



THE COMPLETE
Havergal Brian | volume 2
SONGBOOK

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HAVERGAL BRIAN (1876-1972)

THREE SONGS FOR MEDIUM VOICE

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| 2 | ii | Renunciation (<i>Temple Keeble</i>) ^b | 3'32 |
| 3 | iii | Lady Ellayne (<i>Temple Keeble</i>) ^b | 1'55 |

TWO BLAKE SONGS (*William Blake*)

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GRETCHEN SONGS FROM "FAUST" (*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*)

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THREE HERRICK SONGS (*Robert Herrick*)

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MICHELLE WALTON^a *soprano*
 MARK STONE^b *baritone*
 SHOLTO KYNOCH *piano*

HAVERGAL BRIAN

Composing symphonies in the shadows

Part two: The steep climb from obscurity to public recognition

Brian's early successes led to a local philanthropist, Herbert Minton Robinson, offering him financial support. However, when the composer deserted his wife and children in Staffordshire to set up home in London with his former maid, Hilda Hayward, who was pregnant with the first of their five children, his patron reduced his allowance to practically nothing in disapproval. Brian found himself unemployed and in real poverty in the capital, and in desperation for an income and a sense of purpose he joined the Honourable Artillery Company at the start of World War I – he was 38 years old, although he lied about his age, saying that he was four years younger.

His romantic ideas of military life were soon shattered, and disillusionment and insolence set in; he was discharged on medical grounds, later using his experiences in his first opera *The Tigers*. He then worked in the audit office of the Canadian Forces Contingent in London, and, despite the long hours, was able to compose in the evenings and at weekends.

A visit to Granville Bantock convinced him to move to Birmingham at the start of 1916. There he worked in various factories and offices, but the stress caused by combining a day job with composition led to a persecution complex, with Brian convincing himself that someone was sabotaging his manuscripts. In 1918, he left Hilda and the children for five months when he was having an affair. When he returned, he did not settle at home and suffered from paranoia at work, leading to his dismissal. In May 1919, Brian moved the family to Lewes in Sussex where he worked for the Inland Revenue.

In the 1920s, Brian began to come to terms with his lifestyle: struggling to provide for his family and composing in every spare moment. They moved to Brighton, where Brian worked as a music copyist, after which they lived in nearby Moulsecomb until 1927. This was a dark time for the family finances; Brian's patron's death in 1923 had brought an end to his small but vital allowance. It was during this time of hardship that his landmark symphony, *The gothic*, was completed.

He returned to South London in 1927, where he worked for *Musical opinion*. *The gothic* symphony was entered for the International Schubert Centenary Competition in 1928, but the last movement was disallowed because of its choral element. Brian then had to plead with the competition organisers to release the rights. 1932 brought an unhappy encounter with his

