

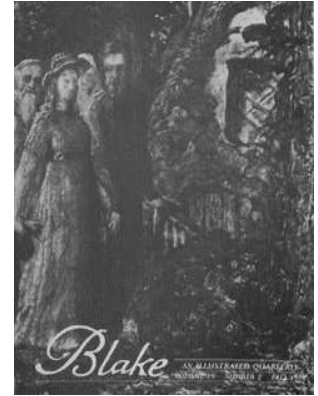
# AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY BLAKE

R E V I E W

Selections from William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience, musical settings by Gregory Forbes; Gregory Forbes, A Companion to the New Musical Settings

Joseph Viscomi, Margaret LaFrance

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The color work in the *Europe* facsimile is also generally satisfactory. Three plates, however, have a distinct color shift not found in their Blake Trust archetypes: plate 9 (inscribed "6" in the reproduction) has been given a rather ghoulish green tint; plate 11 (inscribed "8") has the same brown shift found in some of the *America* plates; and the final plate is a little too yellow. I would not be surprised to find variations among copies of the Dover volume—particularly if they continue to print from the same transparencies. The later printings of the Dover *Songs of Innocence* show just this sort of decay of both color and sharpness of outline.

In addition to the reproductions, the volume includes exceedingly brief summaries of the poems and descriptions of the designs. The latter seem to be summary paraphrases of Sir Geoffrey Keynes's notes on the designs in the Blake Trust facsimiles. The Dover volume concludes with a transcription of the texts. Lacking any indication to the contrary, the typographic texts appear to be new transcriptions rather than reprints of a previously published edition. The details of punctuation do not follow Keynes, Erdman, Stevenson, or Bentley.

Dover's new facsimile of *Songs of Experience* has the same format as its 1971 *Innocence* facsimile. The two volumes are clearly meant to be companions. In this later volume, the publisher's only reference to the copy reproduced is a statement on the verso of the typographic title-page that the facsimile is based on "a copy printed ca. 1826." On the back cover, this same date is given rather misleadingly as the date of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. The appearance of the Dover plates makes it clear that the work reproduced is the *Experience* section from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, copy Z, with Blake's inscribed plate numbers, but not his hand-drawn framing lines, eliminated. For unexplained reasons, the frontispiece to *Experience* is also omitted. Copy Z is well known from the fine Blake Trust facsimile of 1955. The appearance of fairly definite boundary lines between colors in the Dover reproduction makes me suspect that, once again, Dover is silently reproducing the work of the Trust. It is even possible that the plates are based on the 1967 Orion Press/Rupert Hart-Davis reproductions of Z, reissued in 1970 by Oxford University Press. These complete reproductions of copy Z are themselves based on the Blake Trust facsimile, and thus the Dover volume could be a reproduction of a reproduction of a reproduction. (I doubt that this is what Blake meant by "Four-fold Vision.") In comparison to all of these possible forebears, Dover's plates show a strong and most unfortunate shift towards a magenta tint. This feature, plus the fact that about half the plates seem a little out of focus, make the volume less handsome and less useful than the *America/Europe* facsimile. The *Experience* volume concludes with a transcription of the text.

Although I've been rather grumpy about the prob-

lems, these are nice volumes (particularly for the classroom) and well worth having—as long as they are not treated with the same sort of trust we give to the real Trust facsimiles. Dover is to be congratulated for producing these books and for offering them for a song.

Selections from

William Blake's

*Songs of Innocence & of Experience*



given new musical settings by

Gregory Forbes

***Selections from William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience; Musical Settings by Gregory Forbes, Ecchoing Green Records, 1983. A Companion to the New Musical Settings by Gregory Forbes. Gregory Forbes. Kingston, Ontario: Quarry Press, 1983. 48 pages. Together \$27.70; with a set of 20 slides, \$35.70. Slide set only, \$11.20. Prices include shipping.***

**Reviewed by Joseph Viscomi with Margaret LaFrance**

As Ruthven Todd points out, "no one can fully understand the *Songs* divorced of their setting."<sup>1</sup> Some fine, hand-colored facsimiles have made it possible to read Blake's illuminated poetry as graphic art consisting of text and illustration in complex relations. In short, to read it as originally presented. Or have they? Poetry and painting were only two of the "three Powers in Man of

conversing with Paradise which the flood did not Sweep away" (K 609). The third Power was Music, and music, according to Cunningham, was an integral part of the composing process as manifest in the illuminated print: "As he drew the figure he meditated the song which was to accompany it, and the music to which the verse was to be sung, was the offspring too of the same moment."<sup>2</sup> Must the poetry's setting, then, be musical as well as visual?

