

M.C. ALCHEMIST

AN VOSOW LOWEN

THE MERRY MAIDENS

The cost of ecstasy and the permanence of the landscape.



The Merry Maidens

The Merry Maidens (An Vosow Lowen) is a Bronze Age stone circle situated near St Buryan in West Penwith, Cornwall. Comprising nineteen granite stones arranged in a near-perfect ring, it stands within a landscape rich in prehistoric monuments, ancient field systems, and enduring folklore.

Local tradition associates the circle with a tale of music, dancing, and transgression. According to the legend, nineteen young women gathered to dance on a Sunday. As the evening wore on, two pipers appeared and began to play. Entranced by the music, the dancers continued long after they should have returned home. At midnight, or with the arrival of the Sabbath depending on the version told, the revellers were punished and transformed into stone.

Nearby stand two upright stones known as The Pipers, said to be the musicians responsible for the forbidden dance. Together, the circle and the outlying stones form one of Cornwall's most enduring folk narratives, blending landscape, memory, religion, and superstition.

This album follows that legend from twilight to dawn. Rather than presenting a historical account, it explores the story as a sequence of moments: the gathering of the maidens, the arrival of the pipers, the growing enchantment of the dance, the crossing of a forbidden boundary, and the final stillness that remains long after the music has faded.

The stones still stand today. Whether viewed as prehistoric monuments, landmarks of folklore, or silent witnesses to centuries of storytelling, they continue to invite new interpretations from each generation that encounters them.

The Legend in Brief

As evening falls over the fields near St Buryan, nineteen maidens gather to celebrate. Beyond the reach of the village, beneath the fading light of the western sky, they dance together in a grassy enclosure surrounded by ancient stones and open moorland.

As darkness deepens, two pipers appear. Their music drifts across the field, at first distant and curious, then irresistible. Drawn into the rhythm, the maidens dance ever more wildly. The lights of home become a distant memory, and the warnings of custom, church, and family are forgotten.

The hours pass unnoticed.

In many versions of the tale, the dancing continues into the Sabbath. In others, midnight marks the moment when the boundary is crossed. Either way, the revellers fail to stop when they should.

Then the music ceases.

The dancers find that they can no longer move. Feet become rooted to the earth. Limbs stiffen. Blood cools. One by one, the maidens are transformed into stone where they stand.

The pipers attempt to flee, but their fate is no different. They too are caught by the same judgement and turned to stone in a nearby field.

By morning, the dance is over. Where there had once been laughter and music, there now stands a circle of granite stones beneath the Cornish sky.

Centuries pass. Villages change. Generations come and go. Yet the stones remain, silent guardians of a story that continues to be told wherever people gather to wonder how nineteen dancers and two musicians came to leave such a lasting mark upon the landscape.

Skyll an Nos (The Twilight Gate)

Narrative Role

The opening track establishes the setting and mood of the story. The sun is sinking into the Atlantic, the day is ending, and the maidens gather in the field before the night's events begin. Nothing supernatural has yet occurred, but the world is beginning to change. The boundary between day and night, safety and uncertainty, is approaching.

Commentary



Many folk traditions regard twilight as a threshold rather than a simple time of day. It is the moment when familiar landmarks become uncertain, shadows lengthen, and ordinary rules seem less secure. In stories throughout Britain and Ireland, supernatural encounters often occur at dawn, dusk, crossroads, shorelines, and other places that exist between one state and another.

The title *Skyll an Nos* ("The Twilight Gate") reflects this idea. The gate is not a physical object but a symbolic crossing point. As the light fades, the landscape itself appears to awaken. The stones become more than silent monuments, and the field becomes a stage upon which the legend will unfold.

Musically and narratively, the track functions as an invitation. It does not tell the listener what will happen, but suggests that something is about to begin. The maidens stand on the threshold of the story, unaware that a simple evening gathering will become a tale remembered for centuries.

