

# SONGS and DANCES of SWITZERLAND

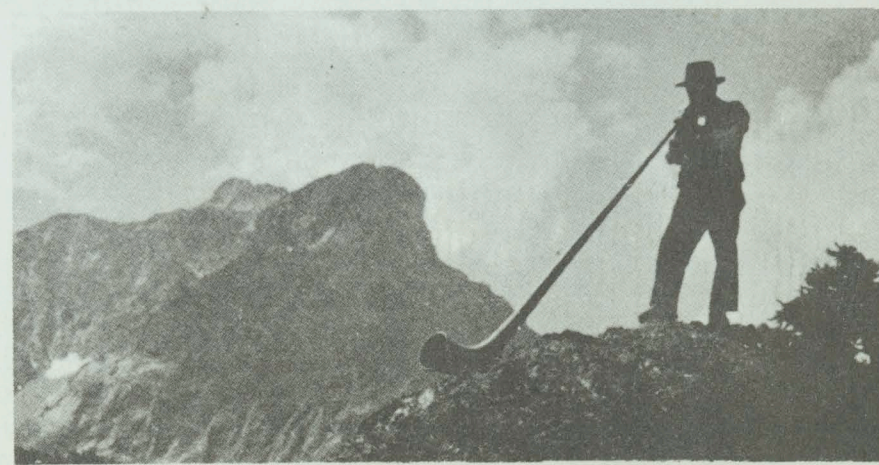
recorded by

LAURA BOULTON

FOLK DANCES · VILLAGE ORCHESTRAS

YODELLING · CHORUSES · HACKBRETT

ALPINE HORN · BELL-TREE



M  
1784  
S698  
1953

MUSIC LP

WAYS RECORDS & SERVICE CORP. N. Y. FW 6807

SONGS AND DANCES OF SWITZERLAND recorded by Laura Boulton

**SONGS and DANCES  
of SWITZERLAND**

Recorded by Laura Boulton  
FW 6807 DESCRIPTIVE NOTES INSIDE COVER

ALPINE YODEL

LOVE SONG:  
EN REVENANT DE NOCES

DANCE SONG:  
FAISONS A PETITE PAS

FOLK SONG:  
ES BUREBUEBLI -  
THE FARMER BOY

LOVE SONG:  
AM SAMSTIG NACHT

ALP. SONG:  
ALPENLEBEN (Zermatt)

SONG OF THE SENN  
(Alpine Herdsman)

MOUNTAIN CALL

DANCE  
(Interla ken)

MARCH  
(St. Luc d'Anniviers)

PAIR DANCE  
(St. Maurice)

DANCE (Sion):  
Hackbrett

DANCE  
(Interla ken)

MOUNTAIN CALL  
(Interla ken)

# SONGS and DANCES of SWITZERLAND

Prefatory Note by Laura Boulton

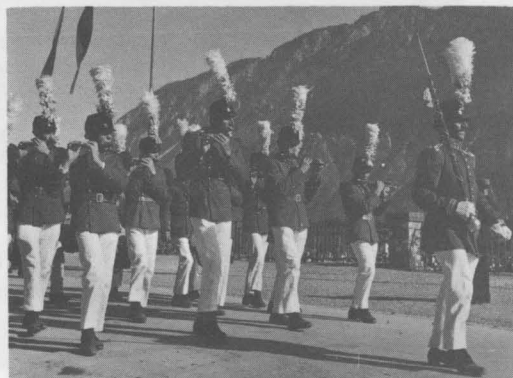
Switzerland is a country of only 15,950 square miles. On Lake Geneva and Lake Neuchatel French-speaking people live; in the East and North the Alemannic Swiss speak German dialects; in the Southeast in the Grisons the Rhaeto-Romanic people speak Romanish; and south of the Alps the Ticinese speak Italian. Each Canton has its own songs and dances, yet French Quadrilles can be found in German speaking Switzerland and the Bavarian Polka is well known in the French speaking area. Many songs and dances are common to the whole area.

Each Canton is devoted to its particular design and style of costume. The Swiss National Costumes League requires a member to wear his or her costume correctly in every detail and never to use it for 'fancy dress'. Not only the Cantons, but each valley has its special costume. The heavy embroidery and silver work on the straps and braces of the cowmen of Appenzell, the gold lace caps of the women of St. Gall, the spreading lace wings that the women of Appenzell and Schwyz wear on their head, all add to the color and gaiety of the folk festivals.

