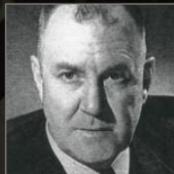




the
Poet sings

LISA HARPER-BROWN
DAVID WICKHAM



the
Poet sings

AUSTRALIAN ART SONGS

AGNEW ALLEN BERTRAM HANSON PAVIOUR

LISA HARPER-BROWN
DAVID WICKHAM

the Poet sings

PAUL PAVIOUR (b.1931)

THE POET SINGS

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---|------|
| 1 | i | Prologue: Hark! hark! the lark (<i>William Shakespeare</i>) | 1'18 |
| 2 | ii | Crabbed age and youth (<i>attrib. William Shakespeare</i>) | 1'04 |
| 3 | iii | Sweet rose, fair flower (<i>attrib. William Shakespeare</i>) | 3'13 |
| 4 | iv | The only pretty ring time (<i>William Shakespeare</i>) | 2'00 |
| 5 | v | Live with me (<i>Christopher Marlowe</i>) | 3'04 |
| 6 | vi | It raineth every day (<i>William Shakespeare</i>) | 1'50 |
| 7 | vii | Epilogue: Fear no more the heat of the sun (<i>William Shakespeare</i>) | 6'18 |

GEOFFREY ALLEN (b.1927)

TWO CHINESE SONGS Op.1 (*Evangeline Dora Edwards after Li Po*)

- | | | | |
|---|----|-----------------|------|
| 8 | i | Flute music | 3'22 |
| 9 | ii | The white egret | 3'15 |

ROY AGNEW (1891-1944)

- | | | | |
|----|--|--|------|
| 10 | | Beloved stoop down thro' the clinging dark (<i>Zora Cross</i>) | 3'22 |
| 11 | | O moonlight deep and tender (<i>James Russell Lowell</i>) | 3'07 |
| 12 | | Dirge (<i>Percy Bysshe Shelley</i>) | 1'57 |

RAYMOND HANSON (1913-1976)

THREE SONGS Op.4 (*Karl Hansen*)

- | | | | |
|----|-----|-----------------|------|
| 13 | i | In fairyland | 2'09 |
| 14 | ii | Shades of night | 2'25 |
| 15 | iii | The wide world | 1'01 |

MICHAEL BERTRAM (*b.1935*)
16 Silence of the night (*Christina Rossetti*) 5'47

GEOFFREY ALLEN

SONGS THAT MOTHER NEVER TAUGHT ME Op.17 (*Geoffrey Allen*)

17 i Love letters 3'50
18 ii Heart attack 1'10
19 iii The vampire's lullaby 2'14
20 iv The dangers of love 6'03

ROY AGNEW

21 Sorrow (*Alfred Lord Tennyson*) 2'32
22 Infant joy (*William Blake*) 1'07
23 Dusk (*Rita Williams*) 1'40
24 Hie away, hie away (*Walter Scott*) 0'51

GEOFFREY ALLEN

TWO SONGS FOR A WEDDING Op.72

25 i Smile, O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth (*Walt Whitman*) 3'13
26 ii Love's coming (*John Shaw Neilson*) 3'10

RAYMOND HANSON

27 I dreamt that she sat by my head Op.3 (*Rabindranath Tagore*) 3'03
28 Fallen veils Op.6 (*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*) 2'55

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LISA HARPER-BROWN soprano
DAVID WICKHAM piano

the Poet sings

What is an Australian song? Would the composer, and for that matter the poet, have to be born in Australia? Should the song simply be written in Australia? If so, how long would the composer have to have been in the country?... and so on. Performers can choose to sidestep this vexed question, of course; we have chosen songs that can generally be agreed to be Australian, by the patrimony of the composers or for their adoption of Australia as their home.

The question is an idle one, perhaps, except insofar as it refers to the discussion of style and influence. Australia is, one hopes, at least a little proud of its artists, musicians and writers, and happy to claim them as its own; but can their work be described as Australian in terms of its style? Is there an Australian musical voice? This is always hard to describe, but one could probably agree that there is a French, German, Spanish, Russian, English or American sound to those nations' music, even if one couldn't succinctly define it. Can one say that of Australia, and if so when might that have been defined?