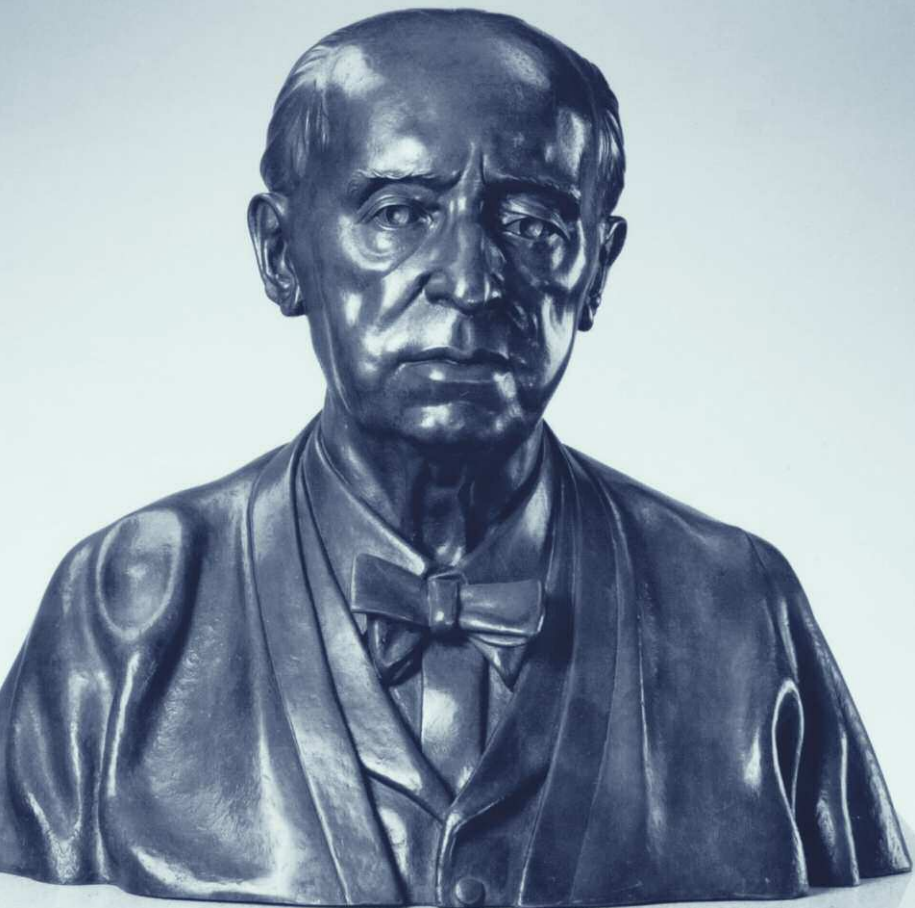
estranged wife Isabel, when she successfully sued him for maintenance, but he only had to pay this until her death five months later; Brian and Hilda then immediately married. By this time, Brian was completing his fourth symphony and had found a publisher for *The Tigers* and *The gothic* symphony.

The outbreak of World War II led to his dismissal from *Musical opinion*, and so ended his longest stretch of full-time employment. Brian moved to Harrow and worked for the Ministry of Supply, but felt unable to compose until 1941, when he had settled into his new home. Over the next three years he completed his cantata based on Shelley's *Prometheus unbound*.

In 1946, Brian lost a great friend and supporter when Bantock died. It took a year before Brian returned to composing, which he did with his *Sinfonia tragica*. He had been awarded a Civil List Pension, and when, in 1948, he retired from the Civil Service at the age of 72, he could devote all the time he wanted to music. In 1950, his newly-written comedy overture *The tinker's wedding* was premièred by the BBC Scottish Orchestra conducted by Eric Warr, and the following year, when Brian visited Warr at the BBC to deliver his ninth symphony, he met the producer Robert Simpson, who was to become a champion of his symphonies and helped include them within the BBC's schedule.

The symphonies continued to come, with another opera, *Faust*, being composed in 1956. In 1958, the lease on their house expired and they moved to a bungalow in Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex. Incredibly, now in his eighties, his composing was actually accelerating; in ten years at Shoreham he composed twenty symphonies. On 24th June 1961, Simpson gave Brian the greatest gift possible when years of his planning came to fruition with the first performance of *The gothic* symphony, at the Central Hall, Westminster. It was a huge success, with Brian receiving a standing ovation for the work he had written thirty-four years previously.

After this triumph, he continued to produce symphonies throughout the early 1960s at the same insistent rate, until 1968 when he and Hilda moved from the bungalow to a flat in the same town. He wrote two further symphonies in his last home and a *Legend* for orchestra, but his failing eyesight and increasing deafness made further composition impossible, so he was left to enjoy his retirement, making chutney and pickling vegetables. He died on 28th November 1972 in hospital following a fall outside his home.



THREE SONGS FOR MEDIUM VOICE

This group of songs was composed in 1918, when Brian was living in Erdington, and published two years later with the help of Brian's friend, Granville Bantock. His time spent in the Midlands was, musically speaking, devoted to song composition. He worked in various factories during the day and wrote music in the evenings, apparently happy at the anonymity he enjoyed at his day job and the separation this allowed between his professional existence and his artistic endeavours. Although there are a few later songs, he looked back on this time as the end of his song-writing, and the final burst of lyrical energy before he embarked on his symphonic canon.