That music was important to Blake, there can be no doubt. According to Gilchrist, Blake "was very impressionable . . . to simple national melodies . . . though not so to music of more complicated structure." At the Linnells', he "would sit by the pianoforte, tears falling from his eyes, while he listened to the Border Melody" sung by Mrs. Linnell. Even then, as late as 1825, he "still sang, in a voice tremulous with age, sometimes old ballads, sometimes his own songs, to melodies of his own."<sup>3</sup> Blake is recorded as having died with a song on his lips, while some of our earliest accounts of him as a poet emphasize his singing.<sup>4</sup> At Mrs. Mathew's salon, "he was listened to by the company with profound silence and allowed by most of the visitors to possess original and extraordinary merit."<sup>5</sup> And although Blake "was entirely unacquainted with the science of music, his ear was so good, that his tunes were sometimes most singularly beautiful, and were noted down by musical professors."<sup>6</sup> In *An Island in the Moon* (c. 1784), in large part a satire of salon society, Quid, Blake's caricature of himself, continually bursts into song. True, Gittipin, Gimblet, Obtuse Angle, and the other Islanders may not have been musically sophisticated, but Blake's real salon audience certainly was. "Being a musical house," the Mathew gatherings included accomplished singers like Elizabeth Billington, composers like Thomas Billington, famous musicologists like Dr. Charles Burney (perhaps one of the music professors?) and Flaxman, who evidently "sang beautifully, having an excellent and beautiful voice." Singing to people who knew a thing or two about music suggests not only that Blake was confident of his voice and compositions, but that he actually was a good singer. Like the Italian saying: If you want to see if you can sing, go to where women wash clothes; if they stop singing, you're good.

That Blake should sing while he worked is as natural as words and images generating and being generated by melodies. It is more interesting, though, that the simultaneity in the illuminated printing process of melos, logos, and graphics is manifest in the reception of the illuminated print. In the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Innocence*, music, singing, and writing, though executed sequentially by the Piper, come together in the form of the book, so that "all [who] read" the "happy songs . . . may joy to hear" (K 111). Reading is hearing

the songs, the melody being the activity of mind as it reads. As Blake says, "Nature has no Tune, but Imagination has" (K 779). Because "Melody," like "Invention [and] Identity," is one of the "Objects of Intuition" (K 474), the songs are given settings each time they are read. Historically, it is the only time the three Powers do come together, for Blake is not known to have passed out illuminated prints as song sheets as he read or sang them.

Gregory Forbes, with his album of twelve songs selected from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, sixteen "facsimiles of Blake's coloured engravings," a set of twenty slides, and a large size illustrated commentary, attempts to combine the aural and visual Blake within a historical context.<sup>8</sup> His "aim . . . in writing . . . has been to bring the listener to an understanding of the song lyrics in a way that Blake intended them" (p. 9). Blake's exact intentions, of course, aren't known, since he never wrote down the music (it is not "lost," p. 7),<sup>9</sup> but Forbes reasons that "because [Blake's] sympathies were always with the common people . . . traditional folk music stylings are especially appropriate for Blake's songs" (p. 7).<sup>10</sup> So, "to bring Blake to the people," he based his aural reconstructions on children's hymns, folk ballads, and Elizabethan songs, as well as "the street music of Blake's London, the jig and reels of itinerant fiddlers and pipers" (p. 7), and used contemporaneous instruments, such as guitars, flutes, flageolets, violin, and hand-drums. From *Innocence* he has set "Introduction," "The Shepherd," "The Lamb," "The Divine Image," "Laughing Song," "The Echoing Green" [side A]; from *Experience* "Introduction," "London," "A Little Girl Lost," "The Garden of Love," "The Tyger," "Ah! Sun-flower" [side B]. The songs were chosen to represent "the main themes of the complete cycle" (p. 8). Blake's contrary states and their accompanying symbols and images are discussed in some detail (pp. 24-27), but the song order, instrumentation, and arrangement of the reproductions do not pair contrary states or make explicit the connections within or between the two sets.

