



THE COMPLETE

# Quilter

SONGBOOK

volume 2

MARK STONE  
STEPHEN BARLOW



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THE COMPLETE **Quilter** SONGBOOK volume 2

**ROGER QUILTER** (1877-1953)

**FIVE JACOBAN LYRICS** Op.28

- |   |     |   |      |
|---|-----|---|------|
| 1 | i   | The jealous lover ( <i>John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester</i> ) | 2'34 |
| 2 | ii  | Why so pale and wan? ( <i>Sir John Suckling</i> )           | 1'05 |
| 3 | iii | I dare not ask a kiss ( <i>Robert Herrick</i> )             | 1'17 |
| 4 | iv  | To Althea, from prison ( <i>Richard Lovelace</i> )          | 2'04 |
| 5 | v   | The constant lover ( <i>Sir John Suckling</i> )             | 1'56 |

**TWO SONGS, 1903** (*Roger Quilter*)

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| 6 | i  | Come back! | 1'36 |
| 7 | ii | A secret   | 1'08 |

- |   |   |      |
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| 8 | <b>FAIRY LULLABY</b> ( <i>Roger Quilter</i> ) | 2'43 |
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**THREE SONGS OF WILLIAM BLAKE** Op.20 (*William Blake*)

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| 10 | ii  | The wild flower's song | 2'14 |
| 11 | iii | Daybreak               | 1'59 |

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| 12 | <b>ISLAND OF DREAMS</b> ( <i>Roger Quilter</i> ) | 3'14 |
|----|--|------|

- |    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 13 | <b>AT CLOSE OF DAY</b> ( <i>Laurence Binyon</i> ) | 2'39 |
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**FIVE ENGLISH LOVE LYRICS** Op.24

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| 16 | ii  | Morning song ( <i>Thomas Heywood</i> )                                  | 2'07 |
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| 18 | iv  | O, the month of May ( <i>Thomas Dekker</i> )                            | 1'55 |
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- |    |  |      |
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25	i Come spring! sweet spring!	1'24
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77'34

**MARK STONE** *baritone*  
**STEPHEN BARLOW** *piano*

## ROGER QUILTER

### The gentlemanly song-composer

#### Part two: A disappointed father and a doting mother

By 1901, Quilter had returned to England from studying music in Germany, and was living at the family's London home in South Audley Street, Mayfair. His parents entertained lavishly, but Quilter found the upper-class guests' philistine attitudes hard to bear, and he naturally sought out the more congenial company of his own friends.

The first public performance of his songs occurred in 1901, when he accompanied the baritone Denham Price at a Crystal Palace Saturday Concert. Their publication followed the same year and, despite the composer's perpetual ill-health and self-doubt, he continued to write songs, which appeared in recitals and in print. He was particularly impressed by the tenor Gervase Elwes, a great champion of English song composers; the two met around 1904, and Quilter often composed for him specifically – both out of a sense of gratitude and self-promotion.

He moved into his own London home on Welbeck Street at the end of 1903 and spent the early part of the next year in Paris, with his mother fearing for his health and his morals. She was unhappy in her marriage, and once told her sons that they would only truly be rid of her attention when they themselves married. In Quilter's case this was an unlikely eventuality, as he was homosexual. He and his mother spent a great deal of time together, and she appears to have accepted her son's sexuality, despite its illegality in England at the time. His father, however, all but disowned him on account of his following a musical career.

Quilter was expected to spend every Christmas at the family's Suffolk home, Bawdsey Manor, something that he found particularly tiresome. Around the time of his 1905 visit, he was persuaded by his mother to become engaged. It was broken off within a few months, but not before the stress had taken its toll on Quilter's health, and he fell ill with influenza early in 1906. A pattern was soon established that was to continue throughout his life: bouts of ill-health, leading to stays in nursing homes and spa resorts. Occasionally his situation was so severe that surgery was required, but generally he returned to reasonable health within the space of a few months, enabling him to continue his work.

In August 1907, he was well enough to attend the première of his *Serenade for orchestra* at a Queen's Hall Promenade Concert. He was pleased with the performance, but disappointed

with the composition, and withdrew it soon afterwards. He was asked to write some songs for a 1909 production of Fagan's *A merry devil*, and was one of several composers who provided music for a production of *The merchant of Venice* at His Majesty's Theatre in April 1910 – he missed these latter performances as he was recovering from rheumatic pain in Sicily.

In June 1910, he performed his *Three Shakespeare songs* in a concert at his old school, Eton College, where a fifteen-year-old Philip Heseltine – later known as the composer Peter Warlock – was in the audience and was greatly impressed by the songs. In the same month, his *Three English dances* were performed at a Queen's Hall Promenade Concert, conducted by Henry Wood. He spent the Autumn in Frankfurt, before returning for a particularly depressing Christmas at Bawdsey, writing to Percy Grainger's mother that he felt that his wealth would prevent him from ever being a real artist, but that he would like to use it to help finance the publication of some of her son's works.

Quilter travelled to Egypt with his mother in February 1911. Around this time Quilter became friends with Robert Allerton, a wealthy American who had studied at the Royal Academy in Munich and the Académie Julian in Paris. Theirs was the only homosexual relationship to which Quilter ever admitted, and Allerton was completely devoted to him, urging him to come back to America. For a time it looked possible that he might make the trip, but in the end he made his excuses, saying that he needed to attend some orchestral rehearsals of Grainger's. By April 1911, he was unable to travel due to his own ill-health, as well as that of his father, and towards the end of the year he was required to be at Bawdsey Manor.

Sir Cuthbert passed away in November 1911, leaving Quilter a small fortune and the ability to live his life in independence and without fear of paternal disapproval. He had achieved some success as a composer, but seemed to lack the drive to truly make his mark on the musical world. This was about to change, when a theatrical project he had been working on around the time of his father's death was to prove to be a monumental success, catapulting Quilter into the consciousness of the general public.



