

PETER WARLOCK SONGBOOK

LUCI BRIGINSHAW
ELEANOR MEYNELL

CONVIVUM
RECORDS



TRACKLIST

1	The Everlasting Voices	1.42	15	Rest, sweet nymphs	2.26
	<i>William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)</i>			<i>Anon 16th century</i>	
2	Take, O take those lips away	1.51	16	Spring	1.25
	<i>William Shakespeare (1564-1616)</i>			<i>Thomas Nashe (1567-c.1601)</i>	
3	Heraclitus	2.58	17	To the Memory of a Great Singer	1.39
	<i>Callimachus (c.310-246BC) trans. William Cory (1823-1892)</i>			<i>Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)</i>	
4	The Water Lily	1.46	18	Consider	1.48
	<i>Robert Nichols (1893-1944)</i>			<i>Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939)</i>	
5	Lullaby	1.35	19	I held love's head	1.08
	<i>Thomas Dekker (c.1572-1632)</i>			<i>Robert Herrick (1591-1674)</i>	
6	Take, O take those lips away (2nd setting)	1.40	20	Pretty Ring Time	1.22
	<i>Shakespeare</i>			<i>William Shakespeare</i>	
7	The bayly berith the bell away	2.53	21	Robin Goodfellow	1.38
	<i>Anon 15th century</i>			<i>Anon 16th Century</i>	
8	My little sweet darling	1.59	22	Ha'nacker Mill	2.31
	<i>Anon 16th century</i>			<i>Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)</i>	
9	Dedication	2.22	23	The Night	2.11
	<i>Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586)</i>			<i>as above</i>	
10	The Cloths of Heaven	1.53	24	The Lover's Maze	1.51
	<i>W B Yeats</i>			<i>possibly Thomas Campion (1567-1620)</i>	
11	The Singer	1.25	25	Cradle Song	3.31
	<i>Edward Shanks (1892-1953)</i>			<i>John Phillip (poem from c.1560)</i>	
12	A Sad Song	1.56	26	The Contented Lover	1.41
	<i>John Fletcher (1579-1625)</i>			<i>James Mabbe (1572-1642)</i>	
13	Sleep	2.21	27	And wilt thou leave me thus?	2.09
	<i>as above</i>			<i>Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542)</i>	
14	Autumn Twilight	2.56	28	Youth	1.37
	<i>Arthur Symons (1865-1945)</i>			<i>Robert Wever (poem c. 1560)</i>	
				Total running time	56.22

INTRODUCTION

In putting together any project, one has to ask oneself: what is the purpose of doing this? I wanted to record a disc with Luci to showcase her musicianship and vocal qualities and to collaborate with her on something that was... a little out of the ordinary. While still searching for an idea, we were performing a recital that included songs by Peter Warlock at St Olave's Church, London which happened to be attended by the chairman of the Warlock Society, Michael Graves. I enjoyed playing the music; it is virtuosic, complex, rich, subtle, witty... It seemed to me that the songs of Peter Warlock were bafflingly under-represented in singers' programmes

and gradually it became obvious that I should make a disc of them with Luci. Warlock songs are also under-represented by female interpreters on disc, so there was a potential gap in the market too.

I started to put out feelers for financial support for a possible recording and now, after several years' preparation and concert-giving, here is the final product. It has been a long journey, but a rewarding and fruitful one, and I hope that it will inspire many more performances and recordings of this fascinating composer!

Eleanor Meynell



Peter Warlock

Songbook

Peter Warlock was born Philip Heseltine in 1894, with place of birth recorded as The Savoy Hotel, London. Accepted to read Classics at Oxford University and later English at UCL, he was a young man of exceptional intelligence. But the misery of attempting to fulfil the family expectations and stifle his true passion for music proved unsustainable. Both degrees were abandoned soon after the outbreak of the First World War, and Heseltine began working as a music critic.

Many agree that this lack of formal musical training contributed to his unique compositional voice; in establishing himself as a composer, it was necessary that he plough his own furrow. Nevertheless, he was inspired and influenced by several fellow musicians. The first was Frederick Delius, whose use of “sensuous chromatic harmony”¹ had so struck the young Heseltine in 1910 that he became an outspoken champion of Delius’ music, as well as a lifelong friend (and biographer) of the older composer. Then in 1916, Heseltine met the Anglo-Dutch composer Bernard van Dieren who mentored him for a while, and helped with “a practical solution to the initial difficulties of musical composition”² which had

prevented him from keeping hold of many of his earliest song-writing efforts. Van Dieren helped steer Heseltine away from “thick muddy chords” to the “contrapuntal discipline [of] clear and vigorous part-writing”³. This invaluable guidance was to prove a significant stepping-stone towards the realisation of his own style.