The slides are for "classroom presentation," to be viewed "while listening to the music," an audio-visual presentation which Forbes believes will "project [the listener] into that time when Blake created each illustration and, at the same time 'meditated the song which was to accompany it'" (p. 10). The slides, which are of the same plates as the reproductions, plus Linnell's sketch of Blake and the three title pages to *Songs*, are used not only to accommodate a student audience, but because they "are much clearer and more vivid than the printed reproductions, and the lyrics can be read without difficulty" (p. 8). Indeed, the 16 photomechanical reproductions (the songs, frontispieces, and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," which is not set to music), though printed on fine, heavyweight ivory paper, are in no way



facsimiles. None is easily readable; all give a poor idea of what illuminated prints look like. The copy is not identified, but seems to be copy Z without the frame lines.<sup>11</sup>

Introducing Blake through song and image is both creative and practical, and a logical extension of what W.H. Auden said—or almost said—somewhere: "No poetry is good poetry that is not good when read aloud." One would think that the voice of the balladeer could easily join those of piper, bard, and prophet, and, like theirs, add to our understanding and enjoyment of Blake. But, unfortunately, the Donovan-like style of these settings does little to enhance the inherent musicality of Blake's words—let alone reveal the meaning of the songs.<sup>12</sup> Missing here is the poet's ear for what a poet said.

A familiarity with eighteenth-century folk stylings and ballad structures may be necessary to capture the popular sounds of Blake's age, but it is no assurance of communicating the spirit of Blake's poems. Because of the musical limitations of Forbes' compositional style, the settings too often seem like impositions on, rather than expositions of, the text. Indeed, the style seems even more limited than it is because Forbes, perhaps confusing the distinction between simplicity and monotony, not only sings all the songs himself, but uses only one instrument, the guitar, as the dominant accompanimental instrument in all of the settings. While his guitar playing is more than adequate, his voice is not the sort that can sustain interest for an entire album. While Forbes does incorporate other instruments throughout the album, using sometimes as many as six musicians, he uses them in such limited and subordinate ways that their presence almost frustrates more than it pleases. The flute, for instance, which he uses to represent the innocent Piper, often plays trills in the background, which are meant to sound pastoral and serene. But the trills rarely grow organically from the musical context, seeming instead to have been a concept of innocence thought of and tacked on after the setting was complete. A more successful use of other instruments is in the jig-like sections that follow "Laughing Song" and the "Introduction" to *Songs of Experience*, although in both instances, the jigs go on so long that we lose the initial freshness of the idea. And, while this type of postlude certainly captures the energetic spirit of the former, it seems a questionable ending to the latter.

From *Innocence*, "The Lamb" is the setting that works best. In this song, Forbes' compositional techniques (a small melodic range, and repetitive rhythms and harmonies) enhance the text. Here the gentle arpeggiation in the guitar and the quiet flute obligato lend a lovely simplicity to the song without becoming monotonous or saccharine. These same compositional techniques do not, however, work in every song. Indeed, in "The Divine Image," Forbes' style actually destroys the mean-

ing of the poem. The melody for the first line ("Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love") is mi, re, ti, do, a seemingly inoffensive and simple arrangements of tones. But when this melody is imposed on the text, and in the syllabic rhythm of the text, the effect is unsettling at best. The seventh step of the scale (ti) is unstable because of its half-step proximity—and its consequent need to "pull"—to tonic (do). That the word "peace" occurs on ti and is then given rhythmic stress (i.e. a longer note value) is not only awkward and unaccomplished writing, but it destroys the very peacefulness and harmony that the words (as a phrase) are trying to convey.