1 i **The defiled sanctuary**

William Blake (1757-1827)

Blake was a favourite poet of Brian; with eight surviving songs for solo or unison voice and a number of part-songs, he set Blake more than any other poet. He once said that he had intended to set the whole of *The book of Theb*, although no evidence exists to suggest that he ever achieved this. In this, one of his most dramatic settings, Brian's strikingly desolate music heightens the blasphemous imagery of this text, and gives a glimpse into the psyche of a composer who clearly felt rejected by the musical establishment and society in general.

*I saw a chapel full of gold
That none did dare to enter in,
And many weeping stood without,
Weeping, mourning, worshipping.*

*I saw a serpent rise between
The white pillars of the door,
And he forc'd, and forc'd, and forc'd,
Till he the golden hinges tore.*

*And along the pavement sweet,
Set with pearls and rubies bright,
All his shining length he drew,
Till upon the altar white*

*He vomited his poison out
On the bread and on the wine;
So I turn'd into a sty
And laid me down among the swine.*

2 ii **Renunciation**

Temple Keble (1889-1949)

In 1918, Brian left his partner, Hilda Hayward, for a period of five months as a result of his affair with Wilhelmina Airston. He referred to Airston as his Florentine princess, and, perhaps as a result of their liaison, she used the pseudonym Temple Keble when writing poetry for Brian to set. This song may give us some insight into the state of their friendship at the time of its composition. It describes the end of a relationship, with the beloved maintaining an easy, happy path through life, whilst the poet is left in desolation and despair.

*I glimpse the road that stretches white, austere,
Before you, but I cannot follow there;
Your feet are shod, your heart is full of cheer,
My heart is empty and my feet are bare.
You loved me – but you step out brave and free,
A smile for what is gone, but no regret;
And I – somewhere for only God to see
Are tears that inly bleed – but fall not yet*

3 iii **Lady Ellayne**

Temple Keble

At the time of their composition, Brian wrote to Bantock saying that he thought that his settings of Keble's words were the best things he had written, although his opinion was probably influenced by the intimacy of his relationship with the poet. What is clear in this song is the quirky humour he was able to produce in his music, without undermining its intensity. Around the same time he was writing his opera *The Tigers*, and there is some natural cross-fertilization between his satirical operatic depiction of wartime society and this song of warning to the alluring, eponymous Lady.

*Lady Ellayne of the burnish'd hair,
Dress'd with such nicety,
Coiled with such care,
You're pleasant to look upon
As you sit there
In your easy armchair.*

*You have a way with you, Lady Ellayne,
Men will run after you, sure it is plain,
You're witty and pretty, well, not too vain!*

*But pray veil your glances, dear Lady Ellayne,
Or fleeting fancies are all you will gain;
'Twere pity for you to have blossom'd in vain,
Sweet Lady Ellayne.*

TWO BLAKE SONGS

William Blake

These two settings of Blake, composed in 1918 and published fourteen years later, are grouped together for the first time on this disc, although they make an obvious pair. Apart from them sharing a poet, composition year and publication year, there is a stylistic connection between these two that separates them from the other groups composed in the same year (tracks 1-3 and 22-24). Most curiously of all, although these two songs were not initially accepted for publication, their piano parts were, and, together with two other solo piano pieces, were published in 1921 as *Four miniatures* (tracks 18-21).

4 i The land of dreams

Brian's sentimentality for childhood suffering is revealed in his choice of poem for this song, a conversation between a father and son; the boy is woken from a nightmare in which he was dreaming of his dead mother. Brian's constantly shifting harmonic structure and angular melody provides an allusion to the semi-conscious world in which the poem's dialogue takes place, confusing dreams with reality and the afterlife. Although there is no great distinction between the two voices, the similarity helps to meld the loss that they share, as husband and son, for the dead woman.