The famous "tyranny of distance" problem, Australia's obvious geographical isolation, left composers in a very different position from their colleagues in Europe. Before the advent of cheap air travel, a journey to, or from, Europe could well have been a permanent migration. In a young country, with a small and even younger artistic community, one can imagine that the term "style" could really only be applied to individuals. Now, on the other hand, with instant communication, the endless resources of the Internet and a thoroughly multicultural population, diverse stylistic influences are legion and the notion of national stylistic commonalities might be regarded as old-fashioned and even undesirable.

Perhaps, then, there were three generations, from around the turn of the twentieth century to the nineteen sixties, when it might have been possible for a national musical community

to contribute to something that might later be identified as a national sound? Songs can succinctly suggest characteristics of a culture's identity, by virtue of their finely considered balance of music and poetry, especially if that poetry is also from that culture. German literature, in particular, preceded the German nation itself – the cultural movement was at the vanguard of the German-speakers in the many smaller states first dreaming of and later demanding a unified country. Carl Alexander wrote in 1834: “Just as language... directly represents the development of nations, so the Lied is the most faithful mirror of its soul.” Accompanist Graham Johnson has described songs as “cultural stock cubes” – concentrated and easily transportable, and when one reconstitutes them by adding performers, one can savour refined elements of another place.

The composers represented in this collection were born between 1891 and the 1930s, and might be ideal subjects for study in this context. It has been very interesting, therefore, to observe that the models and influences are largely those of English song, which was also renewing itself thoroughly during these years. As new English styles developed, and Australian composers travelled overseas to study, new English models returned to alter Australian songs.

It is important to note that English song was itself subject to external influence; from Parry's and Stanford's ambitions to create an English song literature that had the same depths and subtleties of the Lied, to Grieg's impact on a generation exploring their nation's folk music and incorporating its modes, melodic patterns and above all its unaffected “authenticity”, to Ravel's teaching of Vaughan Williams, and Delius's cosmopolitan background. These are also audible in the songs brought together on this disc, ranging from the 1920s to the first decade of the new century. The stylistic essentials of the composers still active were also audibly formed in the 1950s

The range of poets that the composers chose is similar to those found in the best English songs – here, from Shakespeare to Tagore, incorporating Marlowe, Blake, Shelley, Scott, Tennyson, the Rossetts, parlour poets and new writers, often those known to the composers. Geoffrey Allen has written some of his own texts, as Mahler, Debussy and Cornelius did before him.

If a national identity in song relies upon poetry from that nation, then very few of the songs would meet that criterion – of the major Australian poets only John Shaw Neilson is to be found here. Most English-speaking composers chose texts from the British Isles, one presumes for their abundant literary merits and aptness for their musical ideas, rather than for any subservient devotion to the centre of Empire.

It will take a much larger study to pursue these questions in detail, but from the evidence of these songs these Australian composers aligned themselves more or less consciously with their colleagues in Britain, enlarging and enriching the canon of English song with great distinction. Probably Australia's pre-war collective identity as a mature member of the British Empire owing its allegiance to the Crown shaped its artistic output. Perhaps its confidence in its own coherence and strong identity meant that a specifically national music movement was not necessary, as it was in countries forging new cultural cohesiveness after foreign domination or historical fractured governance. Certainly, it would be unreasonable to expect the relatively tiny band of Australian composers to create a totally new musical stream, even as English song underwent radical transformations. The curious must, however, ask whether art song in Australia achieved at least a distinctive accent within English song – listeners will form their own conclusion.

One can say that the songs presented here deserve to be better known, indeed celebrated as individually small but collectively important blocks in Australia's cultural edifice.

Paul Paviour – The poet sings

This is a very rewarding set on great Shakespeare texts, along with one of the most beautiful by Marlowe, by an Englishman who made Australia his home. He studied at the Royal College of Music and London University. He is widely known as an educator and a church musician, and is also one of Australia's leading authorities on hymn tunes and folk songs.