In his other guise as a peculiarly strong-willed and polarising critic, Heseltine had stepped on a few too many toes in the business to be assured of a non-biased reaction to his own music. Necessity dictated therefore that he choose a pseudonym under which to submit his own songs for publication and (out of a few nicknames varying in ridiculousness) Peter Warlock was chosen, sometime in 1918.

His 120-plus song output is vast and impressively varied. Those with no more than a passing interest in his music might dismiss him simply as a writer of boisterous drinking-songs. But as Brian Collins says: “One has to look beyond the programme-fillers, the ready-made encore items, to discover work which is otherwise urbane, sensitive and direct, is frequently thrilling and passionate and, occasionally, innovative to the point of being revolutionary”⁴. Once I had decided to record this album, much the hardest part was whittling down to 28 my initial list of songs which piqued my interest in some way, even as my personal preference excluded “all those songs about beer”⁵.

The following notes go some way to explaining why each of these made the cut.

I believe this compilation provides an illuminating journey through the artistic development and unique mind of this most fascinating of our native song composers. Ordered chronologically by composition year, the musical story you’ll hear is far from linear; a remarkably stylistically-varied imagination persists throughout what turned out to be a tragically short working life. According to the critic J B Steane, Warlock’s songs “are, like their composer, a strange mixture... out of [which] comes a consistently personal voice; there can be few composers whose style is so clearly recognizable through such a slender volume of written work.”⁶ It is my sincere hope that my selection here will have something to offer to both curious newcomer and hardened fan of the music of Peter Warlock.

Our first song (dated winter 1915) is **The Everlasting Voices**, Yeats’ plea for mortality to put on the brakes and grant us a little more time to be alive. Warlock’s tumbling opening piano phrase never hits root position in either the major or minor chords that are simultaneously suggested and the effect is one of unsettling sweetness. The young composer was so inexperienced at this point that the original manuscript has a note in another’s hand saying ‘re-write ending’. The last four bars certainly seem abrupt after the increasingly complicated harmonies

and the passionate build-up in the vocal line towards ‘*tide on the shore*’. But to me it makes perfect sense. A claustrophobic knot of paranoid, obsessive thought (in clustered bi-tonal chords) gives way eventually - like a fresh breath taken - to a quiet, settled chord in the distant (but in truth adjacent) chord of C major. For that one moment, the voices are still.

Take, O take those lips away from 1916 was (probably) Warlock’s first Shakespeare setting. The arc of the poem - complaint, nostalgia, resignation - is perfectly encapsulated in the music. The harmonies seem sunk in the gloom of a very muddy F minor, until the word ‘*mislead*’ brings a sideways shift, putting one in mind of a curtain drawn back to reveal the day. The piano briefly twitters like the dawn-chorus to shine a D♭ major hue on the ‘*kisses*’, only to torture the vocal line again with piled-up clashing semitones for the final ‘*sealed in vain*’.

Heraclitus was dedicated to Warlock’s old music-master from school, Colin Taylor, after his friend Hugh Sidgwick had been killed in the War in September 1917. The poem by the ancient Greek Callimachus was a great favourite of Sidgwick’s and on hearing of his death, it “immediately seemed to fit itself to music”⁷ as Warlock wrote to Taylor. The ‘*nightingales*’ of the poem refer to the works of art that outlive the man; Sidgwick, like Heraclitus long before him, had written poetry which was greatly admired by his friends. Although the words are heart-breaking, the music

leaves one with a sense of peace as the piano/nightingales take soft flight up into the ether.

In **The Water Lily** from the same year, we again hear a perfect meeting of words and music. The melody seems to wind around itself, in a very restricted melodic compass, as the poem speaks of ‘floating’. In fact, this is a remarkably still song; there is a climax where piano and voice briefly peek above the stave in praise of beauty, but it’s a very contained beauty as of a waterlily that breaks apart, unseen by anyone except the sun who gave it life.

If the first four songs show the influence of Bernard Van Dieren and the exploration of atonality, this next shows a marked change of direction: a decision, perhaps, to ‘look backwards’ in order to move forwards. An illuminating sentence from a lecture Warlock gave in 1917 wherein he praised Elizabethan music as having “not only more true genius but more originality and immeasurably more reality than any of our contemporaries can yet exhibit”⁸ shows the thinking behind this shift. In **Lullaby** from 1918 you’ll immediately hear the difference in sound-world; we seem to have gone back in time, and yet we still feel anchored in Warlock’s unique world. A 16th century style is married to a 20th century substance. The confidence of the words (*‘I will sing a lullaby’*) is borne out by a lightly-skipping contrapuntal accompaniment and wonderfully simple vocal line. His friend Cecil Gray, in his 1934 biography of Warlock, wrote: “The separate ingredients can be analysed and defined

but not the ultimate product, which is not Dowland plus van Dieren, or Elizabethan plus modern, but simply something wholly individual and unanalysable – Peter Warlock. No one else could have written it.”⁹

Continuing in this vein we have another setting of **Take, O take those lips away**, two years after the first. Increasing in complexity from *Lullaby*, although the vocal line still seems an echo from across the centuries, here the piano part rarely lets us rest in conventional tonality. A beautiful inevitability is achieved at the end by repeating the falling figure of the introduction, but with harmonies now cleverly shifted to give the sense of tonic that before was so elusive.