In general, the folksongs have good possibilities for harmony and the rhythms of the dance songs are highly developed, often requiring frequent changes of time signature. Students of the folk dance, if they are looking for ritual dances, will find remnants of ancient dances, for example, the Millwheel which is danced by men only and said to have been a Sun dance. The sun is very important in Alpine pastoral life; and the sun wheel is a favorite motive in folk art there. The Sword dance and the Hoop dance of the Guilds of the 16th and 17th centuries have apparently been lost. The majority of the dances are danced in a similar form in other countries of Western Europe.

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SIDE II

ALPINE YODEL (Interlaken) vocal solo.  
Mountain cries in high falsetto are found across central Europe. In the Alpine regions of Switzerland the yodel is a musical expression as well as a cow-call. When used as refrain for folksongs, yodelling can be reduced to musical bars and intervals. Thousands of Swiss songs have this type of refrain and there are many yodelling choirs and clubs for whom yodel music is written in parts.

The yodel type of song is sung by people living in the mountains and it was developed from the need of herdsmen to communicate with their families in the valleys below while they were herding their sheep and cattle in the mountains.

LOVE SONG: EN REVENANT DE NOCES  
(St. Maurice) female solo; accordion accompaniment by the Vieux Pays.

En revenant de nocés,  
J'étais bien fatiguée.  
Au bord d'une fontaine  
Je me suis reposée, ladire.  
La la la (etc.)

Refrain: Oui, j'attends, j'attends,  
j'attends  
Celui que j'aime, que mon  
cœur aime,  
Oui, j'attends, j'attends,  
j'attends  
Celui que j'aime éperdument.  
L'eau en était si claire  
Que je m'y suis baignée,  
A la feuille de chêne  
Je me suis essuyée.

Coming back from the wedding,  
I was very tired.  
Near a fountain  
I rested, ladire.  
La la la (etc.)

Refrain: Yes, I am waiting for  
The one I love, the one my  
heart longs for,  
Yes, I am waiting for  
The one I love desperately.

The water in it was so clear,  
That I bathed in it,  
And with the leaf of the oak tree  
I dried myself.

DANCE SONG: FAISONS A PETITE PAS  
(Sion) chorus; accordion accompaniment  
by the Chanson Valaisan.

Faisons a petite pas  
Le tour bien en cadence.  
Gardons tout gentillement  
La main dans la main.

Ce n'est pas le temps,  
Ne nous embrouillons pas.  
Et voilà, oh, mes amies,  
L'air du Tyroli.

Allons, belle jeunesse,  
Pour nous faire de retour.  
Chantons plein d'allégresse  
Le printemps des amours.

Allons, belle jeunesse,  
Pour nous faire de retour.  
Chantons plein d'allégresse  
Le bonheur est à nous.

Allons, belle jeunesse,  
Pour nous faire de retour.  
Et chantons tous en cœur  
La beauté de ce jour.

Let's make the round  
In cadenced little steps.  
Let us sweetly  
Hold hands.

It's not quite the tempo,  
Let's not get mixed up.  
And here, oh, my friends,  
Is a Tyrolian tune.

Come on, handsome youth,  
So that we can get back.  
Let's sing cheerfully  
The spring of love.

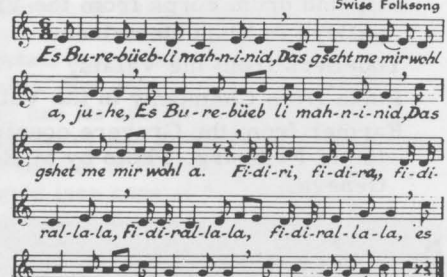
Come on, handsome youth,  
So that we can get back.  
Let's sing cheerfully,  
Happiness is ours.

Come on, handsome youth,  
So that we can get back.  
And sing in unison  
The beauty of this day.

This song accompanies the Pair Dance,  
which is often accompanied by singing only.

