



CONVIVIVM  
RECORDS

*Clive Osgood*

THREE  
SHAKESPEARE  
SONGS

*Bengt Ollén & Sofia Vokalensemble*

## Tracklist

# THREE SHAKESPEARE SONGS

*from*

'As You Like It'

- 1 Blow, blow, thou winter wind . . . . 4.15
- 2 Under the greenwood tree . . . . 4.07
- 3 It was a lover and his lass . . . . 4.04

Total running time . . . . . 12.26

## Programme Note

These three contrasting songs for a capella choir take their words from Shakespeare's pastoral comedy play, 'As You Like It'. They were commissioned by the Lewes based Esterházy Chamber Choir in 2008, and performed there in concert alongside other Shakespeare adaptations from his exact contemporaries, such as Thomas Morley, to modern interpretations by George Shearing.

*Blow, blow, thou winter wind* is a song that appears in Act two, scene seven of the play (shortly after the famous lines 'All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players'). In the song the character Amiens compares the bitter winter wind with the ingratitude of humans. A general air of melancholy is contrasted by several utterances of 'sing heigh-ho' and 'this life is most jolly'. This setting starts with menacing chord clusters to introduce the wintry wind before setting up various imitative entries between the tenor and soprano parts. The song ends without any real resolution as the sopranos sustain their last note.

After the bleak mood of the first song, *Under the greenwood tree* is introduced by the warm tones of a male voice choir before being joined by the upper voices in a melody that is broadly romantic in style. Alluding to the sounds of the 'sweet bird's throat', a solo soprano line is then added to the texture. The song ends looking back to the wintry mood of the first song. The text appears in act two scene five of the play, sung again by Amiens.

The mood continues to lighten with the last song of the set. In partial homage to the wonderful jazz-inspired Shakespeare interpretations by George Shearing and John Rutter, *It was a lover and his lass* is in a popular jazz style with swung rhythms and blues harmonies. The song, from act five of the play, is written for double choir with moments of call and response. After several refrains the song eventually builds to a climax with the sopranos reaching a top B before resolving on a final G major chord.

## *Texts*

### **Blow, blow, thou winter wind**

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude;  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.

*Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!  
This life is most jolly.*

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,  
That dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot:  
Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remembered not.

*Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!  
This life is most jolly.*

## *Texts*

### **Under the greenwood tree**

Under the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And turn his merry note  
Unto the sweet bird's throat,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither:  
Here shall he see  
No enemy  
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun  
And loves to live i' the sun,  
Seeking the food he eats,  
And pleased with what he gets,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither:  
Here shall he see  
No enemy  
But winter and rough weather.

## *Texts*

### **It was a lover and his lass**

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 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,  
Those pretty country folks would lie,  
*In springtime, the only pretty ring time,*  
*When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;*  
*Sweet lovers love the spring.*



## *Texts*

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 springtime, the only pretty ring time,*  
*When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;*  
*Sweet lovers love the spring.*

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





## *Biographies*

### Clive Osgood

Clive Osgood studied Music at Bangor University before completing a Master's degree in Musicology at Cardiff University. After teacher training in London, he spent a year as an organ scholar at Salisbury Cathedral. More recently he completed a second Master's degree in Composition at the University of Surrey.

His written output includes a variety of music for choirs, orchestras and chamber groups. Choral music constitutes the largest part of his work and he has a particular interest in church music.

Clive's music is in the classical tradition – injected with elements of jazz harmony and the rhythmic vitality of Latin American music.

He is currently Director of Music and Organist at the Parish Church of St Bartholomew's in Haslemere, Surrey and teaches 'A' Level Music at Reed's School, Cobham. He is available for tuition in Piano, Jazz Piano, Organ and music theory.

## *Biographies*

### Sofia Vokalensemble

In 1995, Sofia Vokalensemble was founded in Stockholm, Sweden by Bengt Ollén, who continues to be their committed artistic director. Performances are characterised by a warm, lyrical Swedish choral sound and a stage presence that has taken the ensemble far in international competitions, tours and concerts.

Music by Bach, Poulenc, Pärt and Schnittke are frequently featured. The choir has also premiered original work by Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, Fredrik Sixten, Jacob Mühlrad, Sven-David Sandström, Matthew Peterson and Karin Rehnqvist, to name a few. Sofia Vokalensemble is characterised by their great love for music, their pursuit of excellence and their close interaction with their conductor – always with a lot of heart, regardless if the occasion is a regular rehearsal, training camp, travelling to a venue or behind the scenes before a competition. And, of course, on stage together.



#### **Sopranos**

Marie Hagenfeldt Eek,  
Sara Nyberg,  
Ebba Ulfspärre,  
Susan Radif, Lisa Alf,  
Saga Edgren,  
Alma Heinemann

#### **Altos**

Helena Falsin,  
Fanny Papay,  
Åsa Pettersson,  
Ida Söderqvist,  
Ida Hillerdal,  
Nicoline Rodrick Solberg,  
Clara Curman,  
Clara Lindsjö

#### **Tenors**

Harald Carlinger,  
Gustaf Schöldt,  
Viktor Olsson,  
Carl Jonas Wiklander,  
Daniel Möller,  
Anders Nilsson,  
Tomas Icikzonas

#### **Bass**

Erik Hedmo, Mathias Roth,  
Jonas Roth, Eugen Alm,  
Valerie Bjelkeborn





## *Biographies*

### Bengt Ollén

Bengt Ollén is the founder and musical director of Sofia Vokalensemble. Since 1995 he has led the ensemble with great passion and undying enthusiasm. His leadership has helped shape Sofia Vokalensemble into a distinctive choir brimming with positive energy.

Bengt Ollén studied under Gösta Ohlin and Gunnar Eriksson at the Academy of Music and Drama in Gothenburg. Since 1981 he has founded several successful choirs and further honed his skills. Ollén is in demand as an adjudicator in competitions, a conductor at festivals, workshops and concerts, both nationally and internationally and also as a teacher of conducting. Between the years 1994 and 2018, he was a teacher of choral singing at the well-known secondary school Stockholms Musikgymnasium. His choral

ensembles have been highly successful at competitions around the world.

Constantly strengthening the choir's group dynamics has been one of Bengt Ollén's hallmarks. To this end, he uses creative improvisation techniques that produce exciting concert pieces and melody interpretations. He never ceases to encourage communication between the singers, both musically and outside rehearsals. Ollén firmly believes that making good music is a group effort.

The performances of Sofia Vokalensemble under Bengt Ollén's musical direction are characterised by a Swedish choral sound, stage presence and a joy of singing that has proven successful in international competitions and concerts all over the world.

## *Credits*

**Performed by** Sofia Vokalensemble

**Conductor** Bengt Ollén

**Composer** Clive Osgood

## *Production*

**Recorded in** Sofia kyrka (Sofia Church), Stockholm, October 18th 2023

**Audio & Video production**

Esbjörn Ahlsén & Mathias Roth

**Creative Designer**

Mike Cooter

**Photography**

Mathias Roth

**Executive Producer**

Adrian Green



[www.sofiavokalensemble.com](http://www.sofiavokalensemble.com)

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