From *Experience*, "London" and "Ah! Sun-flower" are the best. In "London," the drone bass note successfully portrays the hopeless plodding of downtrodden people and the wailing guitar notes become the cries of the "chimney sweeper" and "youthful harlot." In this song, Forbes' technique of repeating his melodies by couplets rather than stanzas (a technique which contributes to the stasis of many of the settings) works very well as a way of accentuating the key words and images. The coda to "Ah! Sun-flower," which goes on almost as long as the song itself (but, unfortunately, at such a reduced audio level that it is difficult to hear), features a guitar solo by Thomas Handy, the improvisatory nature of which is a welcome change from Forbes' consistent and controlled guitar accompaniments to the songs. One only wishes that Forbes had been this adventurous in all of his settings.

The commentary is in two parts and, with forty-eight pages of wide double columns of type, is quite extensive. "William Blake and the Age of Revolution," the first section of part I, examines the "Political," "Industrial," "Intellectual," "Social," and "Romantic" revolutions of Blake's day, and his reactions to them. "William Blake's Life and Writing," the second section, focuses on those events of Blake's life and his other writings that have a "bearing on the Songs" (p. 9). "The Poetics of the Songs," section three, analyses the form, diction, and symbolism of the poems and discusses the main literary devices Blake employs. Irony, unfortunately, is not included, but an erroneous definition of illuminated printing is. Part II is primarily an explication of each of the twelve songs and designs, with a very "Select Bibliography." The booklet is decorated with monochrome vignettes from *Jerusalem* and other illuminated books, none of which is identified or discussed in the text.

The background material is mostly derived from Bronowski's *William Blake and the Age of Revolution*, while the interpretation of the Songs is mostly derived from Wicksteed and Hirsh. Oddly, though, Forbes ignores the latter's sense of change and the former's warning of reading Blake backwards, in favor of reading the songs within Blake's "system," an approach more in keeping

with Adams and Gleckner.<sup>13</sup> At any rate, Forbes has written a very solid introductory text, with Blake intelligently placed in his time, and the poems, "London" and the "Garden of Love" in particular, given fine, detailed explications. The page or two on each poem is designed to help the student read the poem, literally, by identifying verbs, nouns, antecedents, and parallel structures, and by pointing out important biblical and historical allusions, key words, symbols, and recurrent images.

In the discussion of the poems, of diverse "revolutions, . . . and how [Blake] reacted to them" (p. 11), it is obvious that Forbes knows his audience well. His definition of Experience for woman as sexual repression, for example, and his comments about the marriage of love (and thus Blake's own marriage), the arranged marriage, and the influence of the role of women in the American Colonies on Blake, Wollstonecraft, and other writers, will, I think, be of particular interest to high school students ("Social Revolution: Marriage and Women's Rights," p. 15). So, too, will many of the facts he cites: "A teenage boy could be hanged for minor theft. There were 150 crimes punishable by hanging (although murder was not one of them); most of them were crimes against public property" (pp. 11-12); "there were 50,000 prostitutes, not counting mistresses kept by men of wealth," in Blake's London (p. 16); "of the 70 years of Blake's life, Britain was at war for 35" (p. 11).

Some of his facts, though, are wrong. He defines engraving as a technique in which "a design was copied on to a copper plate with an acid-resistant varnish; when acid was applied to the plate, the design would remain in relief" (p. 23). In other words, he confuses engraving with relief etching, as well as the concepts of negative and positive (using them to mean reverse and regular writing). He cites Todd and Hayter's 1948 experiments as the last word, ignoring Essick's *William Blake, Printmaker* (Princeton University Press, 1980), a careful reading of which would have prevented these and a number of other technical errors.<sup>14</sup> And he sees the stimulus for illuminated printing in the printing of the *Poetical Sketches* (1783). It is, however, highly unlikely that Blake sought "an inexpensive method of self publication" because the apology in the advertisement proved an "embarrassing experience" (p. 19). Publishing juvenilia was very fashionable (especially in the 1770's and 1780's) and, though Blake was certainly no "untutored youth," excusing its merit quite common;<sup>15</sup> fashion and convention are still to be seen in Byron's preface to *Hours of Idleness*, 1807. Besides, Blake was given the book in sheets; that he made no attempt to distribute it cannot be attributed to one offending page, which could have been easily extracted.