# THE COMPLETE *Quilter* SONGBOOK volume 2

## FIVE JACOBEBAN LYRICS Op.28

It is clear from Quilter's song catalogue that the poetry of the seventeenth century held the greatest appeal for the composer. His settings of Shakespeare and Herrick alone number over thirty songs including his choral works, but he was also drawn to their contemporaries, as demonstrated by this group. His choices of texts were often overtly passionate, even flamboyant, and perhaps this gives some clue as to their attraction to Quilter, who surely felt straitjacketed by the behavioural confines of early-twentieth-century England. Quilter completed this set in 1925, and they were published the following year with a dedication to the baritone Mark Raphael.

### 1 i The jealous lover

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-1680)

This first song was written two years before the rest of the group, in 1923, and was published separately the same year. The poem first appeared in Aphra Behn's 1685 collection *Miscellany*, being a collection of poems by several hands. It describes the mistress whom the poet is loath to leave for fear that she should be unfaithful. Ironically, Rochester was himself a debauched libertine of some renown, so if anything the suspicion would have been more likely to exist in reverse. Quilter's setting is adoringly passionate, and not too dissimilar from his setting of Shakespeare's *Who is Silvia?*, written ten years later.

My dear mistress has a heart  
Soft as those kind looks she gave me,  
When with Love's resistless art,  
And her eyes, she did enslave me.  
But her constancy's so weak,  
She's so wild, and apt to wander,  
That my jealous heart would break  
Should we live one day asunder.

Melting joys about her move,  
Killing pleasures, wounding blisses;  
She can dress her eyes in love,  
And her lips can warm with kisses.  
Angels listen when she speaks;  
She's my delight, all mankind's wonder;  
But my jealous heart would break,  
Should we live one day asunder.

2 ii Why so pale and wan?

Sir John Suckling (1609-1642)

The remaining songs of the group were all written in 1925. The poem for the second is taken from act 4 of Suckling's 1637 play *Aglaura*, a tragedy that tells the story of love rivalry between the King of Persia and his son, Prince Thersames, for the eponymous Aglaura. The verse is a simple word of advice: if the girl does not love you, stop moping around and forget about her! Quilter's setting is suitably spirited, with his staccato chords and off-beat rhythms giving an indication as to the exasperation that the poet feels towards his lovelorn friend.

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?  
Prithee, why so pale?  
Will, when looking well can't move her,  
Looking ill prevail?  
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?  
Prithee, why so mute?  
Will, when speaking well can't win her,  
Saying nothing do't?  
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move;  
This cannot take her.  
If of herself she will not love,  
Nothing can make her:  
The devil take her!

3 iii I dare not ask a kiss

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Quilter occasionally revised songs very slightly, and often produced duet versions of solo songs, but this poem, Herrick's *To Electra* from the 1648 collection *Hesperides*, is the only instance of him writing two completely different settings, the earlier 1905 version being part of his *Five lyrics of Robert Herrick* for four-part choir. The poet states that, not being brave enough to kiss his beloved, he is happy just to breathe the same air. The solo song is languid yet passionate, and bears some resemblance to his 1921 setting of Shakespeare's *Take, O take those lips away*.

I dare not ask a kiss,  
I dare not beg a smile,  
Lest having that, or this,  
I might grow proud the while.

No, no, the utmost share  
Of my desire shall be  
Only to kiss that air  
That lately kissèd thee.

4 iv **To Althea, from prison**

Richard Lovelace (1618-1658)

Lovelace wrote these words in 1642 when he was in Gatehouse Prison for a period of seven weeks. He was a Cavalier, a loyal supporter of King Charles I, and had presented a petition in defence of the Bishops who had been ousted from the House of Lords by the Clergy Act of 1640. The poem was published in his 1649 collection *Lucasta*, suggesting that Althea was his fiancée, Lucy Sacheverell (whom he called Lux Casta). It eloquently describes the inability of walls to confine the liberty of his love and soul. Quilter omitted the third verse, which was entirely in praise of the King.

When Love with unconfinèd wings  
Hovers within my gates,  
And my divine Althea brings  
To whisper at the grates;  
When I lie tangled in her hair  
And fettered to her eye,  
The birds that wanton in the air  
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round  
With no allaying Thames,  
Our careless heads with roses bound,  
Our hearts with loyal flames;  
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,  
When healths and draughts go free –  
Fishes that tipple in the deep  
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage;  
Minds innocent and quiet take  
That for an hermitage;  
If I have freedom in my love  
And in my soul am free,  
Angels alone, that soar above,  
Enjoy such liberty.

5 v **The constant lover**

Sir John Suckling

Quilter neatly ended this group as it started – with a lover. The self-proclaimed constancy of the poet is rather dubious though, as it has only lasted three days, and he only predicts it lasting another three if all goes smoothly. Ignoring the poetical norms of male authors and female lovers, this poem could be viewed as a futile riposte to Rochester's poem. Quilter counteracts the irony of the verse by repeating the first half of the text at the end, which gives it an air of sincerity that, although probably not intended by the poet, provides an excellent final flourish for the set.

Out upon it, I have loved  
Three whole days together;  
And am like to love three more,  
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings  
Ere he shall discover  
In the whole wide world again  
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise  
Is due at all to me:  
Love with me had made no stays  
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she  
And that very face,  
There had been at least ere this  
A dozen dozen in her place.

## TWO SONGS, 1903

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

At the start of his career, Quilter often wrote the words for his songs as well as the music. The quality of these texts is questionable, but it is an interesting insight into the literary tastes of the composer. These two songs were published in 1903, although the manuscript for the second is dated 1898. It is easy to dismiss these first steps into composition, but we should remember that the first draft of his most famous song, *Now sleeps the crimson petal*, dates from 1897. In the end, the harshest critic was Quilter himself; in 1915 he withdrew the songs, paying the publishers £10 to destroy the plates.