Cornish Text

*Kudhas an howl, dres an morredyn...
Nownsek vosow, yn an gwelen...
Kudhas an howl, dres an morredyn...
Nownsek vosow, yn an gwelen...*

*An glasder a-dhedh, an dray-redyn splan...
Yma an mener ow kowsas, heb an glan...
Y-nans an pow, yn kres an tewl...
Yma an vosow ow sevel, dres an meul...*

*Skyll an Nos! Gorfen an dydh!
Skyll an Nos! Yn kres an nydh!
An dor ow kowsas, an men ow kara!
Porth an howlsedhas, yn kres an tera!*

Translation

*Hiding of the sun, over the sea-ripples...
Nineteen maidens, in the field...*

*Hiding of the sun, over the sea-ripples...
Nineteen maidens, in the field...*

*The blueness comes, the bright ferns...
The stones are speaking, without the shore...
Down in the country, in the heart of the dark...
The maidens are standing, beyond the praise...*

*Twilight Gate! End of the day!
Twilight Gate! In the heart of the night!
The earth speaking, the stone loving!
Portal of the sunset, in the heart of the land!*

An Piberen (The Pipers' Arrival)

Narrative Role

The second track introduces the two mysterious pipers whose music drives the events of the legend. Their arrival marks the point at which an ordinary gathering begins to change into something less predictable. Whether they are travelling musicians, supernatural visitors, or simply figures shaped by centuries of storytelling is left deliberately uncertain.

Commentary



Musicians occupy a curious place in Celtic and British folklore. Wandering pipers, fiddlers, and harpers frequently appear as agents of change, leading listeners away from familiar paths and into strange circumstances. Their music can entertain, enchant, mislead, or reveal hidden worlds.

In the Merry Maidens legend, the pipers act as catalysts. Before their arrival, the maidens are merely gathered in a field. Once the music begins, the rhythm of ordinary life is replaced by the rhythm of the dance.

The story starts to move beyond the everyday world and into the realm of folklore.

The song therefore focuses less on the musicians themselves than on the effect they have upon those who hear them. The distant sound of the pipes becomes an invitation, drawing the dancers further from home and closer to the fate that awaits them.

Cornish Text

*Detheth an piber, dres an klow...
Dew dhen gul soun, heb an gow...*

*Gwennen an gwel, yn kres an lown...
Klyw an piber, klyw an soun...*

*An Piberen! Yma ow tos!
An Piberen! Yn-nans an nos!
Dew dhen a-ves, dew dhen a-bell!
Kan an piber, kan an gwell!*

Yma an vosow ow trelya...

Yn kres an golow, ow kanna...

Translation

*The piper came, across the hedge...
Two men making sound, without the lie...*

*Whirling the field, in the heart of the joy...
Hear the piper, hear the sound...*

*The Pipers! They are coming!
The Pipers! Down the night!
Two men outside, two men from afar!
Song of the piper, song of the best!*

*The maidens are turning...
In the heart of the light, singing...*

Tregolow (The Glow of the Town)

Narrative Role

As the dance gathers pace, the maidens look back toward the distant lights of home. The village remains visible across the darkening landscape, offering a final reminder of familiar routines and responsibilities. At this point, nothing prevents them from leaving. The choice to remain is entirely their own.

Commentary



Many traditional stories contain a moment at which the characters are offered a chance to turn back. The significance of that moment often becomes clear only later. In *Tregolow*, the distant lights of the settlement represent safety, community, and the ordinary world that the dancers are gradually leaving behind.

The glow of the town is never presented as threatening or restrictive. Instead, it serves as a quiet contrast to the excitement of the gathering.

The maidens are not driven away from home; they simply choose something more immediate and more enticing.

This makes the track an important turning point within the narrative. The later events of the legend may involve enchantment and supernatural judgement, but here the story still rests upon a human decision. The lights remain visible, yet the dancers stay where they are, allowing the night to draw them further from the world they know.

Cornish Text

*Tregolow, pell yn an nos...
Ow kanna splan, dres an kos...*

*Yma agan tre ow galow...
Yn kres an tewl hag hylow...*

*Golow an dref! Golow an chi!
Pellder an nos, pellder a-vi!
Yma an vosow ow miras...
Yn-nans an pow, heb siras...*

*Na dhewhelans, yn agan tre...
An dans ow tays, dres an vre...*

Translation

*Town-lights, far in the night...
Singing bright, across the sadness...*

*Our home is calling...
In the heart of the dark and shadows...*

*Light of the town! Light of the house!
Distance of the night, distance from me!
The maidens are looking...
Down the country, without a doubt...*

*No return, into our home...
The dance staying, across the hill...*

An Dans Nownsek (The Dance of Nineteen)

Narrative Role

This track forms the energetic centre of the album's opening sequence. The pipers have arrived, the lights of home have been ignored, and the dancers surrender themselves completely to the rhythm. Individual voices and concerns fade into the background as the celebration takes on a momentum of its own.