We can dismiss the idea that for five years Blake was actively looking for an alternative means for pub-

lishing his works—or four years, if the "illuminate the manuscript" phrase in *An Island in the Moon* (1784) is misinterpreted as referring to illuminated printing. He would have been one very unimaginative printmaker had he not known that texts could be illustrated and multiplied on one page by etching or engraving; the former, after all, is the method Blake used for three of his illuminated books, and one or the other method is what all eighteenth-century writing engravers and trade card makers used to print and illustrate their texts. Why Blake used relief etching instead of any other method and waited till 1788 to begin experiments are important questions, but they go unanswered when relief etching is pictured as a major breakthrough after years of trying and searching.<sup>16</sup>

The picture of Blake as a graphic artist is a bit out of focus in other ways, too. Forbes inadvertently perpetuates an image of Blake that we recognize as Victorian, though its originator was himself a contemporary of Blake's. Borrowing from Cunningham, Forbes pictures Blake as "a man of tireless industry, and after a day's work . . . for other artists and booksellers . . . he would paint or write through the night" (p. 20). Cunningham says: "During the day [Blake] was a man of sagacity and sense, who handled his graver wisely, and conversed in a wholesome and pleasant manner; in the evening, when he had done his prescribed task, he gave loose to his imagination."<sup>17</sup> But the image of an artist who "engraved by day," as though in some shop, but "saw visions at night"<sup>18</sup> while laboring in his own studio, presents a schizophrenic artist and a melodramatic scene worthy of George Sand, and one which appeals to those who need conflict in order to see meaning in what would otherwise be plotless day-to-day living. But there was no physical or temporal separation between Blake's commissioned works as an engraver or designer and his own work in relief etching. All the plates were executed at home, in his own studio, cut and drawn on the same tables, proofed and printed with the same ink, on the same press. Blake did not work in a copperplate printer's workshop, or a large engraving studio, or a pressroom. It is a mistake to think of him as a craftsman constantly under someone's watchful eye, or under the pressure of deadlines like nineteenth-century wood engravers working for the *Illustrated London News*.

The image of Blake as a mere craftsman, and not just a mistaken notion of the relation between invention and execution (a relation beyond the scope of this or probably any introductory text), is partly responsible for the idea that Blake "wanted . . . skill of hand,"<sup>19</sup> an idea that Blake fought so hard to overcome. Why the "Tyger" looks like a harmless cat, for example, cannot be explained by a lack of skill on Blake's part, or, as Forbes suggests, a case in which Blake, "in executing the drawing . . . ended up with a creation quite different



from what he had in mind" (p. 44). Picturing Blake as a nineteenth-century craftsman is not only misleading, but contradicts Cunningham's own image of Blake as a multitalented artist "sketching designs, engraving plates, writing songs, and composing music" all at the same time<sup>20</sup>—of a man conversing with Paradise with all his Powers.

Forbes' settings are not art songs or compositions like those of Benjamin Britten, Ralph Vaughan Williams, or George Rochberg.<sup>21</sup> Nor are they "Airs simple and ethereal to match the designs and poems of William Blake," which, as Gilchrist admits, "would be a novelty in music."<sup>22</sup> As simple folk songs, they are more successful at introducing Gregory Forbes than the spirit of William Blake. The settings are not "aural facsimiles," but, then, what is appealing in theory is almost always impossible in practice. Whatever the album's scholarly merit, and despite the commentary's minor misrepresentations, Forbes' triadic presentation (and sound argument for such a presentation) ought to stimulate lively and imaginative discussion about the *Songs* in and out of the classroom.

<sup>1</sup> *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (Norwood, Pa.: Norwood Editions, 1973), p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Allan Cunningham, *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*; *Blake Records*, p. 482.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1942), p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Fredrick Tatham; *Blake Records*, p. 305.