### 6 i Come back!

In this song, the poet tells of dreaming about his beloved and crying out to her in his sleep. The accompaniment, with its syncopated right hand and simple bass line in the left hand is reminiscent of several songs from the previous generation – Brahms' *Sapphische Ode* and Tchaikovsky's *None but the lonely heart* immediately come to mind. Quilter was still discovering his voice, but there is something appealing about this youthful effort. It demonstrates his desire to create an immediate and evocative atmosphere for the text, and although perhaps the impassioned build-up is a little naïve, it is abundantly heartfelt and so, given its vintage, quite enchanting.

I dreamed I heard your voice in the night,  
Deep and tender with loving words.  
I dreamed I saw your wondrous eyes,  
Aglow with love and light divine;  
"Come back! come back! my love," I cried.  
"Come back! come back! my love, my life!"

7    ii    **A secret**

Dating from his time in Frankfurt, this song gives some clearer indications of the song-writing that was to emerge. The brief semiquaver passages offer glimpses of his 1905 song *Love's philosophy*, although the momentum is never allowed to take off in the way that it does in the later song. He repeats the text of the first verse at the end, varying the melody for the final phrase and finishing with an Italianate melisma on the penultimate word. His composition teacher, Ivan Knorr, was somewhat uncomplimentary in his manner, but even he admitted that Quilter's music from his time as a student was charming.

My heart, my heart  
No one may see,  
It is locked away  
With a golden key  
Till another day:

When my love shall come,  
As a bird to its mate,  
With the golden key,  
And unlock the gate.  
And the world shall see!

8    **Fairy lullaby**  
Roger Quilter

This song, written in 1921, was dedicated to the soprano Hilda Blake, who performed it at two different Prom concerts in the same year; it was also performed at the Proms by a different singer the same year and by yet another singer the following season. The song's popularity led to him producing a version for women's voices in three parts. The words are more successful than his earlier attempts at poetry; he had clearly learnt from his experience of working on his highly-successful children's Christmas show *Where the rainbow ends*, which includes his setting of Clifford Mills' *Slumber song*.

Close thine eyes in slumber sweet,  
Lullaby,  
While the spangled dews are falling  
And the breezes pass on silv'ry feet;  
Where the swaying shadows meet  
There are fairy voices calling  
Lullaby, lullaby.

Fold thy petals, pretty rose,  
Lullaby,  
While the twilight bells are ringing  
For the curtains of the day to close;  
And beyond the mountain snows  
All the golden stars are singing  
Lullaby, lullaby.

### THREE SONGS OF WILLIAM BLAKE Op.20

William Blake (1757-1827)

These songs were published in 1917 and received their première at the Wigmore Hall in December of that year, sung by the contralto Muriel Foster with the composer at the piano. They were dedicated to Quilter's friend Florence Koehler, an American jeweller and painter who had been the hub of his London social circle, but at this time was living in Paris. Koehler was also a keen amateur musician – she and Quilter would often play piano duets and attend concerts together – so it seems appropriate that he chose to dedicate his settings of Blake (the poet/painter/engraver) to Koehler, in celebration of her eclectic approach to the arts.

#### 9 i Dream valley

This poem, one of several entitled *Song* from Blake's 1783 collection *Poetical sketches*, considers the inherent sadness of memories. Quilter composed this song in 1916, and from the piano introduction, he manages to conjure up a musical image of the passing stream and the half-forgotten world of past events; the baritone Mark Raphael said that it “flows gently on, as if in a trance”. Quilter was pleased enough with the result to arrange it for violin and piano – dedicated to May Harrison – and he also added a cello obbligato part on Monica Harrison's score, presumably for her sister Beatrice to play.

Memory, hither come,  
And tune your merry notes:  
And, while upon the wind  
Your music floats,  
I'll pore upon the stream,  
Where sighing lovers dream,  
And fish for fancies as they pass  
Within the watery glass.

I'll drink of the clear stream,  
And hear the linnet's song,  
And there I'll lie and dream  
The day along:  
And, when night comes, I'll go  
To places fit for woe,  
Walking along the darkened valley  
With silent melancholy.

10    ii    **The wild flower's song**

The second and third songs of the group were written in the following year, 1917. This poem was published in volume two of Alexander Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake* of 1863, which included a selection of his works prepared by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, some of which were previously unpublished. The hazy feel of *Dream valley* is continued, although clearly the dreams encountered here are more troubling. After the turbulent anxieties of the poet's waking, Quilter resolves with a reprise of the first verse, suggesting that, on reflection, the poet realises all is well in the garden of life.

As I wander'd in the forest  
The green leaves among,  
I heard a wild flower  
Singing a song.

"I slept in the Earth  
In the silent night;  
I murmur'd my thoughts,  
And I felt delight.

"In the morning I went,  
As rosy as morn,  
To seek for new joy,  
But I met with scorn."

11    iii    **Daybreak**

Completed on 4th March 1917, the day after *The wild flower's song*, this is also a setting of a poem from the previously-unpublished works Rossetti included in the 1863 edition of Gilchrist's Blake biography. It is an antidote to the melancholy and apprehension of the first two songs of the group, with the notion of sunrise representing both an awaking from the dreams previously described and also a metaphor for a new start, forgetting any troubles that have gone before. The moments of chromaticism in Quilter's heroic setting hint at the poet's internal struggle before, finally, the sun's ascent heralds an optimistic future.

To find the western path,  
Right through the gates of wrath  
I urge my way;  
Sweet morning leads me on;  
With soft repentant moan  
I see the break of day.

The war of swords and spears,  
Melted by dewy tears,  
Exhales on high;  
The sun is freed from fears,  
And with soft grateful tears  
Ascends the sky.

12 **Island of dreams**

Roger Quilter

Quilter wrote an operetta that went through a number of revisions in an attempt to make it a success. Throughout its life the title also changed, and from the version called *Love and the countess* this song was published in 1946, with the subtitle *Venetian serenade*. The words are by Quilter, although the book of the operetta was first by Richard Bennett and then Jeffrey Lambourne, with the lyrics by the former. Quilter dedicated the song to the latter, who worked with Quilter on the final published version of the piece, called *Love at the inn*, and perhaps provided some inspiration for these lyrics.

