

## Mp3 Mary Behan Miller - American Pie



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Mary Behan Miller sings songs about the American experience. 18 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, FOLK: Traditional Folk Details: This CD contains a variety of songs that in one way or another describes interesting aspects of the American experience. Most of the songs are from the 19th century but the title track American Pie is, of course, relatively new. It was written in 1971 by Don McLean and is in some ways a snapshot of the popular music scene in the late 50s and 60s. The cryptic lyrics have intrigued listeners ever since it was written and a number of theories abound as to their meaning and significance. The song was a big hit immediately after McLeans release and later by Madonna in 2000. A number of the older tracks on this CD have had successful reincarnations in modern times. For example, the 1861 composition Aura Lee by W. W. Fosdick (lyrics by George Poulton) was the basis for Elvis Presleys 1956 hit Love Me Tender with new lyrics. Henry C. Work (1832-1884) composed a song, The Ship that Never Returned in 1865 which became the basis for the Kingston Trio song Charlie on the MTA in which poor Charlie orbits eternally around metropolitan Boston. Work also wrote My Grandfathers Clock (1876) that Larry Hopper, a vocalist on the Lawrence Welk Show, popularized many years later. Similarly, Sloop John B became a hit by the Beach Boys in 1966 but is also an old song, with the melody possibly originating in New England. The lyrics, of course, describe a rather unfortunate set of occurrences in the Bahamas. Three tracks on this CD provide a glimpse of the Christian traditions that played a dominant role in early America. One of the songs, Battle hymn of the Republic, illustrates the tensions from the incompatibility of slavery with American ideals that were profoundly influenced by Christian principles. Abolitionist Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910) wrote the lyrics to this famous unionist song in 1861 but the melody is from a camp-meeting song by William Steffe of South Carolina circa 1856. The song Amazing Grace also has connections to slavery. Slave ship captain John Newton (1725-1807) wrote the lyrics after

he had a great deliverance when caught in a severe storm in 1747. For a few more years, he continued in the slave trade, allegedly in a more compassionate manner, but ultimately became a minister. Several different melodies were used with the lyrics prior to the current traditional tune that is believed to be from either Ireland or Scotland. How Can I Keep from Singing? is the third religious song on the CD. Robert Wadsworth Lowry, a Baptist minister, wrote this song in 1860. The remaining tracks on the CD fall into the fun category and some can be associated with different regions of the country. The track Erie Canal clearly refers to New York State with the names of important cities along the canal. Buffalo Gals, written sometime around 1848, also refers to the city of Buffalo, New York and was likely sung by boatmen on the Erie Canal. Somewhat different versions of the song refer to various cities. Other geographical songs include On Top of Old Smokey (Blue Ridge Mountains) along with Sweet Betsy from Pike (a journey from Missouri to California). The Crawdad Song comes from the South and of course is a silly song about crawdads and other nonsense. The Cat Comes Back, written by Harry S. Miller in 1893, is another silly song. It is about an indestructible cat that foils all efforts at his demise or removal. Both cat lovers and haters will appreciate the humorous lyrics. Numerous new verses have been written for this song and one is included here about tying the cat to a railroad track. This sounds bad but of course the cat came back! A George M. Cohan (1878-1942) medley is also included here. Cohan was a prolific composer and performer who was a dominant force on Broadway in the early part of the 20th century. He was not, in spite of the lyrics, born on the fourth of July, but rather on the third. Cohan wrote over 50 musicals and nearly 1500 songs. This medley is composed of the songs You're a Grand Old Flag, Over There and Yankee Doodle Dandy. This is Mary Behan Miller's third CD. Two previous CDs, A Celtic Journey and Kids Songs and Lullabies are available on CD Baby. Other tracks by Mary Behan Miller are available on "Some Keltic, Some Knot" and "Keltic Beginnings" as a member of the group Keltic Kaleidoscope.

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