<sup>5</sup> J.T. Smith, in Gilchrist, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Tatham; *Blake Records*, p. 521. For a list of possible guests at the Mathews' and of the pleasure gardens and theatres where Blake would have heard popular music, see B.H. Fairchild, *Such Holy Song* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1980), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> The basis for the album project is the series of workshops Forbes conducted for secondary school children in "Frontenac County, Ontario, Canada, and later presented . . . at two conferences of the Ontario Council of the Teachers of English. All of these were arranged by David Schleich of St. Lawrence College, Kingston" (p. 47). With the encouragement of Schleich, also editor of Quarry Press and turn-of-mill player on "The Tyger," Gregory Forbes seems to have done everything himself, including writing the accompanying commentary. Despite its elaborate presentation, the project is quite Blakean in spirit. The logo for Echoing Green Records (a company certainly created for this project) is the Piper from the *Innocence* title page, while the record label is "The River of Life," printed in green, with its flute players on either side of the spindle hole.

<sup>9</sup> There is an odd use of sources and significant omissions. Forbes describes the music as "lost," referring, one assumes, to those tunes Smith says were "noted down by musical professors." However, he never refers to Smith, but to Cunningham's statement that Blake "wanted the art of writing it down" (p. 7), which leaves the reader with the impression that Blake's unrecorded musical notations are missing or lost. Cunningham also notes that if they "equalled many of his drawings and some of his songs, we have lost melodies of real value" (*Blake Records*, p. 482).

<sup>10</sup> Forbes is certainly correct to argue that an understanding of the music of Blake's day is the first step to hearing the poetry as Blake meant us to hear it. But I think he overstates the case when he says that "not much has been written about Blake's musical sources since very little is known about the subject; the study must be based almost entirely on Blake's lyrics" (p. 47). By citing only one work in the bibliography on the subject, Martha England's "Blake and the Hymns of Charles Wesley" (*Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 70 [1966], 7-33), he makes clear the need for his album project at the expense of strengthening it as an introduction to the subject, about which much is actually already known. What is not known is if Blake's familiarity with popular ballads derived from reading or singing them. Forbes does mention (p. 22) Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), a copy of which Blake owned; but not Christopher Smart's *Hymns for the Amusement of Children* (3 editions between 1770-1775); Joseph Ritson's *A Select Collection of English Songs* (1783), for which Blake engraved several plates; nor any of the contemporary essays on the relation between music and poetry, like John Aiken's *Essays on Song-Writing* (1774); Ambrose Philips' "Letter on Song-writing," in *The Guardian*, #16 (1713); Anselm Bayly's *The Alliance of Musick, Poetry, and Oratory* (1789); or Daniel Webb's *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music* (1769); nor does he mention recent theoretical work, like Bertrand H. Bronson's *Music and Literature in England in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library of the University of California at Los Angeles, 1953), or Herbert M. Schueller's "Correspondences between Music and the Sister Arts, According to Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 11 [1953], 334-59). These works may be too esoteric for Forbes' audience of high school students, but he seems not to have read them himself or six works that are crucial to discussing the influence of hymns and popular ballads on Blake's poetry: Albert B. Friedman's *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), George Sampson's "The Century of Divine Songs," in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 29 (1943), Martha England and John Sparrow's *Hymns Unbidden: Donne, Herbert, Blake, Emily Dickinson, and the Hymnographers*; Nick Shrimpton "Hell's Hymnbook: Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* and Their Models," in *Literature of the Romantic Period: 1750-1850*, Ed. R.T. Davies and B.G. Beatty (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976), pp. 19-35; John Adlard's *The Sports of Cruelty: Fairies, Folk-Songs, Charms and other Country Matters in the Work of William Blake* (London: Cecil & Amelia Woolf, 1972); and, most important, B.H. Fairchild's *Such Holy Song: Music as Idea, Form, and Image in the Poetry of William Blake* (Kent, Ohio: Kent University Press, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> The reproductions seem to be of 6 and 8 color offset reproductions of copy Z, published by Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd. in 1967. Forbes mentions twice (pp. 23, 47) that the first color facsimile of the *Songs* was 1967, which, of course, is not true, but it does seem to indicate that he used the 1967 volume to make his "facsimiles." (Hard to believe that offset lithography could have undone so many!) For a list of early color facsimiles of the *Songs*, see *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), pp. 432-39. For a history of Blake facsimiles, see Robert N. Essick's review of the Manchester Etching Workshop facsimiles, *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 19 (1985), 39.