Commentary



Many communal dances, festivals, and folk celebrations share a common feature: the gradual loss of awareness of time. Repetition, movement, and music combine to create a sense that the ordinary world has fallen away. Minutes become hours, and participants become absorbed in the shared experience of the group.

An Dans Nownsek explores this idea. The nineteen maidens are no longer presented as separate individuals but as a single circle moving together.

The dance becomes self-sustaining, driven as much by its own energy as by the music that first inspired it.

Within the legend, this is the moment at which the revellers become most vulnerable. Their attention is fixed entirely upon the celebration itself. The outside world, the passing of time, and the approach of midnight are all forgotten. The joy of the dance remains genuine, but it is beginning to carry them towards consequences they do not yet recognise.

Cornish Text

*Troyllya, troyllya, yn an gwel...
Nownsek vosow, heb an skwel...*

*Klyw an piber, kan an gans...
Yn kres an golow, yma an dans...*

*An Dans Nownsek! Troyllya!
An Dans Nownsek! Lowena!
Nownsek denen, nownsek lown...
Yn kres an nos, klyw an soun!*

*Na dhewhelans, na powes...
An dans ow trelya, dres an gres...*

Translation

*Whirling, whirling, in the field...
Nineteen maidens, without the fear (shying)...*

*Hear the piper, song of the hundred...
In the heart of the light, is the dance...*

*The Dance of Nineteen! Whirling!
The Dance of Nineteen! Joy!
Nineteen maidens, nineteen happy...
In the heart of the night, hear the sound!*

*No return, no rest...
The dance turning, across the heat...*

Hanternos (Midnight / The Boundary)

Narrative Role

This track marks the moment at which the story crosses an invisible line. The celebration continues, but the atmosphere has changed. The passing hours can no longer be ignored, and the warnings that seemed distant earlier in the evening begin to feel immediate. Whether interpreted as midnight, the beginning of the Sabbath, or a symbolic point of no return, this is the moment at which the legend turns towards its conclusion.

Commentary



Throughout folklore, certain moments are regarded as thresholds in time. Midnight occupies a special place among them. Neither one day nor the next, it exists between states, carrying associations with mystery, judgement, and transformation.

In the Merry Maidens legend, the significance of midnight lies less in the clock itself than in what it represents. The dancers have been given opportunities to stop, return home, or leave the field behind. Instead, the

celebration continues beyond the accepted boundary. The crossing may appear small, but folklore often treats such moments as deeply significant.

The music of *Hanternos* reflects this growing tension. The energy of the dance remains, yet a sense of unease begins to emerge beneath it. The revellers are still celebrating, but the listener knows that the story has reached the point from which there can be no easy return.

Cornish Text

*Hanternos, yma ow tos...
Gorfen an dydh, kres an nos...*

*An Sabbath a-dhedh, heb an glan...
Yma an vosow ow kanna, kan an tan...
An eur ma detheth, an eur ma splan...
Yma an piber ow powes, yn an lan...*

*Hanternos! An Orfen!
Hanternos! An Worfen!
Yma an piber ow kowsas, heb an gow...
Yma an vosow ow miras, dres an klow!*

Translation

*Midnight, it is coming...
End of the day, heart of the night...*

*The Sabbath arrives, without the shore...
The maidens are singing, song of the fire...
This hour came, this hour bright...
The piper is resting (stopping), in the enclosure...*

*Midnight! The Finality!
Midnight! The Overwhelming!
The piper is speaking, without the lie...
The maidens are looking, across the hedge!*

*Nineteen maidens... standing still...
In the heart of the dark... in the heart of the night...*

Medhel ha Kos (Soft and Still)

Narrative Role

Following the intensity of the dance, the story enters an unexpected stillness. The music fades, movement slows, and the revellers find themselves suspended between celebration and catastrophe. For the first time, the consequences of the night's events begin to reveal themselves.

Commentary



Many legends reserve their most unsettling moments not for dramatic action, but for silence. After noise, movement, and excitement, stillness can feel profoundly unnatural. In *Medhel ha Kos*, the absence of music becomes more disturbing than the music itself.

The title, meaning "Soft and Still," reflects this sudden change in atmosphere. The dancers are no longer caught up in the energy of the celebration. Instead, they become aware of a growing sense of unease. The field is unchanged, yet something fundamental has shifted.

This track represents the moment of recognition. The revellers realise that the night is no longer unfolding as they expected. The joy of the dance has evaporated, replaced by uncertainty and fear. The transformation has not yet fully occurred, but its presence can already be felt. What follows is no longer a question of choice, but of fate.