*"Awake, awake, my little boy!
Thou wast thy mother's only joy;
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep?
Awake! thy father does thee keep.*

*"O what land is the land of dreams?
What are its mountains, and what are its streams?"
"O father! I saw my mother there,
Among the lilies by waters fair.*

*"Among the lambs, clothèd in white,
She walk'd with her Thomas in sweet delight.
I wept for joy, like a dove I mourn;
O when shall I again return?"*

*"Dear child, I also by pleasant streams
Have wander'd all night in the land of dreams;
But, tho' calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side."*

*"Father, O father! what do we here
In the land of unbelief and fear?
The land of dreams is better far,
Above the light of the morning star."*

5 ii **The birds**

This is another Blake dialogue poem, with the verses alternating between a he-bird and a she-bird singing their love songs to each other. As with the previous song, Brian's music is complex, this time imitating the sound of the birds' singing and the movement of their flight. The two voices have distinct characteristics: two of the he-bird's verses are introduced with a birdsong motif, two of them end with a slow *misterioso* passage, and all his lines are broken with short piano interludes; in contrast, the she-bird's responses are tranquil flowing passages, without interruption.

*Where thou dwellest, in what grove,
Tell me, fair one, tell me love
Where thou thy charming nest dost build,
O thou pride of every field!*

*Yonder stands a lonely tree,
There I live and mourn for thee:
Morning drinks my silent tear,
And evening winds my sorrow bear.*

*O thou summer's harmony,
I have lived and mourned for thee:
Each day I mourn along the wood,
And night hath heard my sorrows loud.*

*Dost thou truly long for me?
And am I thus sweet to thee?
Sorrow now is at an end,
O my lover and my friend!*

*Come, on wings of joy we'll fly
To where my bower is hung on high;
Come and make thy calm retreat
Among green leaves and blossoms sweet.*

GRETCHEN SONGS FROM “FAUST”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Brian completed his opera *Faust* in 1956, at a point when he was already in the full flow of his symphony writing – between numbers eleven and twelve. He considered using some of Goethe’s *Faust, part 2* in *The gothic* symphony, before deciding on the *Te deum*, and so this work had clearly been brewing in his mind for some time; *The gothic* score kept the inscription from *Faust*: “Wer immer strebend sich bemüht, den können wir erlösen” (He who always strives with effort, we can redeem) – a sentiment that was undoubtedly pertinent to the composer. This two-song group was devised by Brian, although not published as such in his lifetime.

6 i Der König in Thule

This story is set in the land of Thule, which in ancient literature was the name of a region in the north, sometimes associated with Scandinavia, Iceland or Greenland. Goethe wrote this poem in 1774 and later included it in *Faust*, the first draft of which dates from the same period, although the verse was published first in 1782. In the play, following Gretchen’s first encounter with Faust, she returns to her room and sings this song of the devoted king, whilst undressing, just before she discovers the casket of enticing jewels that Faust has left for her.

*Es war ein König in Thule,
Gar treu bis an das Grab,
Dem sterbend seine Buhle
Einen goldnen Becher gab.*

*Es ging ihm nichts darüber,
Er leert’ ihn jeden Schmaus;
Die Augen gingen ihm über
So oft er trank daraus.*

*Und als er kam zu sterben,
Zählt’ er seine Städt’ im Reich;
Gönnt’ alles seinem Erben,
Den Becher nicht zugleich.*

There was a king in Thule,
Faithful to the grave,
Whose dying lover
Gave him a golden goblet.

He treasured nothing higher,
He drained it at every feast;
His eyes would well up,
Whenever he drank from it.

And as he approached his death,
He counted the cities of his realm;
He left everything to his heirs,
Except for the goblet.

*Er sass beim Königsmahle,
Die Ritter um ihn her,
Auf hohem Vätersaale,
Dort auf dem Schloss am Meer.*

*Dort stand der alte Zecher,
Trank letzte Lebensglut,
Und warf den heil'gen Becher
Hinunter in die Flut.*

*Er sah ihn stürzen, trinken
Und sinken tief ins Meer.
Die Augen täten ihm sinken
Trank nie einen Tropfen mehr.*

He sat at the royal banquet,
Surrounded by his knights,
There in the lofty ancestral hall,
In the castle by the sea.

There stood the old drinker,
Drinking life's last glow,
And he threw the sacred goblet
Down into the waters.

He saw it plunge, fill up
And sink deep into the sea.
His eyes sank
And he never drank another drop.

