *It's a Wonderful Life* is a direct echo of this presentation.

In the Samuel Fuller film *The Steel Helmet*, the film's main character, Sgt. Zack, requests that the song be played by "Fat Paul" on a portable organ. The group of American soldiers is shocked to find out, after a South Korean boy who has accompanied them recognizes and sings Korean lyrics to the tune, that the melody also serves as the South Korean national anthem.

In the 1972 Ronald Neame/Irwin Allen film *The Poseidon Adventure*, the song is sung by the ship's passengers at midnight on New Year's Eve, moments before the ship is struck by a tidal wave and capsized.

In *The Quiet Earth* Zac and Joanne sing it the during an evening celebration after meeting Api, the third person left on Earth.

More recently, towards the end of *Ghostbusters II*, the people of New York City sing "Auld Lang Syne", which weakens the evil Vigo the Carpathian's power enough to be defeated.

The song was played in *When Harry Met Sally*, the New Year's party in which Harry states he never fully understood what the song meant and says "I mean, 'Should old acquaintance be forgot'? Does that mean that we should forget old acquaintances, or does it mean if we happened to forget them, we should remember them, which is not possible because we already forgot?".

*Sofie Fatale's* cell phone ringtone is Auld Lang Syne in the film *Kill Bill Volume 1*.

In the 2008 film *Sex and the City*, a recording by Scottish singer Mairi Campbell is used during a montage depicting the characters' actions at New Years. The recording is notable for its use of the original melody as opposed to the commonly performed melody sung today. It is also in contrast to the joyous and jubilant arrangements commonly heard on celebratory occasions, as it consists merely of an acoustic guitar and strings accompanying Campbell's vocals.

The American PBS television series *Great Performances* program titled "Garrison Keillor's New Year's Eve Special" had the audience sing an adaptation of the lyrics with a humorous last verse: "I think of all the great, high hearts I had when I was young / And now who are these sad old farts I find myself among ?"

The music has also been used in game shows, most notably when the sign changed every year on the CBS *Match Game* and during the credits on the final episode of the original *Concentration* in 1973.

Friz Freleng's 1942 cartoon *The Wabbit Who Came to Supper* has Bugs Bunny suddenly claim that it is New Year's Day to stop Elmer Fudd from chasing him. Bugs starts singing Auld Lang Syne, only to have Elmer look at a calendar and realize that it is actually July.

In the 1987 Bernardo Bertolucci film *The Last Emperor*, a small Chinese orchestra plays the song on traditional Chinese instruments as the emperor's tutor, Reginald Johnston, boards a ship to leave China and return to England.

From Forrest's New Years celebration with Lt. Dan in NYC, the drunk collective singing Auld Lang Syne to welcome in the new year.

*Sex & The City*, New Years, Sarah Jessica Parker

### **Some notable performances**

A somewhat different use of the song as a farewell occurred in October 2000, when it was played as the body of former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau left Parliament Hill in Ottawa for the last time, going to Montreal for the state funeral.

On the sinking of the Japanese ship *Montevideo Maru* in World War II, carrying 1,053 Australians (mostly POWs), the Australians in the water sang this for their trapped mates as the ship went down. Surviving Japanese crewman Yosiaki Yamaji reflected on this moment as realising what big hearts the Australian soldiers had.

According to the book "Freedom at Midnight"(1975) by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins, the song was played to accompany the departure of the final British troops from India through Mumbai's "Gateway to India" in 1948, as the British

flag over the Gateway was ceremonially lowered for the last time. Similarly it was used at the British hand-over of Hong Kong in 1997.

Similarly, again, according to the book "My Vanishing World" (2000) by Nel Adams, the song was sung on the 15th January 1949 at the ceremony held as the British were leaving Burma.

In Pakistan, the tune was played at the formal resignation of President Pervez Musharraf as the country's Chief of Army Staff.

On the 30th November 2009, students and staff at the University of Glasgow sang the song in 41 different languages simultaneously. (14)

Notable Covers and renditions

Les Deux Love Orchestra's Classic Big Band arrangement of "Auld Lang Syne."

John Philip Sousa included "Auld Lang Syne" in the Trio section of his 1924 march "Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company"

Phish has played the song at every new year's concert they have had.

Cliff Richard sang the Lord's Prayer to the melody of "Auld Lang Syne" in his Christmas song "The Millennium Prayer".

Dan Fogelberg wrote a hit song called "Same Old Lang Syne", included on his 1981 album *The Innocent Age*. The song was about encountering an old lover, not on New Year's Eve, but on Christmas Eve.

Straight No Chaser arranged and performed their rendition of the song "Auld Lang Syne" on their 2008 CD "Holiday Spirits".

Canadian band Barenaked Ladies performed a rendition of the song "Auld Lang Syne" on their 2004 CD *Barenaked for the Holidays*.

Billy Joel sang and released "Auld Lang Syne" in his live CD titled *2000 Years: The Millennium Concert*, and is known to play the song both lyrically or piano solo in his concerts during holiday seasons.

Kenny G recorded a saxophone version of the song in 1999 to commemorate the Millennium. An EP release of the tune contained that version along with long-play and radio-length versions that played under audio snippets from a number of political speeches and news bulletins of the 20th Century.

Overboard recorded an a cappella version for their 2008 holiday album, "Tidings".

Bobby Darin recorded a Christmas version in 1960, titled "Christmas Auld Lang Syne", while the song "You're a Grand Old Flag" by George M. Cohan, the first line "Should auld acquaintance be forgot" is part of the song's chorus, and is also cited in the song's instrumental introduction.

In 1976, a disco version of "Auld Lang Syne" was recorded by Salsoul Orchestra headed by Vincent Montana, Jr. and was released as a full disco album and a special Christmas disco single "Donde Esta Santa Claus" in 1978 - the year of disco's peak in popularity. They then became known as the Mistletoe Disco Band. To date, this is still one of the most widely played version of Auld Lang Syne, being played on radio and television shows around the world on New Year's Eve.

Relient K, a christian rock band, recorded a simplified a capella rendition of "Auld Lang Syne" for their Christmas album "Let It Snow Baby... Let It Reindeer" in which they thank their audience for listening to the album and wish them happy holidays.

Coinage

British £2 coin. 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns.

Reverse: Design featuring a quote from the song "Auld Lang Syne", WE'LL TAK A CUP A' KINDNESS YET, FOR AULD LANG SYNE, the calligraphy of which is based on the handwriting of Robert Burns, surrounded by the inscription 1759 ROBERT BURNS 1796.

Edge inscription: SHOULD AULD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT

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