Far away o'er the dark summer ocean,  
All aglow in the moon's silver beams,  
Filled with fragrance and beauty enchanted,  
Lies a rose-covered island of dreams.  
Ah! how swift run the hours to the morrow,  
All too short is the sweet summer night;  
So come, fly with your lover, beloved,  
To that dreamland of love and delight!  
Ah! then softly, oh softly my dearest,  
We will float where the pale moonlight gleams,  
As we glide o'er the still summer ocean,  
To our rose-scented island of dreams!

I am waiting, my own, my beloved,  
By the shore of the sleeping lagoon,  
While the night breeze impatiently whispers  
That the daylight will come all too soon.  
Then haste to your lover, my dearest,  
And away, through the soft moony beams,  
We will fly, all afire with our rapture,  
To that wonderful island of dreams.  
Ah! then softly, come softly beloved  
Let us take this sweet hour of delight,  
And, with never a thought for the morrow,  
We'll but live, oh my love, for tonight.

13 **At close of day**

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943)

Binyon is today best known for his 1914 poem *For the fallen*, which is often used at Remembrance Day services. Born in Lancashire, he was educated at St Paul's School, London and Trinity College, Oxford, where he won the Newdigate Prize for poetry. After graduating, he worked for the British Museum, an occupation that allowed him time to continue writing. This poem, entitled *Twilight*, comes from his collection *Lyric poems*, published a year after leaving Oxford. Quilter's haunting setting, published in 1904, perfectly captures the mysterious dusk of the verse, with its flitting between melancholy and an almost magical excitement.

Warm, the deserted evening  
Closes over the moor.  
Was it here we walked and were merry  
Only an hour before?

Magic light in the west  
Smiles over the moorland swells:  
Fairies invisible roam them  
Whispering wonderful spells.

They whisper, and all grows strange!  
Shadows are over the stream;  
The still, gray rocks are a vision,  
The solid ground a dream.

Trees murmur, and hush, and tremble;  
The west is drained of light.  
Earth slumbers beneath silence  
And the beautiful eyes of night.

14

### The answer

Laurence Binyon

This second Binyon setting was also published in 1904. It is a more conventional song than *At close of day*, and clearly Quilter grew to dislike it because around 1927-1928 Boosey destroyed the plates at his request. The poem, called *An old answer*, is again from Binyon's 1894 collection *Lyric poems*. It is an undemanding love poem that describes the repeated response the poet gives to explain his affections. In fact, Quilter's response was, as ever, an ideal presentation of the sentiment of the text, and the poem's charming honesty led to a song that is appealing and simple in equal measure.

Ask me not, dear, what thing it is  
That makes me love you so;  
What graces, what sweet qualities  
That from your spirit flow:  
For I have but this old reply,  
That you are you, that I am I.

My heart leaps when you look at me,  
And thrills to hear your voice.  
Lies, then, in these the mystery  
That makes my soul rejoice?  
I only know, I love you true;  
Since I am I and you are you.

## FIVE ENGLISH LOVE LYRICS Op.24

These songs, all produced separately before being grouped together, were composed and published through the years 1922 to 1928. The group order seems to follow the composition, making the effect in performance seem a little subdued – not finishing with a big finale, as Quilter was wont to do. This does however make for a nice change, and brings to the fore the more thoughtful and introspective nature of the texts. The poems span a couple of centuries, and the variety of the poems, with Quilter's specific musical responses to the words, makes this one of his most interesting and effective groups.

15

### i **There be none of beauty's daughters**

George Gordon Lord Byron (1788-1824)

This song was premièred at a Promenade concert in August 1922 by the tenor Tudor Davies and the pianist Frederick Kibble. The dedication, however, was to another tenor, Roland Hayes, the first African-American tenor to achieve international fame on the concert platform. Taken from Byron's 1816 collection *Poems*, it was simply entitled *Stanzas for music*, and by the time Quilter composed his song there were already a number of other settings, including those by Stanford and Parry. It is a simple poem of devotion, for which Quilter writes in a seductive, flowing style, bringing out the oceanic references.

There be none of beauty's daughters  
With a magic like thee;  
And like music on the waters  
Is thy sweet voice to me:  
When, as if its sound were causing  
The charmèd ocean's pausing,  
The waves lie still and gleaming,  
And the lulled winds seem dreaming:

And the midnight moon is weaving  
Her bright chain o'er the deep;  
Whose breast is gently heaving,  
As an infant's asleep:  
So the spirit bows before thee,  
To listen and adore thee;  
With a full but soft emotion,  
Like the swell of summer's ocean.

## ii Morning song

Thomas Heywood (c.1573-1641)

As with the first song of this group, this too was premièred at a 1922 Promenade Concert, this time with Frederick Kibble accompanying the soprano Hilda Blake. Again, the dedication was to a different singer, the tenor John Coates, but Blake had received the dedication of *Fairy lullaby* the previous year. The poem is taken from act 4 scene 6 of Heywood's 1608 play *The rape of Lucrece*. Quilter's lively song was revised and republished in 1927, with the melody for the second half of each verse taking a higher and more effective line. It is this final version that is included in this recording.

Pack, clouds, away! and welcome, day!  
 With night we banish sorrow.  
 Sweet air, blow soft; mount, lark, aloft  
 To give my love good-morrow!  
 Wings from the wind to please her mind,  
 Notes from the lark I'll borrow:  
 Bird, prune thy wing! nightingale, sing!  
 To give my love good-morrow!  
 To give my love good-morrow  
 Notes from them all I'll borrow.