7 ii Gretchen am Spinnrade

This poem, like the previous one, was famously set by Schubert, and is also from act two of the opera; Gretchen is sat at the spinning wheel, voicing her agitated emotions at being the object of Faust's desire. The text's short lines, full of repetition, match the movement of the wheel, a device which is juxtaposed by Brian's complex and often tortured harmonic structure, illustrating the girl's troubled state of mind. His full orchestration was quite sparing, employing only strings and *obbligato* horn, so the version presented here, in the composer's own piano reduction, is a faithful rendition.

*Meine Ruh' ist hin,
Mein Herz ist schwer,
Ich finde sie nimmer
Und nimmermehr.*

*Wo ich ihn nicht hab
Ist mir das Grab,
Die ganze Welt
Ist mir vergällt.*

*Mein armer Kopf
Ist mir verrückt,
Mein armer Sinn
Ist mir zerstückt.*

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I will never find it
Ever again.

Anywhere I cannot have him
Is a grave to me,
The whole world
Is bitter to me.

My poor head
Seems deranged to me,
My poor mind
Seems in pieces to me.

*Meine Ruh' ist hin,
Mein Herz ist schwer,
Ich finde sie nimmer
Und nimmermehr.*

*Nach ihm nur schau ich
Zum Fenster hinaus,
Nach ihm nur geh ich
Aus dem Haus.*

*Sein hoher Gang,
Sein' edle Gestalt,
Seines Mundes Lächeln,
Seiner Augen Gewalt,*

*Und seiner Rede
Zauberfluss,
Sein Händedruck,
Und ach, sein Kuss!*

*Meine Ruh' ist hin,
Mein Herz ist schwer,
Ich finde sie nimmer
Und nimmermehr.*

*Mein Busen drängt sich
Nach ihm hin.
Ach dürft ich fassen
Und halten ihn,*

*Und küssen ihn,
So wie ich wollt,
An seinen Küssen
Vergehen sollt!*

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I will never find it
Ever again.

Only for him do I look
Out of the window,
Only for him do I leave
The house.

His lofty stride,
His noble form,
His mouth's smile,
His eyes' power,

And his words'
Magic flow,
His hand's grip,
And ah, his kiss!

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I will never find it
Ever again.

My breast yearns
For him.
Ah, that I might I grasp
And hold him,

And kiss him,
As I would wish,
In his kisses
I should die!

THREE HERRICK SONGS

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

In the twelve year period starting in 1907, Brian set ten Herrick poems, including seven part-songs. These three songs, grouped together for the first time on this disc, are his only surviving Herrick settings for solo voice. One peculiarity is the similarity of the second and third songs; they were composed within three days of each other in 1910, at a point when inspiration was sagging and his lifestyle was improving, courtesy of his generous benefactor. Unfortunately for Brian, but to the great benefit of his music, this domestic comfort was not to last.

8 i The mad maid's song

Brian dedicated this song, composed in 1907, to Dr William Gray McNaught of the publishing house Novello. He had been in touch with McNaught for several years in connection with musical festivals in the Midlands and the North of England, and although this song was published by Breitkopf und Härtel in 1913, a few of his part-songs written over the following couple of years were published by Novello. The maid sings of the loss of her dead lover, and Brian's simple meandering melody, undercut by the triplets of the accompaniment, creates a suitably disturbing image of her derangement. The song was apparently also orchestrated, although this version is now lost.

*Good morrow to the day so fair;
Good morning, sir, to you;
Good morrow to mine own torn hair
Bedabbled with the dew.*

*Good morning to this primrose too;
Good morrow to each maid;
That will with flowers the tomb bestrew
Wherein my love is laid.*

*Ah! woe is me, woe, woe is me!
Alack and well-a-day!
For pity, sir, find out that bee,
Which bore my love away.*

*I'll seek him in your bonnet brave;
I'll seek him in your eyes;
Nay, now I think they've made his grave
I th' bed of strawberries.*

*I'll seek him there; I know ere this
The cold, cold earth doth shake him.
But I will go, or send a kiss
By you, sir, to awake him.*