Much has been made of the mysterious symbolism in the anonymous poem, **The bayly berith the bell away**. What most agree on is that it is sung from the perspective of a young girl about to be married, and unsure how to feel about it. Warlock’s setting is as mysterious as the words: gently lilting but never getting excited, with frequent pauses and hesitation in the vocal line. The flexible but inevitable 3/8 pulsing of the accompaniment nevertheless draws the young bride ineluctably forth to the future, over which she has control only to pause, but not to halt.

300 years after his hero William Byrd set these words, in 1919 Warlock set the anonymous lyric **My little sweet darling**. If you listen to Byrd’s setting you can clearly hear the launch-point for the newer version, but almost immediately Warlock begins

to take us on a more complicated journey. At heart, however, a lullaby is a simple thing. Thus before long, the wayward tonality settles into a whole page-worth of ‘*lulla lulla*’s, winding around the tonic scale of G Major. Thus the song’s conclusion is a charming, written-out improvisation of a parent’s age-old technique for lulling baby.

The next song Warlock dedicated to his recent-met love interest, the elusive Winifred Baker. The already effusive Elizabethan poem **Dedication** bursts to new life with this musical explosion of feeling. Ian Copley calls this “a piece of unabashed, almost bombastic rhetoric, with a turgid ‘thunder and lightning’ piano part”¹⁰, altogether quite unique in Warlock’s entire output. Clearly this was a woman who inspired deep feelings in our composer.

The same year Winifred also received **The Cloths of Heaven**, yet a more contrasting song to the previous could scarcely be imagined. The lover wishes for the cloths of heaven in order to make a suitably grand gesture but alas has nothing material to give. Thus the song begins with an uncompromisingly high and winding melody weaving in and out of the two parts, perhaps representing the frustration of limitation. In spreading underfoot the only possession – dreams – this keening music is placated into trustingly diatonic spread chords. But the harmonic ambiguity of the final phrase here underpins the exquisite vulnerability of laying yourself completely bare.

Within this selection of songs, **The Singer** (1921) stands out for its relative simplicity. Warlock had for a while been fascinated by the traditions of folksongs, both in his native land and over in Ireland where he had spent the last year of the war. This very folksy piano introduction could well be imagined played on some kind of flute. When it recurs in a flattened version at ‘*only music*’ on top of those questioning seventh chords, its purpose is ever-so-subtly to swivel and lead us ‘*there*’ – to the purity and certainty of a simple but ancient song.

The next five songs are all from 1922 when, once again escaping the stresses of London (this time to install himself at his mother’s house in rural Wales), Warlock produced his greatest number of songs in a single year. In **A Sad Song** we again see a vocal line which on its own could have been written 300 years earlier. The accompaniment, however, is always on hand to undermine this ‘purity’. Underneath the last word (*‘earth’*) the harmony is cruelly disrupted; while the melody line repeats the beautiful figure from the song’s opening, the jarring bass-line plays just one semitone beneath both chords. This unnerving device certainly serves to emphasise the heart-breaking betrayal of the poem.

Which of us has not experienced the pangs of a difficult transition from consciousness to **Sleep**, tending to elude us the more desperately we want it? Again we see Warlock employing the device that

had worked so well before: vocal line that is “pure Dowland”¹¹ and accompaniment “delicately tinted”¹² with chromaticism. Just as in real life the ending of conscious thought doesn’t lead straight to sleep but rather to an intermediate connecting passage, so the end of the sung words here melts into a piano passage that ingeniously bridges this gap. The first phrase in a benign G major takes us to a false ending, as when sometimes on the very threshold of sleep we are jerked out, to resume the journey with increased anxiety. Thence the final statement of the theme ends by crowding in on itself in a chromatic jumble. Where do we go from here? Out of nowhere a G major chord is plucked, pianissimo, from the higher reaches of the keyboard. Thus have we succumbed to the nonsense babbling; the brain loosens its grip and then, as if by magic, we dissolve.

Autumn Twilight stands out in being through-composed rather than strophic i.e. the melody does not repeat for each verse, but rather we get a sense of a continuous story being told and developed. Despite (or perhaps because of?) this anomaly, this was reputedly Warlock’s favourite of his own songs. The musical treatment of the words is appropriately mysterious and beautiful: the soft, heavily-pedalled piano part hinting at the falling leaves and fading light of the poem. The main challenge for the singer is to follow Warlock’s instruction - ‘very quietly’, resisting any urge to get loud. But as the

poem dictates, the mists have enfolded the lanes and the vale is darkening; thus are lovers pensive, rather than demonstrative.