All the songs are firmly rooted in the pre-war English tradition. The text-setting, rhythms and harmonies often recall Finzi's Shakespeare volume, *Let us garlands bring*, especially in the wise and resigned **Fear no more the heat of the sun**, positioned in the set as an epilogue. The volume opens with **Hark! hark! the lark**, with Britten-esque rhetorical flourishes. **Crabbed age and youth** has a mordant humour and restless energy, born out of love and defying age. Perhaps the most rewarding for the singer is in the Elizabethan simplicity and understatement of **Sweet rose, fair flower**. Finzi, and Warlock, again provide models for **The only pretty ring-time**, with an infectious energy and notable for its effective modulations and natural declamatory style. **Live with me**, the solitary and lovely Marlowe poem, has the intense intimacy that Schumann would have described as "Innigkeit", expressed through constantly mobile chromatic harmony and vocal line. An exception to the Finzi style is the jaunty **It raineth every day**, every bit as delicious as Walton's *Old Sir Faulk*.

Paviour's lifetime as an organist lends him confidence in knotty counterpoint and supple harmony, but perhaps the medium of piano-accompanied song allows him to relax his intellect and indulge his lyrical gifts in a spirit of sublime restraint.

Geoffrey Allen – Two Chinese songs (Op.1)

Geoffrey Allen was born in the UK in 1927. He studied geography at Oxford, and the first acknowledged compositions date from this time. Since then he has held a number of positions in Australian libraries, latterly at the University of Western Australia and Curtin University of Technology.

Allen has spent much of his career championing Australian music, editing, publishing and facilitating recordings to that worthy end. Since the late 1980s he has experienced a resurgence of creative drive. His body of work is approaching his opus 80, and includes fourteen piano sonatas, many shorter piano pieces and numerous works for woodwind, together with songs and a few works for strings. He acknowledges the major influences on his style as those of mid-20th century British and French composers. His music is generally melody driven, and is characterised by chromatic and frequently shifting tonalities with the rare flirtation with atonality. He eschews serialism, minimalism and other fashions of the last fifty years that he believes will prove to be passing fads.

Like Raymond Hanson, Allen is largely self-taught, and, when someone with a genuine gift follows this path, they can produce music that is refreshingly eclectic and personal, as in this selection.

These songs, **Flute music** and **The white egret**, date from 1948-9, his first acknowledged compositions, and are most effective for all that. They are very spare and still, reminiscent of the Oriental songs of Albert Roussel. The harmony nods towards quasi-eastern modes, but set in a beautiful velvet case like the French *mélodies*. As ever, the melody, with flexible intuitive prosody, is the guiding principle. The texts are by Li Po (c.701-762), translated by E.D. Edwards. Both describe a delicate intrusion into an ideal silence.

Roy Agnew – Songs (from Vol.1)

This volume, one of three, contains the first individually published songs of a composer best known for his piano music. He was born in 1891, making him the earliest of the composers featured on this disc. Upon his relatively early death in 1944, Neville Cardus described Agnew as “easily the most distinguished of Australia’s composers”. Having studied with Emanuel de Beaufuis and Alfred Hill he began a dual career as composer and pianist, with artists such as Moiseiwitsch, Giesecking and Cortot performing his works. In late 1923 he moved to England, where he spent five years, broadening his experiences through meeting, among others, Arnold Bax and Myra Hess.

Agnew, as his catalogue suggests, was a very fine pianist – Miriam Hyde described him as “a masterful and intense performer”, but his aim in the accompaniments of these songs is to best serve the poetry, cloaking it in rich harmony and an uncluttered rhythmical texture. The pianistic demands are relatively modest, though the colours and sonorities are enticing.

The poets in this group are very diverse – sentimental worthies alongside masters like Shelley and Tennyson. The idiom of the earliest songs is that of superior Edwardian parlour ballads, the kind of material that Roger Quilter elevated into fine art, threatening but avoiding the melodramatic, with perhaps a hint of Delius’s songs. **Beloved stoop down thro’ the clinging dark** is distinguished by its beautiful harmonies, **O moonlight deep and tender** by a certain Elgarian nobility, and **Dirge** not least by Shelley’s lyric.

