

Mp3 Skip Henderson - The Poet & Pirate Overtures



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With some exceptions, these are songs of conflict and plunder on the water. Pirates were generally not nice guys and they had an unfortunate disposition toward gratuitous violence. 14 MP3 Songs FOLK: Sea Shanties, FOLK: Traditional Folk Show all album songs: The Poet Pirate Overtures Songs Details: There be pirates of the croonin' persuasion. By Angela Hill, STAFF WRITER OAKLAND TRIBUNE Yahhr. A couple hundred years too late to be plundering the seven seas, but long before Johnny Depp conquered the deep of our seafaring souls, Skip Henderson and Starboard Watch got hooked by the lure of the sea chantey. And it has been nigh on 15 years that this small band in various incarnations has been strummin' and singin' salty old nautical songs every Thursday night at L.J. Quinn's Lighthouse to a bursting hold of chantey groupies. They've now taken over the Germans too, with a full-ahead pirate party the first Friday of every month at Speisekammer restaurant in Alameda. (Guests get a free rum drink if they go in full pirate regalia. Yo ho ho and a free drink of rum.) Weathered and wily, a damn tough life of toil and strife or maybe not yet still seeking gold and glory, the men of the Watch give and get a roarin', rippin', rummin' good time. Eight bells, 8 p.m., and all was well Thursday when they launched into their musical lore. Six of'em this time, but it can be five or eight, depending on who shows up on a given night. This time a squeezebox player, a banjo man, a bass, a fiddle, a pennywhistle and a backup singer to boot. They acquiesced to a flood of requests, crooning songs about a whaler and many a drunken sailor, or "Homeward bound on the Arctic round, rollin' down to Old Maui." Not sure if it's singing, though, so much as growling and shouting. A raucous Rex Harrison kind of technique. Their skipper's a mighty sailin' man. His mates be brave and sure. "Are you Skip?" a newbie swabbie queried. "What's left of'im," Skip snarled and slurred, sippin' a shot o' whisky that may not have been the first of the night. He's Skip Henderson, a seaman from way back, singer and squeezebox player. Won't reveal his age, but looks as

though he's lived life at 100 knots. His hair, silver as seafoam, slips out from his captain's cap. Complexion appropriately ruddy and rugged. A scar under his right eye. Bar fight, mayhaps? Skip won't say for sure. "I picked up the squeezebox as a result of hanging out with some drunken Irishmen," Skip growled, picking up his button accordion and holding it close. "This one's a 1934 Hohner. Probably sold to some sailor back then. It's got a sound like an angel's harp." Skip and his wife have sailed all over the world, and have run their 55-foot schooner, Aida, in the annual Master Mariners regatta on the Bay. He holds a degree in psychology, but was a sailor from his youth. His dad had a boat, and Skip worked for a tugboat company on the Carquinez Strait. "My dad said if you want an honest job and an honest dollar, head for the water," he grumbled. Yet he somehow ended up on trains spent 29 years as a switchman on the Southern Pacific Railway. Retired now. Now the chantey's the thing. "Arrrr, the sea chanties," Skip said, leaning in close with a squinty half wink and a caress of the Hohner. "They please pretty girls and make them feel a little insecuuuurrrre." He's a naughty-cal fellow, all right. And a famous one in pirate circles. His song "Two Hornpipes" is in the second "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie. (He's the very last name on the credits.) Pretty much the only way you can join the group is when somebody dies. "That's why the lantern will be lit tonight," Skip added, taking down a small lantern at the window to light it. "We had some close friends George went down with a heart attack, and Lloyd to cancer." Skip and Bloody John shook their heads. A moment of silence. John sipped some rum from a goblet shaped like a skull. "Pirates aren't nice people," he admitted. "But people like the spirit of the pirate for the anti-establishment sense of freedom that's involved. Freedom, that is, unless you get caught." He grinned a pirate's grin. The second floor bar, poised atop a fine restaurant in the historic Quinn's, is cozy as a captain's cabin. Wood paneled walls, draped in buoys and knots, her floors layered with enough empty peanut shells to drive an elephant mad. Cool Bay air blows in off the estuary when someone slides open the door. Boats in the marina below bob and weave in their slips. 'Tis a whale of a different club scene, to be sure. Yet packed each week, with young and old, most who know all the words and sing along. "Way-hey up she rises, err-lye in the morrr-nin!"

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