How much simpler life seems when you have someone to help you by singing a lullaby? From the same year that he penned the anguished Sleep comes an infinitely more comforting song, setting the anonymous old lyric **Rest, sweet nymphs**. Here chromatic notes are used only for charm, and voice and piano are in complete accord. This is a song to soothe and what could be more soothing than those gorgeously squishy pentatonic chords, gently falling and rising like the most relaxed breathing? The deliciously-extended cradle-rocking passage between verses is the midpoint at which we sink into bliss, and can absorb the beautiful concluding verse as if in a dream.

The gentle chirruping of the piano part in the delightfully cheerful **Spring**, so evocative of the first warm day of the year, invites you to sit outside and listen to nature reawakening. The birdcalls invoked are of the cuckoo, the nightingale, the lapwing and the owl: an indication that appreciation for nature can certainly extend beyond night-fall.

Published in 1923, **To the memory of a great singer** is a revision of a song (*Bright is the Ring of Words*) written five years earlier. The revisions give the song a slightly firmer basis in conventional tonality (a direction taken during the intervening

time), while retaining the original’s best touches, for example the unexpected ‘blue’ note on the word ‘dead’. Warlock grants this poem a happily soaring melody (very attractive to the higher-voiced singer!) in praise of the power of Art to outlast its creators. An elevating sentiment indeed.

Consider was dedicated to Warlock’s friend and fellow-composer Charles Wilfred Orr. This may explain this second example of unusually virtuosic piano writing, something for which Orr was known in his songs. Reverence for the healing powers of Nature soak the music in heart-swelling optimism. Like Spring, this song suggests bird-calls but this time we have the cuckoo calling out from the piano part. (The pianist really does seem to be doing all the work here!)

Another song which stands out as stylistically remarkable is **I held Love’s head**. Here, dramatically wide leaps in the expansive piano part mesh into deliciously jazzy-sounding chromatic clashes with the vocal line. 17th century words here given the full 20th century ‘torch-song’ treatment, which in my opinion works an absolute treat.

In 1924, Warlock left Wales for a short-lived return to London. The space to create, away from the whirlwind experience of the capital, was only fully regained upon his next move out. This time it was to the village of Eynsford in Kent, where he lived from 1925 until 1928 and from whence he was to write the remainder of our songs.

From the first Eynsford year comes **Pretty Ring Time**. Two possible explanations for the meaning of the title as it would have been understood in Shakespeare’s day are the exchanging of rings in betrothal or the sound of the wedding day itself, church bells a’ringing. This is a relentlessly jolly and light-hearted song with evocations yet again of the birdsong of springtime, especially in the 8va piano passage at the start of verse 3. Throughout, voice and piano seem to chase each other through rippling scales and skipping ‘staccatissimo’ chords, much like the lover and his lass as they cavort between the acres of the rye.

The character of **Robin Goodfellow** (1926) is perhaps better known as Puck, most notably in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The verse chosen for this song does not mention the character at all but focuses on the medicinal herbs, the secrets of which are certainly known to this wood-dwelling sprite. So where is the ‘wayward and capricious’¹³ Robin Goodfellow? He is to be found in the piano part, which acts throughout like a child evading capture. The voice is anchored in A major, but the piano continually sidesteps into F from whence, whenever unattended by the voice part, he jumps up, dancing a jig out of reach until pulled back down by the resumption of singing.

The following year, Warlock published three songs to words by Hilaire Belloc (of which we have two here). **Ha’nacker Mill** was written after the poet, while on

a walk through his beloved Sussex, came upon an abandoned mill. By naming it ‘Sally’ and further anthropomorphising by describing her as ‘kindly’, Belloc gives a passionate eulogy of a recently-eroded rural existence. Beginning very high and sinking inexorably, the stark spread chords in a succession of minor keys form a moving yet mysterious response to the desolation of the poem. There is a certain inbuilt poetic circularity in having each verse open with the last word of the previous. In response, Warlock gives us a great example of ‘semi-strophic’ writing; each verse opens on the same tune but is weather-beaten into a slightly different shape each time. No matter how many times you walk around this hill you will end up back where you started, still with that lingering sense of something missing.

In **The Night**, the highly-devout Belloc speaks to sleep as if it were a deity to be worshipped, a divine mystery. Warlock has responded with an incredibly powerful song that is quite devastating in its subtlety. The instructions are “soft and chant-like” and indeed the first verse is just that – a chant on one note, a plea to the gods of sleep. The piano supports with disarming ecclesiastical simplicity. As the voice climbs hopefully up the scale for the next verse so the pianist’s left hand slides chromatically down. This is “*the dead day’s requiem*”, the sinking feeling of looking back on your day with regret. Everything builds to the great spread chords for the plea to “*fold your great wings about*

my face”, the harmony grounded in the certainty of E minor right up until “*false*”, where it is discordantly invaded by C# and thence is even further polluted on “*delight*”. Much like the ‘sweet deceiving’ of Fletcher’s sleep, Belloc too recognised that whatever comfort the night can bring is only temporary.