Raymond Hanson – Collected songs (from Vol.1)

Opp.3, 4 and 6 are represented in the first published assembly of Hanson’s songs, issued by The Keys Press. The Depression of the 1930s curtailed Hanson’s early ambitions to be a missionary, and he turned instead to developing his musical gifts. But it was only after military service in the Second World War that Hanson trained in composition, with Alex Burnard. In turn, he taught at the NSW Conservatorium, and his students included Nigel Butterley, Richard Meale and Barry Conyngham. Larry Sitsky recalls the “image of a man who was kind, honest, full of integrity and humility and a man who cared for his pupils and for the future of music [in Australia].”

Opp.3 and 4 probably date from the pre-war years, before Hanson’s formal training. The texts of Op.4 are by Hanson’s elder brother Ken, under the pseudonym Karl Hansen. **In fairyland** is a touchingly child-like lyric, carried by flowing quavers. Delius again seems to be the prevailing influence, as with the second song, the dark-toned **Shades of night**. This foreshadows later stylistic developments, in its confident handling of line and structure and the integration of the chromaticism into the psychology of the poem. **The wide world** is a rolling, masculine ballad, à la Stanford.

Michael Bertram – Silence of the night

Bertram was born in the UK in 1935, and studied at Lichfield Cathedral School, and the Royal Academy of Music, continuing his piano studies in Australia. He later turned to composition, mentored by Felix Werder and Peter Tahourdin.

Bertram asks in another set of songs for the performers to approach the music in an unashamedly romantic manner. This reflects something of the composer's gifts as a pianist, with a smooth assured surface to the writing. The words are by Christina Rossetti, Dante Gabriel's sister, and convey her customary freshness and earnest directness. The flowing iambic pentameter has the character of passionate speech, which is nonetheless drawn out in a long cantilena. Characteristic of Bertram's songs is a delight in an unexpected rhetorical hiatus, interrupting finely crafted cantabile lines.

Geoffrey Allen – Songs that mother never taught me (Op.17)

Allen seems always to be searching for unusual texts, joining a select group of composers who also choose to set their own words. This set is unusual in taking a woman's voice, if a stylized one. It is also the lightest in musical vernacular, owing much to popular song and cabaret. Op.17 is dedicated to Hélène Delavault, the French chanteuse whose performance at the Perth International Arts Festival inspired its creation. The first song, **Love letters**, is cast as a gentle beguine, with subtly varied verses. **Heart attack** is a breathless moto perpetuo, with a restless chromatic edge. **The vampire's lullaby** picks up that chromaticism and unfolds in sickly, sinister sostenuto. The final song, **The dangers of love** returns to the popular idiom of the first, two leisurely motifs binding the music together as the wry poem traverses the years.

Roy Agnew – Songs (from Vol.1)

After a brief "apprenticeship" with the previous three songs Agnew produced these three gems: **Sorrow**, dark and epigrammatic; **Infant joy**, a subtle and delicate response to Blake's profound naiveté; and **Dusk**, hushed and beautifully harmonized. **Dusk** is perhaps

diminished a little by the unchanging rhythm of its poetry and prosody, but Agnew seems, like Brahms, to have found a profound feeling in himself recalled later by the poetry, and to have distinguished it with a rich musical response. Finally, **Hie away, hie away** brings a welcome burst of energy and bracing fresh air, with poet Walter Scott in fey mood.

Geoffrey Allen – Two songs for a wedding (Op.72)

Two poets are represented here, modern metaphysicals in the grand manner; Walt Whitman in full ecstatic flight, and the Australian John Shaw Neilson in more intimate mood. The poets were chosen as much for their nationality as for their many other qualities – the wedding of the title was the union of an American and an Australian. Allen's long-breathed, lazily-twining chromatic harmony is highlighted here. The accompaniment of the first song, **Smile, O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth**, features a motif from Samuel Barber's ballet *Medea*, emphasising the American connection. **Love's coming** is set to a graceful, understated sarabande, full of wonderment and promise.

Raymond Hanson – Songs (from Vol.1)

The first of these two songs featuring very fine poets is a setting of a poem by the Bengali mystic Rabindranath Tagore – **I dreamt that she sat by my head**, Op.3. The texture is economical and sustained, the tone muted, and one recalls Delius or Ireland in melancholy vein. Most striking is the pronounced stylistic development from Opp.3 and 4 as we reach the Frank Bridge-like economy and intensity of **Fallen veils**, Op.6. We encounter the second of the better poets whom he set, the painterly Dante Gabriel Rossetti, with his medieval references and strong visual imagery. In his heyday, Hanson's music was initially considered too radical, immediately followed by criticism of being too conservative, a fate that Bridge shared with him. This partially explains why these songs were unpublished until 2009.

