

Auld Lang Syne

START

Should old acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind?

Should old acquaintance be forgot, and old lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne,

we'll take a cup of kindness yet, for auld lang syne. END

Lyrics

Auld Lang Syne

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and old lang syne?

Chorus:

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.*

And surely you'll buy your pint cup!
and surely I'll buy mine!
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

Chorus

We two have run about the slopes,
and picked the daisies fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
since auld lang syne.

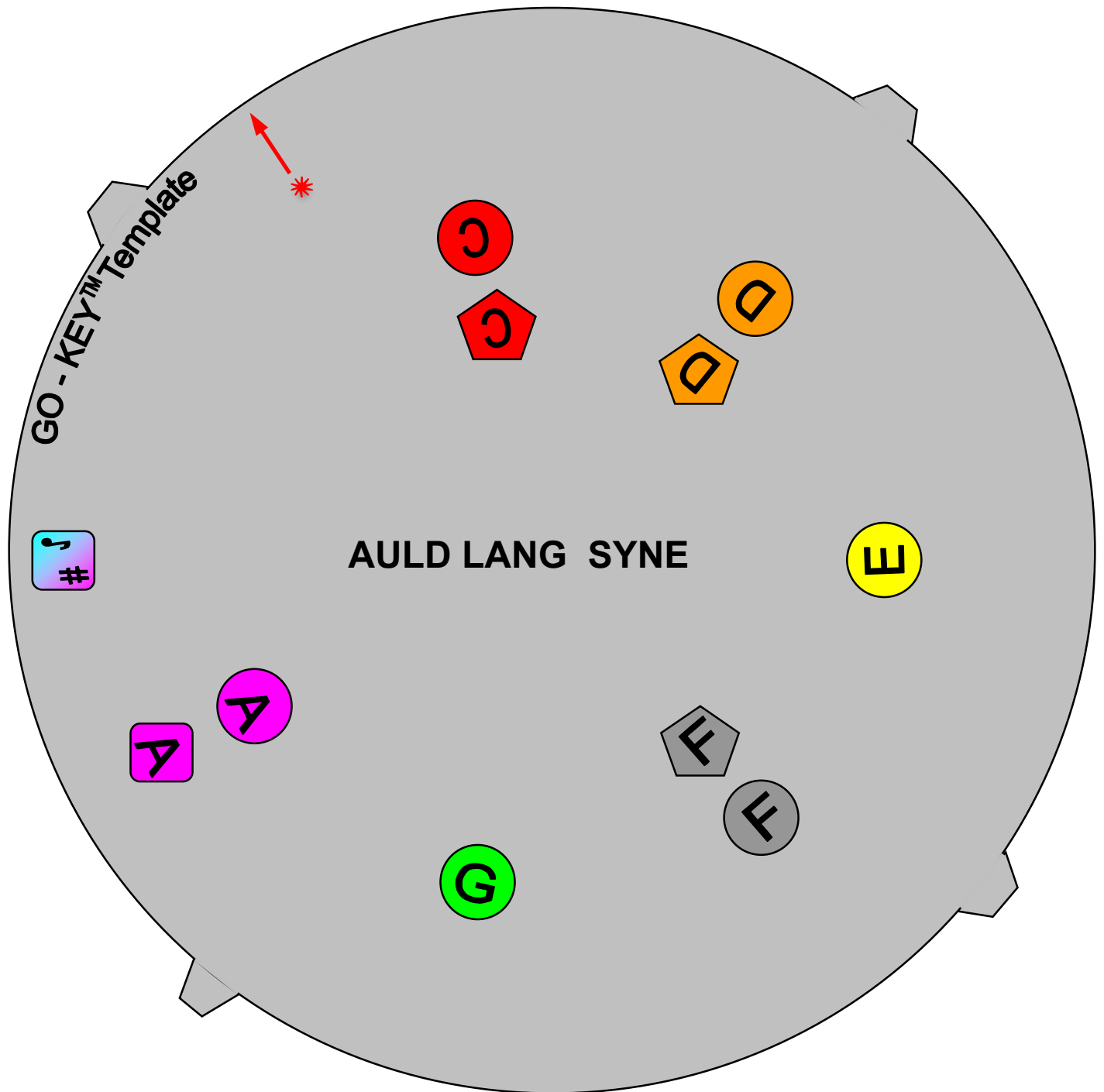
Chorus

We two have paddled in the stream,
from morning sun till dine†;
But seas between us broad have roared
since auld lang syne.

Chorus

And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
for auld lang syne.

Chorus



History and Origin

"**Auld Lang Syne**" is a Scots-language poem written by Robert Burns in 1788 and set to the tune of a traditional folk song. It is well known in many countries, especially in the English-speaking world, its traditional use being to bid farewell to the old year at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve. By extension, it is also sung at funerals, graduations, and as a farewell or ending to other occasions. The international Scouting movement in many countries uses it to close jamborees and other functions. The poem's Scots title may be translated into standard English as "old long since" or, more idiomatically, "long long ago", "days gone by", or "old times". Consequently, "For auld lang syne", as it appears in the first line of the chorus, might be loosely translated as "for the sake of old times". The phrase "Auld Lang Syne" is also used in similar poems by Robert Ayton (1570–1638), Allan Ramsay (1686–1757), and James Watson (1711), as well as older folk songs predating Burns.

Robert Burns sent a copy of the original song to the Scots Musical Museum with the remark, "The following song, an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man." Some of the lyrics were indeed "collected" rather than composed by the poet; the ballad "Old Long Syne" printed in 1711 by James Watson shows considerable similarity in the first verse and the chorus to Burns' later poem, and is almost certainly derived from the same "old song".

The tune to which "Auld Lang Syne" is commonly sung is a pentatonic Scots folk melody, probably originally a sprightly dance in a much quicker tempo. Beethoven wrote an arrangement of Auld Lang Syne in the original brisk strathspey rhythm - published as part of his 12 Scottish Folksongs (1814). Songwriter George M. Cohan quotes the first line of the "Auld Lang Syne" melody in the second to last line of the chorus of You're a Grand Old Flag. John Philip Sousa quotes the melody in the Trio section of his 1924 march "Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company". English composer of light music Ernest Tomlinson wrote a Fantasia on Auld Lang Syne in 1976. The University of Virginia's alma mater ("The Good Old Song") is sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne". "Auld Lang Syne" is traditionally sung at the conclusion of New Year gatherings in Scotland and around the world, especially in English-speaking countries.

"Auld Lang Syne" has been translated into many languages, and the song is widely sung all over the world. The song's pentatonic scale matches scales used in Korea, Japan, India, China and other East Asian countries, which has facilitated its "nationalisation" in the East.

Notable Uses:

- 1939: Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians performed it in on New Year's Eve for decades until his death in 1977. Lombardo's version is played in Times Square every New Year's immediately following the dropping of the ball.
- 1997: On 30 June, the day before Hong Kong was handed over from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China, the tune was played by the silver and pipe bands from the Royal Hong Kong Police Force.
- 2009: On 30 November – St. Andrew's Day – students and staff at the University of Glasgow sang the song in 41 languages simultaneously.
- 2015: On 25 March, the song was played with a bagpipe on the transfer of Lee Kuan Yew's body from the Istana to the Parliament House.
- 2017: On 31 August, the song was played by the SAF band outside the Istana at the farewell ceremony of former President Tony Tan Keng Yam on the last day of his Presidency that ended after 6 years.