**FOLK SONG: ES BUREBUEBLI - THE  
FARMER BOY** (Interlaken) unaccompanied  
chorus. (Bern-Oberland dialect).

**Es Burebüebli (The Farmer Boy)**  
Swiss Folksong



*Es Bu-re-büeb-li mah-n-i-nid, Das gseht me mir wohl  
a, ju-he, Es Bu-re-büeb li mah-n-i-nid, Das  
gshet me mir wohl a. Fi-di-ri, fi-di-ra, fi-di-  
ral-la-la, fi-di-räl-la-la, fi-di-räl-la-la, es  
Bu-re-büeb-li Mah-n-i-nid, Das gseht me mir wohl a.*

2. *'s Muess eine si gar hübsch u fin,  
Darf keini Fähler ha, juhe!...*
3. *Und Herrebüebli git's ja nid,  
Wo keini Fähler hei, juhe!...*
4. *Drum bliben-i ledig bis in den Tod,  
So het die Lieb' es Änd, juhe!...*

1. I'd never wed a farmer boy,  
You know by looking at me—oh, yes!:  
Fee-dee-ree-fee-dee-ra, fee-dee-  
ral-la-la, fee-dee-räl-la-la,  
fee-dee-räl-la-la.  
I'd never wed a farmer boy,  
You know by looking at me!

2. The one I wed must handsome be  
Without a single fault—oh, yes!:

3. But even sons of wealthy men  
Have many faults, I know—oh, yes!:

4. So I'll stay single 'till I die,  
Thus love will have an end—oh, yes!:

—English version by K.F.

**LOVE SONG: AM SAMSTIG NACHT**  
(Interlaken) chorus, accordion accompani-  
ment. This is a parody on an old love song.  
Different words are sung to the same tune  
in different locals. It starts:

Und am Samstag nacht da geit der  
bueb zum schatz . . . . .  
And on Saturday night the boy goes  
to his sweetheart . . . . .

The words refer to an old custom; the  
young man went on Saturday night to stay  
with his sweetheart, and if she became  
pregnant, they married.

**ALP SONG: ALPENLEBEN (Zermatt)**  
unaccompanied chorus. This song was re-  
corded in Zermatt in the heart of the high-  
est Alps, with the towering Matterhorn like  
a giant rising high above all the other peaks  
around. Zermatt is in the Nicolai Valley,  
one of the valleys of the Valais. The mayor  
of the town is a folksong enthusiast. The  
group recorded here consists chiefly of  
members of his family. The song, of course,  
refers to 'life in the Alps'.

**SONG OF THE SENN (ALPINE HERDSMAN)**  
(Sion) vocal solo, hackbrett accompaniment.  
The herdsman sings about life in the Alps  
and ends each verse with:

Mit de chueneuf der weid  
Het der senn sy freud.

To be with the cows in the pasture  
That is the joy of the herdsman.



## SIDE I

**MOUNTAIN CALL (Interlaken):** Alphorn. The Alpine Horn has been compared with the wood-winds of our orchestra. The deep rich tone is supposedly due to the fine seasoned wood of which it is made. Although it is from 7 to 12 feet long, it weighs little for it is made from very thin pine. It consists of two lengthwise crosssections skillfully joined together. There are no sound holes; everything is done by the mouth and breath. It is the length, not the circumference that gives its fine tone.

The alphorn is used by the shepherds and cowherds in the mountains. This ancient folk instrument is very difficult to play. The player rests the bowl on the ground and blows, his cheeks puffed out, his chest heaving, his face growing red as he produces tones so resonant that they have been compared with those of the French horn.

Music is sometimes composed for the Alpine horn and old folk tunes are arranged for it.



The Pair Dance is a dance form prevalent all over Switzerland. About 6 basic steps combined with several different holds is enough to follow the various traditional dances.

**DANCE (Interlaken):** Accordion. This recording was made at Interlaken in the Bernese country. The Schottische has been adapted in various ways. In 2/4 tempo it is similar to the Scottish 'skip change of step'.

**MARCH (St. Luc d'Anniviers):** Fife and drum. A particularly rare and striking music in the Valais of southwest Switzerland is the old music of the drums and fifes. One hears the drums and pipes along with the pruning shears and the pickaxe in the vineyards in and around Sierre. This is a tune of St. Luc d'Anniviers, a village in the Val d'Anniviers, near Sierre where it was recorded. In this village the people have preserved the old songs and dances through many generations.

**PAIR DANCE (St. Maurice):** The Vieux Pays Orchestra including the Bell-Tree. This melody begins and ends with the delicate bells of the chapeau chinois (Chinese hat), a collection of bells mounted on a metal frame shaped like a hat, also called the "tree-bells" or the "bell-tree". One of the oldest of the folk instruments, it was made (before the present metal form) from a heavy branch of a tree on which were attached little bells. The end of the branch was struck on the ground in rhythm so that the bells are a rhythmic accompaniment to the music.

