

TRANSCRIPTION

Elizabeth Stewart sings an unwed mother's lament, "Hishy Ba"

ScottishVoicesProj.0499

[This recording was made in August 1988 at a house in St.Andrews, Fife, that John Niles and his research team were renting at this time. Present were Elizabeth Stewart, John Niles, and members of his group.]

[Elizabeth Stewart sings:]

Chorus: Oh hishy ba, for Ah'm yir ma
Hishy ba, ma bairn, oh
It's hishy ba, for Ah'm yir ma
But the gweed kens fa's yir faither, oh.

[the gweed: the Good One,
the Lord; fa's: who's

1 When I was a maid o sweet sixteen
And beauty only bloomin, oh
It's little, little did I think
That at seventeen I'd be greetin, oh.

Chorus

2 It's keepin me fae jumpin dykes
Fae balls an fae woooin, oh
It's gien me balance tae ma styze
And that's the latest fashion, oh.

[styz: stays

Chorus

3 If I haedda been a gweed wee lass
And taen ma mither's biddin, oh
I widna be sittin at this fireside
Sayin "hishy ba" tae my bairn, oh.

Chorus

4 Oh, the plooman lads are gey queer lads
They're false and deceiving, oh
They'll sell their horse an they'll sell their cairt
And they'll leave their lassies greetin, oh.

[gey: very

[greetin: crying

Chorus: Oh hishy ba, for Ah'm yir ma
Hishy ba ma bairn, oh

It's hishy ba, for Ah'm yir ma
But the gweed kens fa's yir faither, oh.