

PARTIAL TENTATIVE TRANSCRIPTION

Nicole Robertson sings a bit of the East Coast whaling song “The Balaena”

ScottishVoicesProj.0592

[This recording was made in July 1984 in the sitting room of Stanley Robertson’s house in Aberdeen. Present at this point in the recording session were Stanley Robertson, his son Anthony, his daughter Nicole, and John Niles. Nicole sings only the first verse of the song, while Stanley and Anthony join in on the chorus, singing with Nicole in three-part harmony. Too bad they did not go on to sing the whole song!]

SR: {Speaking to his daughter Nicole.] Can you dee me the Balaena?

NR: I’ll do the first part.

SR: OK. *[After a short pause, starts to prompt her:]* “When the no—”

NR: I know how to sing it! I was just thinking. *[Sings:]*

1 Oh he noble fleet of whalers are sailin frae Dundee
Well manned by British sailors to workin on the sea.
On the Western Ocean passage none with them can compare,
But the smartest ship tae make the trip was the Balaena, I declare.

Chorus: When the wind is in the quarter and the engine workin free,
There’s no another whaler a-sailin frae Dundee
Can beat the auld Balaena, an ye needn’t try her on,
For we’ll challenge aa baith large an smaa fae Dundee to St. John.