Wake from the nest, robin redbreast!  
 Sing, birds, in every furrow!  
 And from each bill let music shrill  
 Give my fair love good-morrow!  
 Blackbird and thrush in every bush,  
 Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow,  
 You pretty elves, amongst yourselves  
 Sing my fair love good-morrow!  
 To give my love good-morrow,  
 Sing, birds, in every furrow!

iii **Go, lovely rose**

Edmund Waller (1606-1687)

This is one of the most beautiful English songs in the repertoire, and surely Quilter's greatest song. The seemingly-effortless elegance of his music appears to merely present the exquisiteness of the verse – taken from Waller's 1645 collection *Poems* – in a way that is both candid and beguiling. It is dedicated to the tenor Hubert Eisdell, who together with the pianist Frederick Kiddle premiered the work at a Promenade concert in August 1923, the year after its composition. Waller was an infamous Member of Parliament – the 1645 publication was during his eight-year exile from England – but his fame as a poet was to a large extent on account of this poem.

Go, lovely rose –  
 Tell her that wastes her time and me,  
 That now she knows,  
 When I resemble her to thee,  
 How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,  
 And shuns to have her graces spied,  
 That hadst thou sprung  
 In deserts where no men abide,  
 Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth  
 Of beauty from the light retired:  
 Bid her come forth,  
 Suffer herself to be desired,  
 And not blush so to be admired.

Then die – that she  
 The common fate of all things rare  
 May read in thee;  
 How small a part of time they share  
 That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

iv **O, the month of May**

Thomas Dekker (c.1570-1632)

The composer Maude Valérie White had also produced settings of *There be none of beauty's daughters* and *Go, lovely rose*, and so it may have been as a mark of respect that Quilter chose to dedicate the fourth song of this set to her. It was composed in 1926 – Quilter had spent ten days with her in Rome in January – and published the following year. The text, called *The first three-men song*, is from act 3 scene 5 of Dekker's 1599 play *The shoemaker's holiday*, a comedy about love conquering monetary differences, class divides and amputated legs.

O, the month of May, the merry month of May,  
So frolic, so gay, and so green, so green, so green!  
O, then did I unto my true-love say,  
Sweet Peg, thou shalt be my summer's queen.

Now the nightingale, the pretty nightingale,  
The sweetest singer in all the forest quire,  
Entreats thee, sweet Peggy, to hear thy true-love's tale:  
Lo, yonder she sitteth, her breast against a brier.

But O, I spy the cuckoo, the cuckoo, the cuckoo;  
See where she sitteth; come away, my joy:  
Come away, I prithee, I do not like the cuckoo  
Should sing where my Peggy and I kiss and toy.

O, the month of May, the merry month of May,  
So frolic, so gay, and so green, so green, so green;  
And then did I unto my true-love say,  
Sweet Peg, thou shalt be my summer's queen.

## v The time of roses

Thomas Hood (1799-1845)

Quilter chose to end the set as he began it, with a calm setting of a nineteenth-century poem; like the previous song, this was also dedicated to a Maude, in this instance his eldest sister. The version of the text used is from Hood's posthumous 1846 collection *Poems*, published in accordance with his dying wishes; an earlier 1827 edition included two further verses. The words describe a spring love affair as remembered in winter, and Quilter's wistful 1928 setting gives a sense of sweet melancholy, perhaps suggesting that the references to spring and winter may also allude to the seasons of life.

It was not in the winter  
Our loving lot was cast;  
It was the time of roses –  
We plucked them as we passed!

That churlish season never frowned  
On early lovers yet:  
O no – the world was newly crowned  
With flowers when first we met!

'Twas twilight, and I bade you go,  
But still you held me fast;  
It was the time of roses –  
We plucked them as we passed!

## My heart adorned with thee

Roger Quilter after Friedrich von Bodenstedt (1819-1892)

Quilter's 1903 group *Four songs of Mirza Schaffy* was a collection of settings of the German poet Bodenstedt. The author had originally claimed them to be translations of the work of the Azerbaijani poet Mirza Schaffy with whom he studied, but after Schaffy's death he admitted that they were in fact his own original poems. This song, based on the poem *Mein Herz schmückt sich mit dir*, was written nearly fifty years after the first four, in 1951, and Quilter's words are very faithful to the German. Together with a duet version for mezzo-soprano and baritone, it was published in the year of the composer's death, 1953.

My heart adorned with thee  
Is like the Heavens when the sun is bright;  
Thou giv'st it light, and without thee,  
Deep fall the shadows of the night.

E'en as the Earth her beauty hides  
When murky darkness round her steals,  
And only with the laughing sun  
All her rich glory she reveals.

*Mein Herz schmückt sich mit dir, wie sich  
Der Himmel mit der Sonne schmückt –  
Du gibst ihm Glanz, und ohne dich  
Bleibt es in dunkle Nacht entrückt.*

*Gleichwie die Welt all' ihre Pracht  
Verhüllt, wenn Dunkel sie umfließt,  
Und nur, wenn ihr die Sonne lacht,  
Zeigt, was sie Schönes in sich schließt!*

### THREE SONGS FOR BARITONE OR TENOR Op.18 No.1-3

Quilter's complete opus 18 actually consists of six songs, although within the set there is a group of two songs, a single song and this set of three. These first three songs were written in 1913 and published the following year; the remaining songs were written in 1914 and 1916, and the complete group was republished, with the amended title *Six songs*, in 1920. The enlarged group would appear to have been made for the publisher's convenience, as there is little to link the songs, and so for the purposes of this series of recordings the original grouping is preserved.

21

#### i To wine and beauty

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester

The first song of the set, a hearty drinking song, was dedicated to an actor friend of Quilter's, Theodore Byard, with whom he stayed in Venice in 1914. The song's original title of *Bacchus' song* was crossed out on the manuscript and replaced with the more poetic title used for the song's publication. Rochester's title for the poem, *Upon his drinking a bowl*, refers to the King of Pylos' magnificent golden cup described in Homer's *Iliad*. Two of Wilmot's six verses were omitted from the song, for the sake of the twentieth-century audience, one that references the Third Anglo-Dutch War – contemporaneous with the poem's authorship – and another that mentions Samuel Butler's fictional astrologer Sir Sidrophel.