PAUL PAVIOUR

THE POET SINGS

1 i **Prologue: Hark, hark, the lark**

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Hark, hark, the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies:
And winking Mary-buds begin to ope their
golden eyes
With everything that pretty is, my lady
sweet, arise:
Arise, arise.

2 ii **Crabbed age and youth**

attrib. William Shakespeare

Crabbed age and youth cannot live together:
Youth is like the summer morn, age like
winter weather;
Youth is full of pleasance, age is full of care;
Youth is like summer brave, age like winter bare.
Youth is full of sport, age's breath is short;
Youth is nimble, age is lame;
Youth is wild and age is tame;
Youth is hot and bold, age is weak and cold;
Age, I do abhor thee; youth, I do adore thee:
O my love, my love is young!
Age, I do defy thee. O sweet shepherd, hie thee,
For methinks thou stays too long.

3 iii **Sweet rose, fair flower**

attrib. William Shakespeare

Sweet rose, fair flower untimely pluck'd,
soon faded,
Pluck'd in the bud, and faded in the spring!
Bright orient pearl, alack too timely shaded!
Fair creature kill'd too soon by death's
sharp sting!
Like a green plum that hangs upon a tree,
And falls, through wind, before the fall
should be.

I weep for thee, and yet no cause I have,
For why thou left me nothing in thy will;
And yet thou left me more than I did crave,
For why I craved nothing of thee still.
O yes, dear friend, I pardon crave of thee:
Thy discontent thou didst bequeath to me.

4 iv **The only pretty ring-time**

William Shakespeare

It was a lover and his lass,
 With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
 That o'er the green cornfield did pass
 In the spring-time, the only pretty ring-time,
 When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.
 Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
 With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
 These pretty country folks would lie
 In the spring-time, the only pretty ring-time,
 When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.
 Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,
 With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
 How that a life was but a flower
 In the spring-time, the only pretty ring-time,
 When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.
 Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time,
 With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
 For love is crownèd with the prime
 In the spring-time, the only pretty ring-time,
 When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.
 Sweet lovers love the spring.

5 v **Live with me**

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)

Live with me and be my love,
 And we will all the pleasures prove
 That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
 And all the craggy mountain yields.

There will we sit upon the rocks
 And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
 By shallow rivers, by whose falls
 Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee a bed of roses
 With a thousand fragrant posies,
 A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
 Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A belt of straw and ivy buds
 With coral clasps and amber studs:
 And if these pleasures may thee move,
 Then live with me and be my love.

6 vi **It raineth every day**

William Shakespeare

When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gates,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came, alas! to wive,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
By swaggering could I never thrive,
For the rain it raineth every day.

For when I came unto my beds,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
With toss-pots still had drunken heads,
For the rain it raineth every day.

A great while ago the world begun,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
But that's all one, my song is done,
And I'll strive to please you every day.

7 vii **Epilogue: Fear no more the heat
of the sun**

William Shakespeare

Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages,
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and taken thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke,
Care no more to clothe and eat,
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone.
Fear not slander, censure rash.
Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee and come to dust.

No exorcizer harm thee,
Nor no witchcraft charm thee.
Ghost unlaid forbear thee.
Nothing ill come near thee.
Quiet consummation have,
And renownèd be thy grave.

GEOFFREY ALLEN

TWO CHINESE SONGS Op.1
Evangeline Dora Edwards (1888-1957)
after Li Po (c.701-762)

8 i **Flute music**

A flute of jade in unseen hands
Played in an unknown house...
The air is filled with flying drifts of sound;
Rising and falling on a fitful breeze,
They stir the silent city with breaking
waves of music.
The scattered theme of this night song is
broken willows;
Memories of old gardens touch a
thousand hearts.

9 ii **The white egret**

A solitary egret, left behind
In the swift southward flight,
Sinks like a falling snowflake on the river;
Not ready yet to fly, it rests awhile
Beside a sand bank, motionless.
No fears ruffle its white breast, smooth
as the water
From which the ripple of its coming
has withdrawn.