In one of the more obstreperous piano parts in our selection, the opening introductory figure of **The Lovers Maze** (1927) is straight from a classic lute-song, but on each repetition is peppered with ever-varying smudges of ‘wrong’ notes. The simplicity of the vocal line against the piano’s harmonic refutations make one think of the maze of the title; turning this way and that as you will, you remain stuck on your F minor track. The canon device used in the final verse also puts one in mind of going round and round, chasing your tale: a relationship stuck in unhealthy repetitive patterns.

Next we have yet another beautiful lullaby, **Cradle Song**. The effort to get baby to settle is supported by a hypnotic cradle-rocking rhythm throughout, but the piano provides evidence that the process isn’t entirely straightforward. In verse two we hear the top line straying from the tune into a chromatically-sliding scale, gently clashing with each ‘*lullaby*’. Then as the verse ends, baby’s protestations become a little more insistent in the off-beat counter-rhythm at the top of the texture. This, however, is a baby who wants to be soothed by the beautiful refrain which ends each verse,

and in this case the perseverance of ‘*thy nurse*’ pays off. Just as in *Sleep*, all concerned are eventually rewarded with the peace and repose of a G major chord.

The following year Warlock sent his friend Gwen Shepherd the manuscript of **The Contented Lover** (then entitled *Celestina*) as a birthday present, with a note saying he’d been laid up for three months with “nothing to do but booze and sweat it out in sentimental songs, of which I lay one at your feet.” Chromaticism is used here and there to sprinkle effervescence, in complete support of the vocal line: not for here the subtle undermining that we find underneath texts of a darker hue. The contemporary magic Warlock infuses into these 300-year old words have left us with a beautifully twinkling vignette. How could any lover not be contented with this?

And now we come to what is arguably my favourite in this collection. I believe that **And wilt thou leave me thus?** (from August 1928) represents the apotheosis of Warlock’s skill of marrying words to music, translating the sense of a poem fully-formed into a song. It is also I think the finest example of his skill at counterpoint, the culmination of a journey which began with Bernard Van Dieren releasing him from those ‘muddy chords’, and was infused along the way with the wisdom culled from years of studying the Renaissance masters.

The piano begins with a falling B♭ minor figure winding around itself in canon, which forms the

question ‘*and wilt thou leave me thus?*’. Through various means, this ‘questioning theme’ proceeds so insidiously to infect the song that all possible cadences are strangled by dissonance. The lover tries every trick he can think of to persuade his lady to reconsider and ‘*say nay*’ until he comes closest by outlining how purely he has loved her - ‘*[I] have given thee my heart*’. It is here that the piano part suddenly morphs into two bars of hymn-like innocence, seeming bound for a perfect cadence on the word ‘*smart*’. But that is not to be. The theme interrupts just at that moment, concluding the question with the most starkly clashing chord yet: piano’s G against singer’s G♭. From the second verse onwards, this theme has begun to creep in even before the singer has finished making the point, thus more and more harshly undermining any attempts to get the question answered. In a last twist of genius, the final appearance of the theme is sung (and played) in the key of F, with the last note modified to A-natural to suggest major-key deliverance. Could we finally get some joy? Of course not. We sidestep deftly back to B♭ minor, and the final piano phrase climbs up to land on another A-natural; but now being a semitone below the tonic, that note can provide no comfort. A broken chord for a broken heart.

Not wishing to end on such a downer, our final song is **Youth** from July 1928, our composer’s third treatment of these words from the Tudor morality play, *Lusty Juventus*. As befits the words, this is an

unashamedly jolly piece. Warlock was happy to admit admiration for composers like Irving Berlin (and indeed once described him as ‘more credible’ than Stravinsky) and this song’s jauntily rollicking piano part seems to come straight out of Broadway. Wedding it to these 16th century words, however, he once again succeeds in satisfyingly melting away the boundaries between the centuries. In his choice to set these particular words three times, could we speculate that here was a man who never intended to get old?

Following a move back to London at the end of the year, acquaintances noted a certain dissatisfaction and disillusionment with life, and during the next two years Warlock produced only a handful of original musical works. Creative slumps of this kind were nothing new and tended to coincide with prolonged stays in the capital. Unfortunately, this time there was to be no resurgence. On the morning of 17 December 1930, Peter Warlock was found dead in his flat in Chelsea, having been poisoned by several hours’ inhalation of coal gas. The inquest recorded an open verdict, although speculation and analysis of his behaviour in the days and weeks leading up to his death have led to many firm proponents of the theory of suicide. We shall never know for sure.