Vulcan provide me such a cup  
As Nestor used of old;  
Try all your art to trim it up  
And damask it round with gold.

Carve me thereon a curling vine,  
A lovely girl and boy:  
Their limbs in amorous folds entwine,  
The type of future joy.

Make it so large, when filled with sack  
Up to the swelling brim,  
That toasts in that delicious lake  
Like ships at sea may swim.

Bacchus and Venus my guardians are,  
Let wine and beauty reign!  
With wine we'll drive away all care,  
And then to love again.

22 ii **Where be you going?**

John Keats (1795-1821)

The dedicatee of this song, Harry Plunket Greene, was the son-in-law of the composer Sir Hubert Parry, a singer and author of the book *Interpretation in song*. The poem was popular with composers, having already been set by Frank Bridge, Joseph Holbrooke, and a fellow student of Quilter's in Frankfurt, Norman O'Neill. Quilter again chose to omit a verse, one that tells of how the poet loves the maid's flowers but prefers her kisses. The poem is a simple rustic flirtation, which Quilter sets in an appropriate folksong style with some effective birdsong ornaments.

Where be you going, you Devon maid?  
 And what have ye there in the basket?  
 Ye tight little fairy, just fresh from the dairy,  
 Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

I love your hills and I love your dales,  
 And I love your flocks a-bleating;  
 But O, on the heather to lie together,  
 With both our hearts a-beating.

I'll put your basket all safe in a nook;  
 Your shawl I'll hang on a willow;  
 And we will sigh in the daisy's eye,  
 And kiss on a grass green pillow.

23 iii **The jocund dance**

William Blake

Like *Dream valley*, this is also the setting of a poem called *Song* from Blake's 1783 collection *Poetical sketches*. It was Quilter's first Blake song, predating his opus 20 set by three years; the later group was his next song composition after the opus 18 *Six songs*. *The jocund dance* is similar in sentiment to *Where be you going?* – extolling the delights of the surroundings, but preferring the beloved lady – continuing the theme of rustic love, with the swing of the dance providing a suitable close to the group. It was dedicated to Quilter's friend, the baritone and composer, Frederic Austin.

I love the jocund dance,  
The softly breathing song,  
Where innocent eyes do glance,  
And where lisps the maiden's tongue.

I love the laughing vale,  
I love the echoing hill,  
Where mirth does never fail,  
And the jolly swain laughs his fill.

I love our neighbours all,  
But Kitty, I better love thee;  
And love them I ever shall,  
But thou art all to me.

I love the pleasant cot,  
I love the innocent bower,  
Where white and brown is our lot,  
Or fruit in the midday hour.

I love the oaken seat,  
Beneath the oaken tree,  
Where all the old villagers meet,  
And laugh our sports to see.

## April love

Roger Quilter

Published in 1952, Quilter dedicated this setting of his own text to his friend, the New Zealand baritone Newton Goodson. So in the year before his death, Quilter once again chose to set his own text, as he had done at the very start of his career. The result is very successful in this song on the familiar theme of love's awakening in springtime. The excitement of the first verse yields through a transposition to the gloomy talk of winter before spring is sprung again for the final verse, with its call for the lover to come out into the April sun.

The buds are bursting in the brake  
On every flowering thorn,  
And mating birds are all awake,  
This lovely April morn.

Winter his dusky cloak has shed,  
Old winter grim and grey,  
And with his ice and snow has fled  
Into the night away.

Then come, O come, my dearest love,  
Before sweet April's done;  
While azure skies are bright above,  
Come forth and greet the sun.

## TWO SONGS, 1897

Roger Quilter

These two settings of his own words are the earliest surviving songs of Quilter's. They were dedicated to his mother, or rather they were dedicated to the mother of a Ronald Quinton, because the young composer sought refuge under the guise of this similarly-initialled pseudonym. Due to this concealment, Quilter did not feel the need to buy back and destroy the plates as he did with his *Two songs* of 1903, but he did make the following note on his own copy in 1916: "on no account to be reprinted in any form or under my name".

### 25 i **Come spring! sweet spring!**

As with the 1903 publication, this song dates from his time as a student in Frankfurt, and it has all the hallmarks of a class exercise. The poetry is straightforward, the setting is strophic, and the melody unusually routine. Just occasionally are there flashes of interest, as the piano part is allowed to venture above the vocal line, painting the words "breeze" and "tree" in the first verse and "love" and "skies" in the second. It shows a competent composer, but not yet the brilliant songsmith who was to emerge just a few years later.

Come, spring! sweet spring!  
Quickly all your treasures bring;  
Subtle perfumes on the breeze,  
Emerald buds to deck the trees;  
Golden coverings for the hills,  
Primroses and daffodils  
All a-glowing,  
All a-blowing.

Come, spring! sweet spring!  
Listen how the thrushes sing!  
Everything is full of love,  
Earth beneath and skies above,  
Like the flowers the hearts of men  
Blossom into love again,  
All a-blowing,  
All a-glowing.

### 26 ii **The reign of the stars**

This is one of Quilter's shortest songs, measuring only fourteen bars, and the composer employs the same rhythmic device throughout nearly the whole piece. In spite of this brevity and considerable repetition, it has a certain charm. The poem is better than the first song's, and Quilter's response is similarly more interesting. There are harmonic and melodic differences between the two verses that provide a greater sense of direction and, in what was later to become something of a Quilter hallmark, he raises the tessitura of the piano part for the second verse.

All through the silent and darksome night  
The stars are aglow with mysterious light,  
And the glint of their eyes is all silver and white.

Far, far away, so fair and so free  
Like diamonds afloat in a sapphire sea  
They glimmer in silent sympathy.