<sup>12</sup> The Donovan album they recall most clearly is *A Gift from a Flower to a Garden* (Epic, 1967), which is probably only coincidence, but it is interesting to note that Donovan in this two-record set seems to think he's Blake. As a "minstrel," he sings his "poems" so that "all may see and know . . . that God is Love," sings one of them to experienced "youth" and the other to innocent "children of the dawning generation." The texts of the 12 songs for children are printed and illustrated with pen line drawings, and the sheets form both a booklet and a song cycle.

<sup>13</sup> Jacob Bronowski, *William Blake and the Age of Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Joseph H. Wicksteed, *Blake's Innocence and Experience* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1928); E.D. Hirsh, Jr., *Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake* (New Haven: Yale University Press), which was published in 1964, not "1927" (p. 47); Hazard Adams, *William Blake: A Reading of the Shorter Poems* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963); Robert Gleckner, *The Piper and The Bard* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1959).

<sup>14</sup> A few technical corrections: Blake's apprenticeship was not to the Society of Antiquaries but to Basire, the Society's official engraver (pp. 23, 26). Illuminated books of the Middle Ages were not "hand-printed" (p. 19), nor is "illuminated printing" a "technique that married the arts of engraving with watercolor painting" (p. 7). It is doubtful that "Blake was a victim of technological change in that engraving was a dying craft, gradually giving way to lithography in the first two decades of the 18th century [sic]" (p. 13). Forbes means, of course, the nineteenth century, but during this period the most popular reproductive method was aquatint, the mainstay of the picturesque view industry, and engraving, even after Hullmandel set up his lithography press, 1817-1818, was in great demand, because the development of steel engraving (1822) made it possible to print tens of thousands of impressions with great detail and without loss of quality.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Ruth Lowry, *Windows of the Morning: A Critical Study of William Blake's Poetical Sketches, 1783* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 39-41.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of why Blake chose to use relief etching when other, more conventional, methods would have enabled him to combine text and illustrations on one plate, see my *The Art of William Blake's Illuminated Prints* (Manchester: Manchester Etching Workshop, 1983), pp. 1, 19-20.

<sup>17</sup> *Blake Records*, p. 488.

<sup>18</sup> P. 501.

<sup>19</sup> P. 485.

<sup>20</sup> P. 482.

<sup>21</sup> Britten, *Songs & Proverbs of William Blake*, for baritone and piano, op. 74 (London: Faber & Faber, 1965); Williams, *Ten Blake Songs*, for voice and oboe (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); Rochberg, *Blake Songs*, for soprano and chamber ensemble (New York: Leeds Music Corp., 1963). There is, admittedly, a thin line between poor translation and exciting variation. New settings of a song or play can become works of art in their own right, celebrating the original and displaying what may have been hid. It seems that musicians have been more successful in creating new works of art based on Blake's songs than have other artists. Illustrations of Blake's poetry struck Ruthven Todd as "the most horrible of all things"—though, admittedly, he had the "whimsical drawings of some cheery, chintzy girl, who is 'so fond of Blake as he inspires her so much.' From such nightmares as these, Good Lord, Deliver us!" (Todd, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, p. viii). He is apparently referring to (and quite rightly, I think) Pamela Bianco's line drawings in *The Land of Dreams* (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

<sup>22</sup> Gilchrist, p. 41.

## NEWSLETTER

### ASECS CLIFFORD PRIZE



The American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is currently soliciting nominations for its 1984-85 James L. Clifford Prize. The Prize carries an award of \$300 and goes to the best nominated article, an outstanding study of some aspect of eighteenth-century culture, interesting to any eighteenth-century specialist, regardless of discipline. The following rules also apply: (1) The article should not be longer than 7500 words. (2) The article must have appeared in print in a journal, festschrift, or other serial publication between July 1984 and June 1985. (3) The article may be nominated by a member of the Society or by its author. (4) Nominations must be accompanied by an offprint or copy of the article and must be postmarked by February 1, 1986 and sent to the ASECS office. (5) The winning author must be a member of the Society at the time of the award. Nominations or inquiries should be sent to the following address: ASECS, R.G. Peterson, Executive Secretary, Sr. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057, (505) 663-3488.