His friend and fellow-composer Kaikhosru Sorabji summed him up in a moving obituary in *The New Age* in January 1931, as “one of the finest musical minds of our times... a song-writer of exquisite delicacy,

jewel-like craftsmanship, and flawless rightness of instinct, ... equalled by few and surpassed by far fewer.” If Peter Warlock felt he had nothing further to offer the world, we must all be grateful for such timeless treasures as are left us from this extraordinary and unique musical mind.

Luci Briginshaw

London, April 2021

- ¹ Copley, Ian, *The Music of Peter Warlock* (London: Dobson, 1979), p35
- ² Gray, Cecil, *Peter Warlock: a memoir of Philip Heseltine* (London: Cape, 1934), p138
- ³ Copley, op. cit., p44
- ⁴ Collins, Brian, *Peter Warlock’s Music*, (www.peterwarlock.org/collinspwmusic.htm) 2001
- ⁵ Cockshott, Gerald. *Some Notes on the Songs of Peter Warlock. Music & Letters*, vol. 21, no. 3, 1940, p 247
- ⁶ Steane, JB, *Peter Warlock Songs*, Norman Bailey/Geoffrey Parsons Review, Gramophone, 1978
- ⁷ As quoted in Copley, op. cit., p63
- ⁸ Heseltine, Philip, *The Condition of Music in England*, *The New Age*, 14 June 1917
- ⁹ Gray, op. cit., p245
- ¹⁰ Copley, op. cit., p76
- ¹¹ Copley, op. cit., p40
- ¹² Copley, op. cit., p44
- ¹³ *Warlock’s tempo marking for Robin Goodfellow*

Thank You

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Poem Texts

1 The Everlasting Voices

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

O sweet everlasting Voices, be still;
Go to the guards of the heavenly fold
And bid them wander obeying your will,
Flame under flame, till Time be no more;

Have you not heard that our hearts are old,
That you call in birds, in wind on the hill,
In shaken boughs, in tide on the shore?
O sweet everlasting Voices, be still.

2 Take, O take those lips away

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

from *Measure for Measure* (1603)

Take, O take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn!
But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain!

3 Heraclitus

Callimachus (c.310-246BC)

translated from the Greek by William Cory (1823-1892)

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead;
They brought me bitter news to hear and
bitter tears to shed.
I wept, as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and
sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake,
For Death he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

4 The Water Lily

Robert Nichols (1893-1944)

The Lily floated white and red,
Pouring its scent up to the sun;
The rapt sun floating overhead
Watched no such other one.

None marked it when it spread abroad
And beautifully learned to cease:
For Beauty is its own reward,
Being a form of Peace.

5 Lullaby

Thomas Dekker (c.1572-1632)

from *The Pleasant Comodie of Patient Grissill* (1603)

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise.
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby:
Rock them, rock a lulla, lullaby.

Care is heavy, therefore sleep you;
You are care, and care must keep you.
Sleep, pretty wantons etc.

6 Take, O take those lips away (2nd setting)

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

from *Measure for Measure* (1603)

Take, O take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn!
But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain!

7 The bayly berith the bell away

Anon 15th century

The maidens came
When I was in my mother's bow'r;
I had all that I would.
The bayly berith the bell away;
The lily, the rose, the rose I lay.
The silver is white, red is the gold;
The robes they lay in fold.
The bayly berith the bell away;
The lily, the rose, the rose I lay.

And through the glass window shines the sun.
How should I love, and I so young?
The bayly berith the bell away;
The lily, the lily, the rose I lay.

8 My little sweet darling

Anon 16th century

My little sweet darling, my comfort and joy,
Sing lullaby, lulla!
In beauty surpassing the princes of Troy,
Sing lullaby, lulla!
Now suck, child, and sleep, child,
thy mother's sweet boy,
Sing lullaby, lulla!

The Gods bless and keep thee from cruel annoy,
Sing lullaby, lulla!
Sweet baby, lullaby, lulla.

9 Dedication

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586)

Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth,
Which now my breast o'ercharged to music lendeth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due:
Only in you my song begins and endeth.

Who hath the eyes which marry state with pleasure?
Who keeps the key of Nature's chiefest treasure?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due:
Only for you the heav'n forgot all measure.

Who hath the breast, whose milk
doth passions nourish?
Whose grace is such, that when it chides doth cherish?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due:
Only through you the tree of life doth flourish.

Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth,
Which now my breast o'ercharged to music lendeth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due:
Only in you my song begins and endeth.

10 The Cloths of Heaven

W B Yeats

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

11 The Singer

Edward Shanks (1892-1953)

*Edward Shanks' poem The Singer is reproduced here
with grateful acknowledgment to Mrs Susan Bellord
and Mrs Sarah Astell.*

In the dim light of the golden lamp
The singer stands and sings,
And the songs rise up like coloured bubbles
Or birds with shining wings.

And the movement of the merry or plaintive keys
Sounds in the silent air
Till the listener feels the room no more
But only music there.