ROY AGNEW

10 **Beloved stoop down thro' the
clinging dark**
Zora Cross (1890-1964)

Beloved stoop down thro' the clinging
dark and comfort me.
The faded flower lies mingled with the dust
And on the sea a lone seagull goes drifting
by white-winged but dead.
Ah fold me in your arms
And shut out sea and land and sky;
I would be lost merged utterly with thee.
While floating by like ships at dusk go
silently cloud-clad the white winged dead.

11 **O moonlight deep and tender**
James Russell Lowell (1819-1891)

O moonlight deep and tender,
A year and more ago,
Your mist of golden splendour
Round my betrothal shone!

O elm-leaves dark and dewy,
The very same ye seem,
The low wind trembles through ye,
Ye murmur in my dream!

O stars, ye saw our meeting,
Two beings and one soul,
Two hearts so madly beating
To mingle and be whole!

O happy night, deliver
Her kisses back to me,
Or keep them all, and give her
A blissful dream of me!

- 12 **Dirge**
Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)
Rough wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods, whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,
Wail, for the world's wrong.

RAYMOND HANSON

THREE SONGS Op.4

Karl Hansen (b.1905)

- 13 i **In fairyland**
In fairyland there lived a prince
So tall so true so brave.
He rode about in armour bright,
And gave the fiery dragon fight,
The fair princess to save.

The princess was as beautiful as anyone
might know.
In days of old, as I am told,
She went with him to his castle bold
Because she loved him so.

- 14 ii **Shades of night**
Shades of night fall softly down,
All the world is sleeping.
Hushed is nature, not a sound
From the forest creeping.

Slumber on, while o'er thy bed
Shines the moon's soft light,
Slumber on, above thy head
Stands an angel bright.
- 15 iii **The wide world**
There's a wild surf a-rolling on a rugged
rocky shore,
There's a stately ship a sailing in her pride.

There are far lands and strange lands where
heathen temples soar,
And mighty hills and plains a stretching
wide.

It's oh for the wide world, the strange
world, the free world,
Where danger and adventure abide.

So give me a stout ship with white
sails unfurled,
And I'll laugh as she leaps in her stride.

MICHAEL BERTRAM

16 **Silence of the night**

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes
as bright

As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too
bitter sweet,

Whose wakening should have been
in paradise,

Where souls brimfull of love abide
and meet;

Where thirsting longing eyes

Watch the slow door

That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
My very life again though cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

GEOFFREY ALLEN

SONGS THAT MOTHER NEVER

TAUGHT ME Op.17

Geoffrey Allen (b.1927)

17 i **Love letters**

I stand alone in the night time and the cold
I dream of other days when I was young,
And the world sang to me of hours in
the sun,

And through the evenings after,
Parties that never seemed to end.

Now, all I have from those golden years
Are the words that my lovers wrote,
and forgot.

Letters, now, are the evidence I have
That once they were so eager to be near me
They have waited patiently in hope to
hear me

Make the choice that would decide
Whose the honour to stand beside me.

But it is a dream that has turned
Into a nightmare of the dark.

I fear the shadow play

That haunts my nights and reminds me
That I am old, and the fires of youth have
gone forever,

And there is nothing I can do
But wait for the day to dawn,
Just another day, all alone
When my lovers' songs will echo still.

18 ii **Heart attack**

In the game of love, they say,
You must play it day by day.
Nothing's certain, nothing's sure,
Not for rich man nor for poor.

You should know that in this game,
For young or old it's just the same,
When you climb on Cupid's rack
There's a risk of heart attack!

If you lose a game in love
You can play it, set or match,
Take the service, make it decent,
Win the rally, ace on ace.

But beware, that after all
You are not set up to fall
To the dart from Cupid's pack,
And a fatal heart attack.

19 iii **The vampire's lullaby**

Sleep, my darling, here in my arms,
Sleep 'til night-fall, fear no alarms.
And when the dark comes we will
take wing,
And hunt for a victim, to whom we
will cling.

Now sleep safely, daydream away,
Innocent reveries of nights at play in
sylvan glades
Where deep sleepers never shall wake
From our soft and fatal embrace.

And in the silent dark before dawn,
Fly back to mother's arms, while
mortals mourn.