*Pray hurt him not; though he be dead,
He knows well who do love him;
And who with green turfs rear his head,
And who so rudely move him.*

*He's soft and tender, pray take heed,
With bands of cowslips bind him,
And bring him home – but 'tis decreed
That I shall never find him.*

9 ii Why dost thou wound and break my heart

Composed in 1910, this song was dedicated to Bantock's secretary, Howard Orsmond Anderton, who was nicknamed 'the colonel' and considered to be something of a pathetic individual, who hung around the Bantocks rather than making a career for himself – he was also a composer. The similarities between this song and the next, together with the fact that they were written almost simultaneously, this one for piano and the next for orchestra, suggests that this could have been a draft for the *The night piece*. Despite this, the song is very effective, with its alternating tempi and imploring melody strongly conveying the poet's promise to return to his love.

*Why dost thou wound and break my heart,
As if we should forever part?
Hast thou not heard an oath from me,
After a day, or two, or three,
I would come back and live with thee?
Take, if thou dost distrust that vow,
This second protestation now: –
Upon thy cheek that spangled tear,
Which sits as dew of roses there,
That tear shall scarce be dried before
I'll kiss the threshold of thy door;
Then weep not, sweet, but thus much know:
I'm half return'd before I go.*

10 **iii The night piece**

The tenor John Coates attempted to perform this song, composed in 1910, but his pianist, the legendary Leopold Godowsky, found the accompaniment unplayable. Like the previous song, it was also orchestrated, although this piano part looks more like an orchestral reduction – with the emphasis being on ‘orchestral’ rather than ‘reduction’. Another tenor, John McCormack, took up the piece a few years later, when the piano part had been simplified a little, but it is still an almost impossible task for the pianist, requiring some judicious editing. Herrick’s poem is one of several where his beloved is named as Julia, which was also the name of his mother.

*Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the spark of fire, befriend thee.*

*No Will-o'-the-wisp mislight thee,
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee,
But on thy way
Not making a stay,
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.*

*Let not the dark thee cumber,
What though the moon does slumber.
The stars of the night
Will lend thee their light
Like tapers clear without number.*

*Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me;
And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet,
My soul I'll pour into thee.*

FIVE BLAKE SONGS

William Blake

Of these five unison songs taken from Blake's *Songs of innocence and experience*, *The fly* was published in 1922 and the remaining four in 1929, but they were all written in 1914. At this time Brian had just moved to London and, discovering himself in real poverty, had managed to earn a small amount of money by selling publishers some of his other children's songs. Spurred on by the prospect of this small income and his hunger, he wrote a couple of dozen songs and part-songs in this year, as well as a children's operetta, commissioned by Augener, and a military march for orchestra.

11 i Piping down the valleys wild

Blake's 1789 illustrated collection of 45 poems, *Songs of innocence and experience*, begins with this introduction. Its references to the child, the lamb, and the general pastoral scene set the tone of innocence for the first group of verses, and Brian's joyful setting amplifies the guileless charm of Blake's words; the fleeting references as the child "wept with joy" and the poet "stained the water clear" hint at the darker themes of the *Songs of experience*. The text explains how the poet came to set down his words on paper, and so this song provides a suitable prologue to this group.

*Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:*

*"Pipe a song about a lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again."
So I piped: he wept to hear.*

*"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!"
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.*

*"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read,"
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed.*

*And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Ev'ry child may joy to hear.*

12 ii **The blossom**

Some commentators have suggested that there may be sexual allusions in this poem, as the blossom sings about waiting for the sparrow's and robin's advances, however it is more likely, given that it belongs to the *Songs of innocence*, that Blake intended it as a description of pure and natural love. Certainly, Brian's childlike setting leans more heavily towards a naïve interpretation, although he does give a hint of a double meaning with the penultimate lines of each verse being sung at a slower speed, and the final lines suddenly springing back to tempo with suggestive dynamic swells.