But still from the sweet and rounded mouth
The delicate songs arise,
Like floating bubbles whose colours are
The coloured melodies.

12 A Sad Song

John Fletcher (1579-1625)

Aspatia's Song from The Maids Tragedy (1619)

Lay a garland on my hearse
Of the dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches bear;
Say, I died true.

My love was false, but I was firm
From my hour of birth.
Upon my buri'd body lay
Lightly, lightly, gently earth!

13 Sleep

John Fletcher

from The Woman Hater (1607)

Come, Sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving
Lock me in delight awhile;
Let some pleasing dreams beguile
All my fancies; that from thence

I may feel an influence
All my powers of care bereaving!

Though but a shadow, but a sliding,
Let me know some little joy!
We that suffer long annoy
Are contented with a thought
Through an idle fancy wrought:
O let my joys have some abiding!

14 Autumn Twilight

Arthur Symons (1865-1945)

The long September evening dies
In mist along the fields and lanes;
Only a few faint stars surprise
The lingering twilight as it wanes.

Night creeps across the darkening vale;
On the horizon tree by tree
Fades into shadowy skies as pale
As moonlight on a shadowy sea.

And down the mist-enfolded lanes,
Grown pensive now with evening,
See, lingering as the twilight wanes,
Lover with lover wandering.

15 Rest, sweet nymphs

Anon 16th century

found in Francis Pilkington's *First Booke of Songs and Ayres* (1605)

Rest, sweet nymphs, let golden sleep
Charm your star-brighter eyes,
While my lute her watch doth keep
With pleasing sympathies.
Lullaby, lullaby,
Sleep sweetly, sleep sweetly,
Let nothing affright ye,
In calm contentments lie.

Thus, dear damsels, I do give
Good night, and so am gone;
With your hearts' desires long live,
Still joy and never mourn.
Lullaby, lullaby,
Hath eased you and pleas'd you,
And sweet slumber seiz'd you,
And now to bed I hie.

16 Spring

Thomas Nashe (1567-c.1601)

from *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1600)

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-wit-ta-woo.

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play,
The shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-wit-ta-woo.

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-wit-ta-woo,
Spring, the sweet Spring!

17 To the Memory of a Great Singer

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them.
Still are they carolled and said,
On wings they are carried
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

18 Consider

Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939)

Now green comes springing o'er the heath,
And each small bird with lifted breath
Cries: "Brother, consider the joy there is in living!"
"Consider! Consider!" The jolly throstle saith.

The golden gorse, the wild thyme, frail
And sweet, the butter cowslip pale,
Cry: "Sisters, consider the peace that
comes with giving!
And render, and render your sweet and
scented breath!"

Now men come walking o'er the heath
To mark this pretty world beneath,
Bethink them: "Consider what joy might lie in living,
None striving, constraining none,
and thinking not on Death."

19 I held Love's head

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

I held Love's head while it did ache;
But so it chanced to be;
The cruel pain did his forsake,
And forthwith came to me.

Ay me! how shall my grief be stilled?
Or where else shall we find
One like to me, who must be killed
For being too too kind?

20 Pretty Ring Time

William Shakespeare

from *As You Like It* (1599)

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 springtime, 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 etc.

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 springtime etc.

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 etc.

21 Robin Goodfellow

Anon 16th Century

found in *Robin Goodfellow*,
commonly called *Hobgoblin* (1628)

And can the physician make sick men well?
And can the magician a fortune divine?
Without lily, germander, and sops-in-wine,
With sweet briar
And bonfire
And strawberry wire
And columbine.

Within and out, in and out, round as a ball,
With hither and thither, as straight as a line,
With lily, germander etc

When Saturn did live, there lived no poor,
The king and the beggar with roots did dine,
With lily, germander etc.

22 Ha'nacker Mill

Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)

Sally is gone that was so kindly
Sally is gone from Ha'nacker Hill.
And the Briar grows ever since then so blindly
And ever since then the clapper is still,
And the sweeps have fallen from Ha'nacker Mill.

Ha'nacker Hill is in Desolation:
Ruin atop and a field unploughed,
And Spirits that call on a fallen nation,
Spirits that loved her calling aloud:
Spirits abroad in a windy cloud.

Spirits that call and no one answers;
Ha'nacker's down and England's done.
Wind and Thistle for pipe and dancers
And never a ploughman under the Sun.
Never a ploughman. Never a one.

23 The Night

Hilaire Belloc

Most Holy Night, that still dost keep
The keys of all the doors of sleep,
To me when my tired eyelids close
Give thou repose.

And let the far lament of them
That chaunt the dead day's requiem
Make in my ears, who wakeful lie,
Soft lullaby.

Let them that guard the hornèd moon
By my bedside their memories croon.
So shall I have new dreams and blest
In my brief rest.

Fold your great wings about my face,
Hide dawning from my resting place,
And cheat me with your false delight,
Most Holy Night.