Cornish Text

*Medhel ha kos, yn an gwel...
An gwyn ow kowsas, dres an pell...*

*Na vos, na lown...
Heb an kan, heb an soun...
Yn kres an ni, yma an tewl...
Sevel kos, dres an meul...*

*Medhel ha kos! Yma an gwatheth!
Medhel ha kos! Yn kres an setheth!
Nownsek enederen, sevel kos...
Yn kres an tewl, yn kres an nos...*

Translation

*Soft and still, in the field...
The wind speaking, across the distance...*

*No voice, no joy...
Without the song, without the sound...
In the heart of the fog, is the dark...
Standing still, beyond the praise...*

*Soft and still! There is the worst!
Soft and still! In the heart of the sunset!
Nineteen souls, standing still...
In the heart of the dark, in the heart of the night...*

*The cold coming, across the town...
In the heart of the night, without the hill...*

Kalesans an Gwad (Hardening of the Blood)

Narrative Role

This track depicts the transformation itself. The stillness and uncertainty of the previous song give way to the irreversible process of petrification. What began as a night of celebration becomes a permanent part of the landscape, as the dancers lose their human form and become stone.

Commentary



Stone occupies a unique place in folklore. Unlike flesh, it does not age, heal, or forget. Once transformed, the maidens become fixed in both place and time, preserved as a lasting reminder of the events of the night.

The title *Kalesans an Gwad* ("Hardening of the Blood") emphasises the gradual nature of the transformation. Rather than an instantaneous magical change, the process is imagined as something creeping through the body, replacing warmth, movement, and life with cold permanence.

This idea helps explain the enduring power of the legend. The stones are not merely a punishment; they are a memory made physical. Long after the music has faded and the dancers themselves have been forgotten, the circle remains. The landscape becomes a record of the story, preserving it for future generations.

Within the album, this track serves as the point of no return. The fate of the maidens is sealed, and the joyous energy that carried the earlier songs has finally come to an end.

Cornish Text

*Kalesans, yn an gotheth...
Trelya men, yn an wotheth...*

*Detheth an moon, dres an troos...
Heb an kan, heb an voos...
Yma an gwad ow kollenas, men hag eur...
Yn kres an tewl, yn kres an dor...*

*Kalesans an Gwad! Men an nos!
Kalesans an Gwad! Yn an kos!
Nownsek vosow, sevel kos...
Trelya men, dres an nos!*

Translation

*Hardening, in the pride...
Turning to stone, in the vein...*

*The cold came, across the feet...
Without the song, without the voice...
The blood is filling, stone and hour...
In the heart of the dark, in the heart of the earth...*

*Hardening of the Blood! Stone of the night!
Hardening of the Blood! In the sadness!
Nineteen maidens, standing still...*

Turning to stone, across the night!

*No return, no rest...
The stone standing, across the heat...*

An Dew Veger (The Two Pillars)

Narrative Role

While the maidens have already succumbed to their fate, the two pipers attempt to flee. Their efforts prove unsuccessful, and they too are transformed into stone. The legend explains their presence through the two standing stones traditionally known as The Pipers, located some distance from the main circle.

Commentary



Many folk tales include a final attempt to escape judgement. Whether successful or not, the attempt serves to emphasise the inevitability of the outcome. In the Merry Maidens legend, the pipers run from the field, but the boundary they have crossed cannot simply be left behind.

The title *An Dew Veger* ("The Two Pillars") reflects the final state of the musicians. No longer wandering performers, they become fixed features of the landscape, just as permanent as the circle itself. The transformation completes the story's pattern, ensuring that all those involved share the

same fate.

The separation of the pipers from the maidens also contributes to the visual power of the legend. Visitors encounter not only a circle of stones, but additional stones standing apart from it. Folklore provides an explanation for this arrangement, connecting individual features of the landscape into a single narrative.

By the end of the track, the events of the night are complete. The dance has ended, the music has fallen silent, and the landscape has assumed the form in which it will be remembered.