*Merry, merry sparrow!
Under leaves so green
A happy blossom
Sees you, swift as arrow,
Seek your cradle narrow,
Near my bosom.*

*Pretty, pretty robin!
Under leaves so green
A happy blossom
Hears you sobbing, sobbing,
Pretty, pretty robin,
Near my bosom.*

13 iii **The chimney sweeper**

Of all the songs of this group, this one would present the greatest problems when performing it as a unison song, as prescribed; the text is often quite fast, and there are gradations of tempo in the first two verses, which would be difficult to negotiate as a group, particularly of children. Brian's setting of this distressing story of childhood slavery is effective as a solo song. The tale is made all the more poignant told, as it is, from the viewpoint of innocent children, whose dreams of a heavenly afterlife lead to their happy acceptance of their terrible mortal existence.

*When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "weep! weep! weep! weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.*

*There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved: so I said
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."*

*And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a fright!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.*

*And by came an angel, who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins, and let them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.*

*Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind;
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.*

*And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm:
So, if all do their duty they need not fear harm.*

14 iv **The fly**

In contrast to the previous song, this song was clearly composed to be sung as a group. Perhaps for this reason it was the first to be published, eight years after composition, and seven years before the rest. It was dedicated to Miss Pauline Tatiana Wood, the daughter of Henry Wood, perhaps in an attempt to curry favour with the conductor and encourage him to programme one of Brian's orchestral pieces. Blake's poem, in which the poet compares his own existence to that of a fly, is the only setting of the group from the *Songs of experience*.

*Little fly,
Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Has brushed away.*

*Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art thou not
A man like me?*

*Then am I
A happy fly
If I live
Or if I die.*

*For I dance,
And drink, and sing,
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing,*

*If thought is life
And strength is breath
And the want
Of thought is death.*

Poems from the days of the Empire that discuss racial differences often sound strange to modern ears. It is important to consider that this poem was written at a time when the abolitionist movement was gaining momentum, and words that may appear to have an air of condescension today were probably significant in their day for giving voice to vital issues of equality. In this poem, which Brian imbues with a Latin flavour, a black child is consoled by his mother, who tells him that in heaven he will be able to lead the white child to God, after a lifetime of being led.

*My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but oh! my soul is white!
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.*

*My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,
And, pointing to the East, began to say:*

*"Look on the rising sun: there God does live,
And gives His light, and gives His heat away,
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.*

*"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.*

*"For, when our souls have learned the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,
Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"*

*Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me;
And thus I say to little English boy:
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,*

*I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.*

TWO HANDEL ARRANGEMENTS

John Hughes (1677-1720)

Brian spent a considerable amount of time studying the scores of Handel operas in the British Museum, and so when the museum's keeper of manuscript music, William C. Smith, wanted to produce an edition of Handel's first settings of English texts, Brian was called upon to provide a realization. Handel's cantata *Venus and Adonis* dates from about 1711; the complete text, consisting of two recitatives and two arias, was published in Hughes' 1735 posthumous collection *Poems on several occasions*. The music was long thought lost, but the manuscript of the voice and bass line for the arias was discovered by Smith, and a performing edition produced in 1937.

16 i Dear Adonis

The goddess of love, Venus, is accidentally wounded by one of Cupid's arrows and falls in love with a young boy called Adonis. She descends to Earth in order to attempt to seduce him as he is about to go hunting, but despite her attempts at wooing, Adonis is not interested in her, and he leaves her to rejoin the hunt. In the morning, when the hunting party returns, Venus is attracted by their noise, and on seeing the captured boar with its mouth covered in blood, she asks after Adonis, only to discover that he was killed by the animal.

*Dear Adonis, beauty's treasure,
Now my sorrow, once my pleasure;
O return to Venus' arms.*

*Venus never will forsake thee;
Let the voice of love o'ertake thee,
And revive thy drooping charms.*

17 ii **Transporting joy**

In her grief, on hearing of the death of Adonis, Venus makes a purple anemone spring up from his blood. She then departs on a chariot drawn by doves, and locks herself away in order to mourn. The music for the recitative that precedes this aria has been lost, but in the surviving text Venus sings about her beloved having been changed into a flower, and of how she must now share her claim to the transformed Adonis with Proserpine, the Queen of Hades, as he blooms and fades each year.