## Spring voices

Roger Quilter

Later in his life, Quilter reserved his pseudonyms for the authorship of texts, such as this poem attributed to the fictitious Romney Marsh, a name that he also used for the poet of his unaccompanied part-song *Summer sunset*; this was apparently a private joke between him and his nephew, Arnold Vivian. *Spring voices* was composed and published in 1936. It was dedicated to the American soprano Grace Moore, who as well as singing at the world's most important opera houses was also a film star. It was perhaps her celebrity-status that earned her this recognition from Quilter, although it may also have been her nickname: the Tennessee Nightingale.

I heard a throstle singing at the dawn of day.  
Throstle, throstle, of what are you singing?  
"I sing of buds upon the hawthorn spray,  
Of spring that follows  
The twittering swallows  
With daisied feet on the dewy grass,  
And rain-soft breezes that pass and pass."

I heard a cuckoo calling, calling from the trees.  
Cuckoo, cuckoo, O what are you singing?  
"I sing of laughter born upon the breeze,  
Of children's voices  
And merry noises,  
Of wavy meadows and dancing rills  
And nodding windflowers and daffodils."

Far in the darkening wood I heard a nightingale.  
Nightingale, nightingale, what are you singing?  
"I sing of love beneath the moonlight pale,  
Of sighs and kisses  
And soft caresses,  
Of love-sweet blossoms that glow and swing  
Breathing, dreaming of Love and spring."

## FOUR SONGS OF THE SEA Op.1

Roger Quilter

This group, dedicated to the composer's mother, went through various incarnations. It was composed around 1900 and published the following year, when it was premièred at Crystal Palace by the baritone Denham Price with Quilter accompanying. Quilter then revised both the text and music and republished it in 1911 as *Three songs of the sea*, omitting the first song. Some time later the original four-song group was republished. For this recording the songs are each presented in their later versions, namely the 1901 version of the first song, and the 1911 versions of the last three.

28

### i I have a friend

The melody of this song is almost identical in each of the three verses, with only some minor rhythmic changes to fit the words, and the accompaniment is also the same for the outer verses, taking a higher tessitura and having a little more movement for the second quieter verse. It is a simple song with a straightforward message. The broad, chordal gestures of the piano suggest the huge ocean waves with the slow, regular undulations of the melody representing the friends being swayed on the ship. It has an artlessness, which perhaps Quilter grew to dislike between the first and second edition publications.

I have a friend, a true, true friend, strong and fresh from the ocean,  
Brave and free as the rushing wave is the soul of his deep devotion.

He never fails in times of need, times of grief or sorrow;  
One warm clasp of his big brown hand and a cheery hope for the morrow.

Come, O my friend, with happy voice, blyth as birds in the dawning,  
Bring a breath from your fragrant sea and a smile as bright as the morning!

29    **ii    The sea-bird**

This song opens with the piano playing the “deathlike cry” of the bird, which is then imitated by the vocal part as a sailor thoughtfully watches the bird fly off into the distance. Quilter’s original text was “Just as the day was dying in floods of crimson gore” for the second line of verse 1, “gleaming sky” in line 1 of verse 2, and “young waves” in line 2 of verse 2. As such, the poetry is less melodramatic in the later version, but the accompaniment was made richer, with the broken chords of the second verse being filled out.

I watched a sea-bird flying along the wintry shore,  
Just as the light was dying o’er sunset’s golden floor.

I saw him curve and quiver against the fading sky,  
And heard the sad waves shiver under his deathlike cry.

Slowly his great wings lifting he floated away alone,  
Like some tired spirit drifting into the great unknown.

30    **iii    Moonlight**

The third song of the group almost completely escaped revision in 1911, with the text remaining the same, and just a few extra bass notes added to the piano part. Like the first song, the three verses have the same melody and harmonic structure, with only the tessitura of the piano part and the dynamic level changing. This similarity is probably the reason why the first song of the group was cut, to avoid the repetition that may have caused The Times critic to report at the premiere that the songs were “melodious if rather obvious compositions set in a very simple manner”.

Under the silver moonlight flutter the great white wings,  
Wooed by the soft night breezes tender with whispered things.

Silently onward gliding into the silent night,  
Like to a fairy vessel crowned with a fairy light.

Whisper, O soft night breezes, murmur your tender tune,  
Carry the white wings onward under the silver moon.

## 31 iv By the sea

Quilter's 1911 version of the final song was also given a richer piano part, and the text revised from "The waves did trickle and curve and roll; / They tumbled over my sinful soul" for the first two lines of the second verse. It is the most successful song of the group, with the piano emulating the stormy sea and the voice having to fight its way through. Quilter was beginning to flex his composing muscles, but it would require the poetry of Shakespeare, Shelley and Herrick to really fire his imagination to the fullest.

I stood today by the shimmering sea;  
 Never was wind so mild and free;  
 The light and the loveliness dazzled me.

The waves did frolic and curl and roll;  
 They sighed and sang to my listening soul,  
 And the might of their mystery made me whole.

32 Tulips  
Robert Herrick

This song, published in 1947, was Quilter's last setting of Herrick and was based on his partsong published the previous year. This version simply takes the soprano line from the choral edition, and so lacks some of the rhythmic variety that his solo songs normally have. Nonetheless, it is a charming setting of a poem, the theme of which Herrick regularly returned to: *carpe diem*. The poet describes the short-lived tulips and the similarly-brief life-spans of other flowers, before urging ladies to take note of this and to enjoy themselves while they still can.

Bright tulips, we do know,  
 You had your coming hither;  
 And fading time does show  
 That ye must quickly wither.

Your sisterhoods may stay  
 And smile here for your hour;  
 But die ye must away  
 Ev'n as the meanest flower.

Come, virgins, then and see  
 Your frailties, and bemoan ye;  
 For lost like these't will be,  
 As time had never known ye.