Cornish Text

*An piber ow ponya, dres an gwel...
Dew dhen ow fia, heb an skwel...*

*Yma an moon ow holya, yn an nos...
Dres an klow hag awel, dres an kos...
Na vovans, na dhewhelans...
Yn kres an tawl, yma an kellans...*

*An Dew Veger! Sevel pell!
An Dew Veger! Yn an gwel!
Dew dhen a-ves, dew dhen yn men...
An worfen dydh, an worfen len!*

*Yma an piber ow powes, yn an tir...
Trelya men, yn an eur hir...*

Translation

*The piper running, across the field...
Two men fleeing, without the fear (shying)...*

*The cold is following, in the night...
Across the hedge and gale, across the sadness...
No movement, no return...
In the heart of the dark, is the loss...*

*The Two Pillars! Standing far!
The Two Pillars! In the field!
Two men outside, two men in stone...
The end of the day, the faithful end!*

*The piper is resting (stopping), in the earth...
Turning to stone, in the long hour...*

Gwithyas an Gwel (Guardian of the Field)

Narrative Role

With dawn comes silence. The transformation is complete, and the events of the night have passed into history. The villagers discover the stones where the dancers once stood, and the landscape takes on a new meaning. What was once the site of a celebration becomes a place of remembrance.

Commentary



Folklore often seeks to explain features of the landscape by connecting them to stories. A hill, a standing stone, or a circle of granite becomes more than a physical object; it becomes a reminder of something that happened long ago. Whether the event is believed literally is often less important than the fact that the story continues to be told.

Gwithyas an Gwel ("Guardian of the Field") explores this relationship between memory and place. The stones no longer represent individual dancers. Instead, they become part of the landscape itself, standing watch through changing seasons and passing generations.

The track also marks a shift in perspective. Earlier songs focus on the participants within the legend. Here, attention turns to those who encounter the stones afterwards: travellers, villagers, storytellers, and visitors who inherit the tale. The field becomes a meeting place between past and present, where memory is preserved not in books or records, but in the enduring presence of stone.

The music of the dance has long since faded, yet the story remains. In that sense, the stones fulfil a role beyond punishment. They become guardians of the legend itself.

Cornish Text

*Detheth an howl, dres an bryn...
Men ow splanna, gwynn ha gwyn...*

*Nownsek vosow, sevel yn kres...
Heb an vovans, heb an gres...
Gwithyas an gwel, milvlyedhen...*

Yn kres an golow, dres an sen...

*Gwithyas an Gwel! Men an Nos!
Gwithyas an Gwel! Kres an Kos!
Na dhen ow kanna, na dhen ow fia...
An menygi ow sevel, dres an tera!*

Translation

*The sun came, across the hill...
Stone shining, white and white...*

*Nineteen maidens, standing in the middle...
Without the movement, without the heat...
Guardian of the field, a thousand years...
In the heart of the light, across the sound...*

*Guardian of the Field! Stone of the Night!
Guardian of the Field! Heart of the Sadness!
No man singing, no man fleeing...
The stones standing, across the land!*

*The maidens are looking far...
Guardian of the dark, in the field...*

An Vosow Lowen (The Merry Maidens)

Narrative Role

The closing track presents the legend as a complete narrative, bringing together the themes and events explored throughout the album. Rather than focusing on a single moment, it follows the story from the gathering of the maidens to the silence of the stone circle that remains after the dance has ended.

Commentary



Throughout the album, each track examines a particular stage of the legend: twilight, temptation, celebration, judgement, and remembrance. *An Vosow Lowen* draws these elements together into a single continuous narrative, allowing the listener to experience the tale as a whole.

In many traditional storytelling traditions, familiar stories are retold in different forms depending on the occasion. A listener might hear individual episodes separately before later encountering the complete version. This final track follows a similar approach, revisiting the major events of the cycle while presenting them as one uninterrupted journey.

The title also returns attention to the maidens themselves. Although the legend includes pipers, warnings, and supernatural elements, it is ultimately the dancers who give the story its identity. Their transformation provides the explanation for the stone circle, while their memory ensures the tale continues to be told.

As the final notes fade, the listener is returned to the same landscape with which the album began. The sun has risen, the music has ended, and the stones remain. The story is complete, but the circle still stands, inviting each new generation to imagine what happened there on that long-remembered night.

Cornish Text

*An howl a-go dres ton an mor, ow tewlel skeus an tewl,
Yma an skrifow ow krowsen, dres an men hag an meul.
Yma vosow Sen Beryan ow mones dres an gwel,
Y-nans an pow ow klowas, galow an tir ha pell.*

*Ny welans i an piberen, yn kres an spernen-wynn,
Gans dewlagas a ven-der, ha besies tan hag yn.
Yma an gwels ow tevi, an awel gans selen,
An sedhas ma ow trelya, dres an howl hag an men.*

*Soun a-dhedh, soun a-bell, an kan ow tewlel skrew,
Yma an nos ow trelya, yn kres an golow ew.
I a gemmer aga le, dorn yn dorn ow sevel,
Dres la an eglos gothyl, dres an hanter-gevel.*