The village bands were formerly strings, fiddles, 'cellos, double-bass and a kind of dulcimer called the hackbrett. Now the clarinet, trombone, French horn as well as the accordion are often added. Every village is proud of its band. The leader of the band may be the shoemaker, a carpenter, a farmer or anyone. The band is made up of farmers, carpenters, machinists, the milkman, anyone who can play.



DANCE (Sion): Hackbrett. The hackbrett, now rare in Switzerland, is a forerunner of the dulcimer. It is a long board with wire or metal strings of various lengths. The strings are struck with tiny wooden hammers wound tightly with bits of wool or yarn to produce a soft vibrant tone. It was brought to Switzerland centuries ago by Gypsies.

This melody often played for listening pleasure is also used to accompany the Landler. The Landler is an extremely fast waltz, the most lively of all the Swiss dances. It is especially developed in the Alps where it has assumed the character of a courting dance. The man has the most action. The woman spins around by herself while the man stamps his feet on the ground, clasps his thighs, and snaps his fingers like castanets. He chases the woman or leaps around her. Stamping rhythmically he finally grasps the girl around the waist, and swings her around.

DANCE (Interlaken): Accordion. The Swiss Mazurka is danced as follows:

Step forward on one foot with a stamp

Spring right foot to left foot, swinging leg forward


Hop on right foot with left leg raised in front

This step is usually danced three times on left foot, and is followed by one waltz step forward to repeat on the other foot.

**MOUNTAIN CALL** (Interlaken) Alpine Horn and Cowbells. This recording was made in Interlaken with the Alphorn and the cowbells of the cattle as the herd with the herdsmen came down from the summer heights where they were in mountain pastures all summer. Down the mountain tracks, often as steep as stairsteps, the herds are led by their dependable leaders, their bells ringing rhythmically. Interlaken is in the Bernese country where there are particularly rich traditions regarding the cattle processions.

One of the most picturesque ceremonies of the year called "the going to the Alps" is on the day in spring when the herdsmen take their cattle up into the mountain pastures. Through weeks of preparation the men fatten, wash and brush the cattle, until the herds shine while the women make embroidery for their men's costumes and wreaths of mountain flowers for the cattle. Each woman hopes her man will be chosen to lead the march up into the mountains. After early morning worship on the day, everyone gathers to sing and dance. In some places there are exciting cow fights to determine which cow will be the "queen" to lead the procession. When chosen, wearing a bouquet of flowers and the largest most beautifully decorated bell to show her exalted rank, she proudly leads a colorful parade through the village, the cowherds with their shining cattle and with their milk utensils following.

Coming down to the valley at the end of summer is also a joyful day. Special songs are played on the Alpine horn by the herdsmen to call the cattle. These songs (called in French *ranz des vaches*) are based on a simple chord so they will not be out of harmony with the mountain echo. The cowmen's calls, the recitation or roll-call of the cows' names, the traditional singing and yodelling, all are a part of the joyful occasion. The deep, vibrant voice of the Alpine horn with its rich velvet tone echoing from the mountain sides is punctuated by the rhythmic ringing of the large *glocken* on the necks of the cattle. The huge bells looking like deep kettles under the chins of the cattle produce enchanting accompaniment to the horn.

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Photos courtesy Swiss National Tourist Office, New York.

**Cover Photos:**

Participant in ancient costume festival in Champéry in the Valais, Switzerland.

Appenzell herdsman playing the accordion during Costume Festival in Altdorf.

Schwyz farmer and adorned cow.  
Photo by J. Gaberell

Alphorn - Kiental, Bernese Oberland.  
Photo by F. Hutzli.

**Note Photos:**

The Alphorn - Eiger and Monch at Murren in the Bernese Oberland.

Village Orchestra in the Valais.

Dance at Alpine festival - Engsligenalp near Adelboden. Photo by E. Gyger.

A bovine queen in the Bernese Oberland.

The bouquet on her head indicates her exalted rank. Photo by Hutzli, Reichenbach.

Fife and drum corps from the Valaisan valleys in Visperterminen.

Yodellers from the Valais.

Polka from Champéry in the Valais.

Farmer from the Gruyere country, canton of Fribourg. Photo by M. Kettel, Geneva.