20 iv **The dangers of love**

When I was young and still unworldly
My mother said that I could
Play with the boys that lived in our street,
But I should never go down to the woods.

When I grew older, and much bolder,
My mother took alarm;
She warned me of men
Who dallied and then
Vanished before the storm:
"There are dangers in love, my dear."

But I was deaf to all her warnings,
I wanted love and to spare;
Somewhere were passions waiting
for slaking,
And I was rushing there.
For the pleasures of love, I dared.

I dared to welcome all offers of love
I received,
From soldiers and sailors, from poets
in need,
From doctors and lawyers, and once,
I recall,
Even a bishop was tempted to fall
To the challenge of love with me.

When I felt I had tasted the pleasures
I craved,
And had learned how both young men
and old men behaved,
I selected a husband, and gave him
my heart,
And the last of the dangers of love
fell apart,
And the comfort of love was mine.

Now I have reached an age of reason,
And love has come to stay.
I give this advice to all my daughters
When they go out to play
In the garden of love each day.

When you are waiting for your lover,
And a new game to start,
Remember the warning of my mother,
Lest he should break your heart.
Then he will find, when all is over,
That you're the chief danger of love.

ROY AGNEW

21 Sorrow

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

I' the glooming light
Of middle night,
So cold and white,
Worn sorrow sits by the moaning wave;
Beside her are laid
Her mattock and spade,
For she hath half delved her own
 deep grave.
Alone she is there:
The white clouds drizzle: her hair
 falls loose;
Her shoulders are bare;
Her tears are mixed with the beaded dews.

22 Infant joy

William Blake (1757-1827)

"I have no name:
I am but two days old."
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name."
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy but two days old,
Sweet joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while
Sweet joy befall thee.

23 Dusk

Rita Williams

In cool depths of forest,
No sound can be heard,
No laughter of children,
No singing of bird,
For daylight is dying,
And all things are still,
Save whisp'ring of leaflet,
And murm'ring of rill.

And twilight has come now,
The herald of sleep;
The stars soon will follow,
Their vigil to keep,
All hush'd is the forest;
The birds in their nest,
Are peacefully sleeping,
For nature's at rest.

24 **Hie away, hie away**
Walter Scott (1771-1832)

Hie away, hie away,
Over bank and over brae,
Where the copsewood is the greenest,
Where the fountains glisten sheenest,
Where the lady-ferns are strongest,
Where the morning dew lies longest,
Where the black-cock sweetest sips it,
Where the fairy latest trips it:
Hie to haunts right seldom seen,
Lovely, lonesome, cool and green,
Over bank and over brae,
Hie away, hie away.

GEOFFREY ALLEN

TWO SONGS FOR A WEDDING

Op.72

25 i **Smile, O voluptuous
cool-breath'd earth**

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Smile, O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset – earth of the
mountains misty topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full
moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide
of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter
and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth – rich
apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

26 ii **Love's coming**
John Shaw Neilson (1872-1942)

Quietly as rosebuds
Talk to the thin air,
Love came so lightly
I knew not he was there.

Quietly as lovers
Creep at the middle noon,
Softly as players tremble
In the tears of a tune;

Quietly as lilies
Their faint vows declare,
Came the shy pilgrim:
I knew not he was there.

Quietly as tears fall
On a wild sin,
Softly as griefs call
In a violin;

Without hail or tempest
Blue sword or flame
Love came so lightly
I knew not that he came.

RAYMOND HANSON

27 **I dreamt that she sat by my head** Op.3

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

I dreamt that she sat by my head, tenderly
ruffling my hair with her fingers, playing the
melody of her touch.

I looked in her eyes and struggled with my
tears, till the agony of unspoken words burst
my dream like a bubble.

I sat up and saw the glow of the Milky Way
above my window, like a world of silence on
fire, and I wondered if at this moment she
had a dream that rhymed with mine.

28 **Fallen veils** Op.6

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)

I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell:
I know the grass beyond the door,
The keen sweet smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before, –
How long ago I may not know:
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turned so,
Some veil did fall, – I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?
And shall not thus time's eddying flight
Still with our lives our love restore
In death's despite,
And day and night yield one delight once more?

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