*Agga thros yw skav ha skans, aga holon yw tan,
Yma an lughes ow tansya, dres an wotheth hag an glan.
An dref yw pell ha tewl, an golow yw dewis,
Yma an drowlya ow skonya, dres an hanter-vewis.*

*An klegh a Sen Beryan, ow kanna poos ha tewl,
Yma an taw ow trehi, dres an eneder hag an meul.
An lowena yw kellys, ma an moon ow sevel,
Dhyworth an troos dhe'n galon, yn kres an hanter-awel.*

*An gwad yw selt, an askorn yw men, an krohen yw loos,
Nownsek vosow ow sevel, heb an kan ha heb an voos.
An piberen a fias, dres an klow hag an vre,
Mes yma i sevel yn men, yn kres an gwayan tre.*

*Lemmen an borwa yw gwynn, dres an tir kos ha pell,
Le-may nownsek eneder, yn menygi an gwel.
Na dhen ow kanna soun, na dhen ow tansya dres an tir,
An kyle a ven yw set, yn kres an eur ha hir.*

Translation

*The sun goes below the sea-wave, casting shadows of the dark,
The marks are crossing, across the stone and the praise.
The maidens of St Buryan are going across the field,
Down the country hearing, the call of the land and far.*

*They do not see the pipers, in the heart of the hawthorn,
With eyes of stone-darkness, and fingers thin and sharp.
The grass is growing, the gale with salt-mist,
This sunset is turning, across the sun and the stone.*

*Sound arrived, sound from afar, the song casting a spell,
The night is turning, in the heart of the light it is.
They take their place, hand in hand standing,
Beyond the law of the old church, beyond the secret.*

Their feet are light and fleeting, their heart is fire,

*The lightning is dancing, across the pride and the shore.
The town is far and dark, the light is chosen,
The whirling is refusing, across the half-living.*

*The bell of St Buryan, singing heavy and dark,
The silence is cutting, across the soul and the praise.
The joy is lost, the cold is rising,
From the foot to the heart, in the heart of the half-gale.*

*The blood is silt, the bone is stone, the skin is grey,
Nineteen maidens standing, without the song and without the voice.
The pipers fled, across the hedge and the hill,
But they are standing in stone, in the heart of the moving town (place).*

*Now the morning is white, across the sad and far land,
Where nineteen souls [are], in the stones of the field.
No man singing sound, no man dancing across the land,*

NOTES ON SYMBOLISM AND LANGUAGE

The songs of *An Vosow Lowen* draw upon recurring images found throughout Cornish folklore, traditional storytelling, and the landscape itself. The notes in this section are not intended as a guide to the Cornish language, but as a companion for listeners interested in some of the themes, symbols, and ideas that appear throughout the album.

Symbol Glossary

Men (Stone)

Stone is the defining image of the Merry Maidens legend. It represents permanence, memory, and the ability of stories to survive long after the people who first told them have passed away. In the album, stone is both a physical reality and a symbol of endurance.

Nos (Night)

Night marks the transition from the familiar world into the uncertain realm of folklore. As darkness deepens, ordinary routines give way to mystery, possibility, and transformation.

Tan (Fire)

Fire represents warmth, celebration, and human companionship. It is associated with life, movement, and communal gathering, standing in contrast to the stillness that eventually overtakes the dancers.

Gwel (Field)

The field is more than a setting. Removed from the safety of home and village, it becomes a liminal space where everyday rules lose their authority and the events of the legend can unfold.

Howl (Sun)

The setting and rising sun frame the narrative. Sunset opens the story, while dawn brings its conclusion. The movement from light into darkness and back again mirrors the journey of the album itself.

Mor (Sea)

Although rarely at the centre of the narrative, the sea is a constant presence in the landscape of West Penwith. It serves as a reminder of distance, change, and the wider world beyond the boundaries of the field.

Awel (Wind)

The wind carries voices, music, and memory across the landscape. Throughout folklore it often acts as a messenger between places, linking the human world with the unseen.

Golow (Light)

Light can represent guidance, home, memory, or hope. In *Tregolow*, the distant lights of the settlement become a symbol of the ordinary life that the dancers choose to leave behind.

Piber (Piper)

The piper is a familiar figure in Celtic and British folklore. Musicians often appear as bringers of change, leading listeners away from familiar paths and into unexpected circumstances.