24 The Lover's Maze

Thomas Campion? (1567-1620)

O be still, be still, unquiet thoughts,
and rest on love's adventer!
Go no more astray, my wanton eyes,
but keep within your center!
Delight not yourselves for to stand and gaze
On the alluring looks of a beautious face,
For love is like to an endless maze,
More hard to get out than to enter.

O but why should I complain of love,
since once I have affected?
My hopes are not yet quite so dead,
but that I might be respected.
Yet her often replies say no, no, no,
It is danger to say so, so, so,
Which makes my heart very woe, woe, woe,
For fear I should be rejected.

O but wherefore should so fair a face
retain a heart so cruel?
Then despair, despair, aspiring thoughts,
to gain so rare a jewel!
O but when I cull, and clip, and kiss,
Methinks there hidden treasure is,
Which whispers in mine ears all this:
Love's flames require more fuel!

25 Cradle Song

John Phillip (dates unknown)

from *The Play of Patient Grissell* (c.1560)

Be still, my sweet sweetening, no longer do cry;
Sing lullaby, lullaby, lullaby baby:
Let dolours be fleeting, I fancy thee, I,
To rock and to lull thee, I will not delay me.
Lullaby baby, lullaby baby,
Thy nurse will tend thee, as duly as may be.

What creature now living would hasten thy woe?
Sing lullaby, lullaby, lullaby baby:
See for thy relieving, the time I bestow
To dance, and to prance thee, as prett'ly as may be.
Lullaby baby, lullaby baby,
Thy nurse will tend thee, as duly as may be.

The gods be thy shield, and comfort in need;
Sing lullaby, lullaby, lullaby baby:
They give thee good fortune, and well for to speed,
And this to desire, I will not delay me.
Lullaby baby, lullaby baby,
Thy nurse will tend thee, as duly as may be.

26 The Contented Lover

James Mabbe (1572-1642)

from his translation of *Celestina* by
Fernando de Roja (1499)

Now sleep, and take they rest,
Once grieved and pained wight,
Since she now loves thee best
Who is thy heart's delight.

Let joy be thy soul's guest,
And care be banished quite,
Since she hath thee expressed
To be her favourite.

27 And wilt thou leave me thus?

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542)

And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay, for shame!
To save thee from the blame
Of all my grief and grame.
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath given thee my heart
Never for to depart
Neither for pain nor smart:
And wilt thou leave etc.

And wilt thou leave me thus,
And have no more pity
On him that loveth thee?
Alas, thy cruelty!
And wilt thou leave etc.

28 Youth

Robert Wever (dates unknown)

from *Lusty Juventus* (c.1560)

In an arbour green asleep whereas I lay,
The birds sang sweet in the middes of the day;
I dreamèd fast of mirth and play:
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

Methought I walkèd still to and fro,
And from her company I could not go;
But when I waked it was not so:
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

Therefore my heart is surely pight
Of her alone to have a sight,
Which is my joy and heart's delight:
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.



ARTIST

Luci Briginshaw Soprano

Luci Briginshaw was the winner of the Audience Prize and Second Prize at the inaugural Opera: By Voice Alone Competition in 2019. She sings regularly with English Touring Opera, most recently as Fennimore in Weill's *Der Silbersee*, the title role in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* and covering Konstanze in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Seraglio* and The Queen of Shemakha in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel*.

Luci has also covered *The Queen of the Night* in *The Magic Flute* for Glyndebourne and sung live on *In Tune* for BBC Radio 3. Her other opera roles include Aithra (*Die Ägyptische Helena*), Violetta (*La Traviata*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Mimi (*La Bohème*), Leila (*Les pêcheurs de perle*) and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*). She has also created several opera roles in contemporary works by Martyn Harry, Alex Groves and Mario Ferraro. Luci has lived and worked in London since completing her degree in Music from King's College, where she was a first-study pianist as well as singer.

www.lucibriginshaw.co.uk

BIOGRAPHIES

Eleanor Meynell Piano

Eleanor Meynell won a scholarship to Chetham's School of Music, and during her time there was a prize-winner in several national and international competitions, including 1st prize at Bromsgrove Young Musician of the Year at age 15. She was also awarded both the ARCM and LGSM diplomas while still at school.

Eleanor has broadcast as a soloist and chamber musician on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM and Radio Belfast London, and is currently on the staff at Goldsmiths College and Trinity Laban College of Music, where she accompanies and coaches. In 2015 she made her Wigmore Hall debut, playing songs by Schubert and Brahms and receiving critical acclaim in *The Times*.

Eleanor has recorded a solo CD of composers associated with Leipzig, regularly performs recitals and concertos in the UK, and is a founding member of the chamber group enSEmble26, bringing high-quality classical music concerts to her local community in Sydenham, London.

www.eleanormeynell.com



PETER WARLOCK SONGBOOK

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