*Transporting joy,
Tormenting fears,
Succeeding smiles,
Bewailing tears,
Are Cupid's various train.*

*The tyrant boy
Prepares his darts,
With soothing wiles,
With cruel arts,
And pleasure blends with pain.*

18-21 **FOUR MINIATURES**

The origin of these pieces is that two of them, numbers two and four, began life as the accompaniments for songs in 1918: *The land of dreams* and *The birds* (tracks 4 & 5). The publisher Augener liked the piano parts in isolation and offered to publish them, so Brian added two further pieces in 1920. The piano pieces were published in 1921, and the original songs not until 1932. Brian was encouraged by the high opinion the publisher had of the *Miniatures* and sent copies of the sheet music to some well-known pianists of the time, but unfortunately none of them bothered to reply.

WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

Temple Keeble

These 1918 settings of words by Brian's mistress of the time, Wilhelmina Airston, were published in 1920, and achieved some success: Lia Rosa sang a number of Brian's Keeble songs, and the last of this group was taken up by the tenor John Coates. As with his other Keeble settings of the same year, *Renunciation* and *Lady Ellayne* from *Three songs for medium voice*, they demonstrate a great range from poignant to comic, and Brian took full advantage of this diversity in his compositions. Naturally, this fertile partnership came to an abrupt end with the conclusion of the affair.

This song is a little reminiscent of Delius' famous *Twilight fancies*, the verses of which also end with the line "When the sun goes down". In contrast to Delius' hauntingly still setting, which describes a princess hearing a shepherd's horn in the evening, Brian's song is more actively composed, with swelling chromatic runs illustrating the sea and occasional slow, chordal passages giving brief respites. Keble's poem is the lament of a mourning woman, who sings of her love who died at sea, and her desire to end her own life in the same place.

*The sea-surf's white on the golden sand,
 (Say, do you hear the swelling tide?)
 White was the fleck on his soft white hand,
 When they bore him to me across the strand, –
 (The tide was low when the sun went down.)*

*They bore him to me all dank and cold, –
 (Say, do you hear the seething tide?)
 The tale of his years might soon be told,
 Hot youth he was that shall ne'er be old, –
 (The sobbing tide when the sun went down!)*

*And Death is too kind to leave me here, –
 (Say, do you hear the coming tide?)
 There is nothing in me of hope or fear.
 But the heart of a woman stricken and sere.
 (I shall be with the tide when the sun goes down.)*

*I shall sink where he lay in the grey cold sea,
 (Say, do you hear the conqu'ring tide?)
 I shall fill the place where he bade me be;
 I shall call to him softly, – (Ah, me! Ah, me!
 For the time when the tide and the sun go down!)*

23 **ii On parting**

As with *Renunciation*, it is difficult not to read something into the words of this poem concerning the state of the brief relationship between poet and composer – the verse is a request for a parting lover to return, expressed through a veil of ardent insecurity. Certainly Brian's response to the text is extremely passionate, and he effectively wrings every ounce of emotion out of the short verse. Although the accompaniment has an ominous, descending bass motif and the melody alternates between lyrical romance and tortured suffering, the song's final plea ends on a gentle, positive tone.

*Would you had stayed!
Quickening fingers on my soul you have laid.
Why, love, go?
Fond my love is, is not yours even so?
Well, assume: fires consume!
Not a flame would I forgo;
Gold refined, the dross will burn,
Wherefore, dear my lover, go – but return!*

24 **iii Love is a merry game**

The final song on this disc is a typically quirky Brian composition, with short sections written in distinct styles. After an extravagant piano introduction there is an almost comically jovial vocal entry. The middle section, in which the poet recollects when he first met his beloved, is written with the lyrical expressiveness of *On parting* before being jolted back to jollity for the last two lines. In this short song, Brian clearly demonstrates his attitude towards composition. He sought to write in an almost defiantly individual style, irrespective of the effect it might have on the chance of performance or publication, but always achieving an impressive and memorable effect.

*Love is a merry game,
When jesters play.
It was not quite the same
That fair June day,
When you first breathed my name,
And I, I looked and loved,
And could not look away.
Love is a merry game,
But jesters both must play.*

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