Dans (Dance)

The dance represents joy, freedom, and communal celebration. At the same time, it illustrates how easily delight can become obsession when all awareness of time and consequence is lost.

Tir / Tera (Land)

The land is more than a backdrop. It acts as a witness to the events of the story, preserving both the stones and the memories associated with them across the centuries.

Kres (Heart / Centre)

Frequently appearing in the lyrics, *kres* refers not only to a physical centre but also to the heart of an experience, place, or moment. Many key events occur "in the heart" of the night, the field, or the landscape.

Tewl (Darkness)

Darkness is not portrayed as evil, but as a realm of uncertainty. It conceals, transforms, and blurs the boundaries between the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Dor (Gate / Door)

The image of a gate or doorway appears throughout folklore as a symbol of transition. In the album it represents the crossing of thresholds, whether between day and night, safety and danger, or the known and the unknown.

Menegi (Standing Stones)

The standing stones represent the final meeting point of landscape and story. Whether viewed as prehistoric monuments, landmarks, or characters within the legend, they remain the enduring focus of the tale.

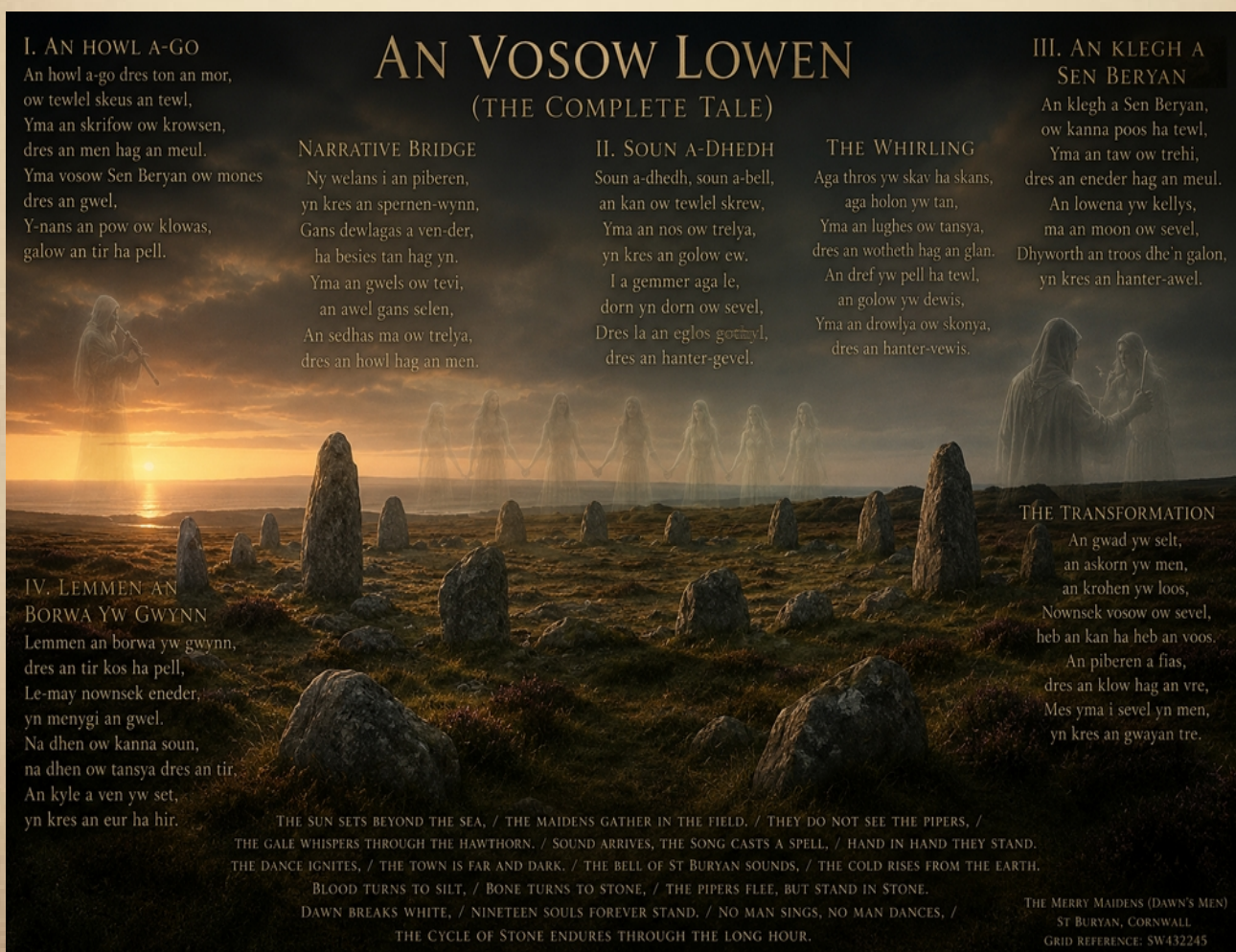
Sources and Inspiration

An Vosow Lowen draws inspiration from the Merry Maidens stone circle near St Buryan in West Penwith, Cornwall, together with the associated folklore of the Nineteen Maidens and the Two Pipers.