## TO JULIA Op.8

Robert Herrick

Quilter dedicated this, his only song cycle, to the tenor Gerwase Elwes, who gave the first performance at the Aeolian Hall with Quilter at the piano in 1905, the year of composition. The songs remained popular; Quilter later arranged them for piano quintet and, in the year after the composer's death, Malcolm Sargent orchestrated them for a Proms concert. The poetry, all of which extols the virtues of the eponymous lady, is from Herrick's 1648 collection *Hesperides*. Julia was in fact the name of Herrick's mother, and Quilter was clearly drawn to the name – the 1936 incarnation of his opera was also called *Julia*.

### 33 Prelude

The work starts with a short piano solo that introduces the two main musical themes that run through the cycle. The first is the opening falling passage – a simple, romantic gesture that instantly creates an image of openness and dedication. The sensual, voluptuous modulations that follow give the impression of the poet's mind in a dream-like ecstasy as he considers the depth of his love for Julia. Only at the end does the minor tonality and loneliness of the second theme – a questioning, rising motif – indicate the unease that may exist in the poet's mind.

### 34 i The bracelet

After the uncertainty at the end of the prelude, this first song starts with an agitated and turbulent introduction. The poem describes the bracelet Julia has been given by the poet to indicate his capture of her, saying that she is held only by this bond of silk, whilst he is bound by the strong ties of his affection. There is an air of desperation in Quilter's song that brings out the asymmetry of the relationship between the poet and Julia, and even as the postlude appears to come to a calm rest, there is a unsettling *sforzando* last chord.

Why I tie about thy wrist,  
Julia, this my silken twist,  
For what other reason is't,

But to shew thee how in part  
Thou my pretty captive art?  
But thy bondslave is my heart.

'Tis but silk that bindeth thee,  
Knap the thread and thou art free  
But 'tis otherwise with me:

I am bound, and fast bound so  
That from thee I cannot go;  
If I could I would not so.

## ii The maiden blush

A simple statement of the falling motif begins the calm opening of this second song, one of three from the cycle that was published separately. The poet describes the various beautiful shades of red that are seen in nature, and only in the last two lines does he reveal that he is comparing them to Julia's blushing cheeks. Quilter creates a world of musical introversion – not dissimilar to his song *Now sleeps the crimson petal* – that not only mirrors the girl's reticence but also is quietly seductive, ending with a sustained vocal note under which the piano reiterates and resolves the opening melody.

So look the mornings when the sun  
 Paints them with fresh vermilion:  
 So cherries blush, and Katherin pears,  
 And apricocks in youthful years;  
 So corals look more lovely red,  
 And rubies lately polishèd:  
 So purest diaper doth shine,  
 Stained by the beams of claret wine:  
 As Julia looks when she doth dress  
 Her either cheek with bashfulness.

## iii To daisies

Also published separately, this song is an appeal for the daisies to stay open until Julia has gone to sleep, after which the world can do what it wants. It maintains the serenity of the previous song, each verse beginning with a variant on the familiar falling melody. The second half of each verse rises higher than the previous one, producing an impression of a slow build up of passion, before the postlude relaxes the atmosphere, ending with a chord progression that is pure cocktail-bar jazz; one can almost imagine Quilter doodling at the piano as these chords are played.

Shut not so soon, the dull-eyed night  
 Has not as yet begun  
 To make a seizure on the light,  
 Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closed are,  
 No shadows great appear,  
 Nor doth the early shepherd's star  
 Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close  
 Her life-begetting eye;  
 And let the whole world then dispose  
 Itself to live or die.

37 iv **The night piece**

The tranquil mood of the previous two songs is broken by the rapid movement of the piano introduction, setting the scene for Herrick's poem that begs Julia to come to him in the night, ignoring any fears of strange creatures. Quilter creates a fantastic image of the various elves and worms – with some particularly expressive melismas – and manages to include both the falling and rising themes, in the vocal line and piano part respectively. It was a popular song, encored at its first performance and, like *The maiden blush* and *To daisies*, was also published separately.

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

No will-o'-the-wisp mislight thee,  
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;  
But on, on thy way,  
Not making a stay,  
Since ghost there's not 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 silvery feet,  
My soul I'll pour into thee.

38 v **Julia's hair**

The interplay between the two musical themes is continued in this song; the piano's single-line opening is a questioning, rising phrase that is collected and answered by the falling opening vocal line. This is a simple song of adoration, proclaimed at the sight of Julia's hair glistening in the morning dew. It is the shortest song of the set at only twenty bars – probably the reason it was not published separately – but it is heavily laden with atmosphere nonetheless, and provides an oasis of respite between the excitement of *The night piece* and the conclusion of the cycle.

Dew sat on Julia's hair  
And spangled too,  
Like leaves that laden are  
With trembling dew;  
Or glittered to my sight,  
As when the beams  
Have their reflected light  
Danced by the streams.

39 **Interlude**

The second piano solo provides a bridge between the contemplative nature of *Julia's hair* and the excitement of the final song. In fact, it is difficult to hear the previous song, with its final rising phrase in the piano, without the ear expecting the resolution provided by this interlude. The poet's uncertainty is this time expressed by Quilter initially presenting the familiar falling passage in the minor key. He quickly resolves to a major tonality – as the poet regains his confidence – and the repeated falling phrases gather in momentum to segue into the short introduction for the concluding song.

40 **vi Cherry ripe**

This rousing finale for the cycle is based on one of Herrick's most famous poems. It begins with the cries of a market-trader selling cherries, but we soon realise that the poet is referring to the cherry lips of his beloved Julia. There is none of the uncertainty of the earlier songs in this final offering. Whether or not his love is reciprocated is unclear, and perhaps unimportant; the ardour of his devotion is all-conquering. Quilter's treatment of the text affirms this, with a momentary tenderness as he repeats the lines that mention her lips, before heroically reiterating the whole poem.

“Cherry-ripe, ripe,” I cry,  
“Full and fair ones, come and buy.”  
If so be you ask me where  
They do grow, I answer: “There,  
Where my Julia's lips do smile;  
There's the land, or cherry-isle,  
Whose plantations fully show  
All the year where cherries grow.”

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