The album also reflects broader themes found in Cornish folklore, oral storytelling traditions, prehistoric monuments, and the enduring relationship between landscape and legend. While based upon traditional tales, the songs do not attempt to present a definitive version of the story. Instead, they offer a creative interpretation of a legend that has been retold in many forms over the centuries.

The Cornish lyrics were written specifically for this project using Standard Written Form Cornish. As with many artistic translations, emphasis has been placed upon atmosphere, imagery, and narrative flow rather than strict word-for-word correspondence.

The author encourages listeners interested in the history of the site to explore the archaeological, historical, and folkloric sources relating to the Merry Maidens, the Two Pipers, and the wider prehistoric landscape of West Penwith.



I. AN HOWL A-GO
An howl a-go dres ton an mor,
ow tewel skeus an tewl,
Yma an skrifow ow krowsen,
dres an men hag an meul.
Yma vosow Sen Beryan ow mones
dres an gwel,
Y-nans an pow ow klowas,
galow an tir ha pell.

NARRATIVE BRIDGE
Ny welans i an piberen,
yn kres an spernen-wynn,
Gans dewlagas a ven-der,
ha besies tan hag yn.
Yma an gwels ow tevi,
an awel gans selen,
An sedhas ma ow trelya,
dres an howl hag an men.

II. SOUN A-DHEDH
Soun a-dhedh, soun a-bell,
an kan ow tewel skrew,
Yma an nos ow trelya,
yn kres an golow ew.
I a gemmer aga le,
dorn yn dorn ow sevel,
Dres la an eglos goctyl,
dres an hanter-gevel.

THE WHIRLING
Aga thros yw skav ha skans,
aga holon yw tan,
Yma an lughes ow tansya,
dres an wotheth hag an glan.
An dref yw pell ha tewl,
an golow yw dewis,
Yma an drowlya ow skonya,
dres an hanter-vewis.

III. AN KLEGH A SEN BERYAN
An klegh a Sen Beryan,
ow kanna poos ha tewl,
Yma an taw ow trehi,
dres an eneder hag an meul.
An lowena yw kellys,
ma an moon ow sevel,
Dhyworth an troos dhe'n galon,
yn kres an hanter-awel.

IV. LEMMEN AN BORWA YW GWYNN
Lemmen an borwa yw gwynn,
dres an tir kos ha pell,
Le-may nownsek eneder,
yn menygi an gwel.
Na dhen ow kanna soun,
na dhen ow tansya dres an tir.
An kyle a ven yw set,
yn kres an eur ha hir.

THE TRANSFORMATION
An gwad yw selt,
an askorn yw men,
an krohen yw loos,
Nownsek vosow ow sevel,
heb an kan ha heb an voos.
An piberen a fias,
dres an klow hag an vre,
Mes yma i sevel yn men,
yn kres an gwayan tre.

THE SUN SETS BEYOND THE SEA, / THE MAIDENS GATHER IN THE FIELD. / THEY DO NOT SEE THE PIPERS, /
THE GALE WHISPERS THROUGH THE HAWTHORN. / SOUND ARRIVES, THE SONG CASTS A SPELL, / HAND IN HAND THEY STAND.
THE DANCE IGNITES, / THE TOWN IS FAR AND DARK. / THE BELL OF ST BURYAN SOUNDS, / THE COLD RISES FROM THE EARTH.
BLOOD TURNS TO SILT, / BONE TURNS TO STONE, / THE PIPERS FLEE, BUT STAND IN STONE.
DAWN BREAKS WHITE, / NINETEEN SOULS FOREVER STAND. / NO MAN SINGS, NO MAN DANCES, /
THE CYCLE OF STONE ENDURES THROUGH THE LONG HOUR.

THE MERRY MAIDENS (DAWN'S MEN)
ST BURYAN, CORNWALL
GRID REFERENCE: SW432245