CHANDOS COLLECT

Ivor Novello
SONGS

CHAN 6677

Marilyn Hill Smith
soprano

Chandos Concert Orchestra
Stuart Barry

Ivor Novello (1893–1951)

1	**Some Day My Heart Will Awake** from *King's Rhapsody*	3:00
2	**Primrose** from *The Dancing Years*	2:12
3	**Love Is My Reason** from *Perchance to Dream*	2:54
4	**Dark Music** from *Arc de Triomphe*	4:07
5	**The Little Damozel**	2:53
6	**When the Gypsy Played** from *Glamorous Night*	5:14
7	**On Such a Night as This** from *Gay's the Word*	3:22
8	**Fly Home, Little Heart** from *King's Rhapsody*	3:41
9	**Keep the Home Fires Burning** ('Till the Boys Come Home)	3:24
10	**Music in May** from *Careless Rapture*	2:45
11	**A Violin Began to Play** from *King's Rhapsody*	4:18
12	**Spring of the Year**	2:10
13	**My Dearest Dear** from *The Dancing Years*	2:58
14	**Finder, Please Return** from *Gay's the Word*	3:34
15	**Look in My Heart** from *Valley of Song*	3:05
16	**When I Curtsied to the King** from *Perchance to Dream*	3:22

17	**We'll Gather Lilacs** from *Perchance to Dream*	5:06
18	**Fairy Laughter**	1:47
19	**Glamorous Night** from *Glamorous Night*	4:22
20	**Why Is There Ever Goodbye?** from *Careless Rapture*	3:20
		TT 68:47

Marilyn Hill Smith soprano
Chandos Concert Orchestra
Michael Davies leader
Gordon Langford piano
Stuart Barry

Ivor Novello: Songs

Ivor Novello is one of the pinnacles of the British musical theatre, famed throughout the English-speaking world as the composer and writer of seven operettas which successively dominated the West End stage for almost twenty years. Just as today the public flocks to see a musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber, so between 1935 and 1952 people were eager to enjoy the next operetta by Novello, escaping the harsh reality of two World Wars and post-war depression by being temporarily transported to a theatrical fantasy world which offered a message of hope for the future. Each operetta contained a wealth of romantic music, its songs displaying an appealing melodic simplicity and richness of harmony which complemented the unashamedly sentimental lyrics by Christopher Hassall. The recipe provided welcome relief and comfort during those troubled years, and explains why Ivor Novello became a national hero who continues to delight millions of devotees today.

Spring of the Year was Novello's first composition to be published – and the composer was only sixteen. It is a frivolous waltz-song with vocal acrobatics not dissimilar to those previously displayed in the waltz-song from Edward German's operetta *Tom Jones*. Its first performance at an Albert Hall Saturday ballad concert was badly received, and Novello chose a more classical style for his second published song, **The Little Damozel**, which appealed to every notable soprano of the day, including Amelita Galli-Curci. Hits flowed from his pen, including the nursery song **Fairy Laughter**. With words by Douglas Furber, it suggests to naughty boys everywhere why fairies laugh and cry! However, the song which made the young Novello rich and famous overnight was his patriotic **Keep the Home Fires Burning**, also known by its last line, ''Till the Boys Come Home'. An American poet, Lena Guilbert Ford, wrote the words as a message of hope to both those fighting in the First World War and those waiting at home. It rapidly took its place alongside two other British Army marching songs: 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' and 'Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag'.

The songs which Novello wrote for his operettas were totally different from his earlier compositions. Expansive melodic lines combined with lush harmonies, enhanced by orchestration rich in *divisi* string texture, produced a romantic sound which became

the Novello hallmark. The young American singer Mary Ellis, one of Novello's leading ladies, made her debut in the operetta *Glamorous Night* (1935) singing the two songs **Glamorous Night** and **When the Gypsy Played**.

Two highlights from the score of *Careless Rapture* (1936) are probably the most well-known. The plaintive song **Why Is There Ever Goodbye?** was introduced by another leading lady, Olive Gilbert, who also became Novello's closest friend. Like so many of Novello's songs in a minor key, it echoes the bitter-sweet quality of Franz Lehár.

A fine contrast is offered by the charming song **Music in May** in waltz time – the waltz-song being a favourite of Novello's, found in every operetta.

In *The Dancing Years* (1939), undoubtedly the most popular and well-known Novello operetta, every song is a gem. Mary Ellis returned to appear opposite Novello – the only composer to star (but never sing!) in most of his own stage works. Two much-loved songs dispel the accusation that every song in the score is in waltz time. **My Dearest Dear** achieves the perfect balance between words and music to express sentimentality, and **Primrose** captures the lightness of English operetta at its very best.

The story of *Arc de Triomphe* (1943) is based on the real-life experience of the operatic soprano Mary Garden, but the operetta contained perhaps too many sentimental songs for its own good! **Dark Music** reunited Elisabeth Welch with Novello after her legendary debut in *Glamorous Night*. The song demonstrates Novello's love of and respect for two other composers of operetta, Rudolf Friml and Sigmund Romberg.

Novello's gift for romantic song-writing surpasses itself in three famous songs from the score of *Perchance to Dream* (1945). The beautifully poised waltz-song **Love Is My Reason**, complete with the stylistic Viennese lift of phrasing, contrasts admirably with the whimsical story **When I Curtsied to the King**. However, the most famous song associated with Novello is surely **We'll Gather Lilacs**, for its sentiments were carried in the hearts and minds of every soldier and sweetheart during the Second World War; like 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' during the First World War the song provided hope and comfort.

In *King's Rhapsody* (1949), as in none of his other operettas, Novello adopted a melancholic mood, as a result of post-war depression, and the sad content of the dramatic plot did not provide his fans with the usual message of hope and escapism. The three songs **Fly Home, Little Heart**, **Some Day My Heart Will Awake** and **A Violin Began to Play** reflect this poignantly, and hint at the influence on Novello of Lehár and Kálmán.

Novello wrote the majority of the songs in *Gay's the Word* (1951), with witty lyrics by Alan Melville, for his trouper friend Cicely Courtneidge, to produce a more 'up-tempo' show style than in any of his other stage works. Yet Novello could still not resist slipping the romantic **On Such a Night as This** and **Finder, Please Return** into the score.

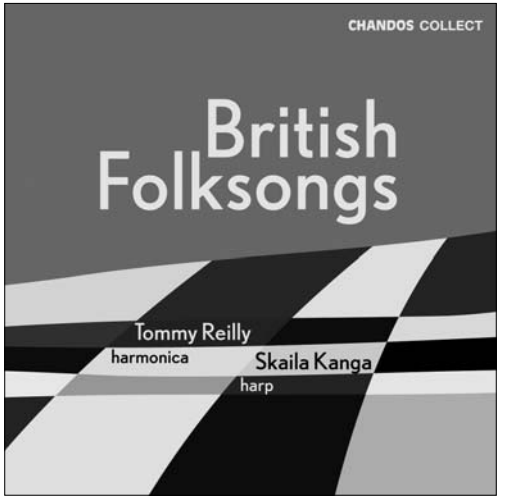
Set in the valleys of Novello's native Wales, the musical *Valley of Song* was originally called 'Lily of the Valley', the manuscript lying unfinished at his side when Novello died on 5 March 1951. In 1964 Ronald Hanmer skilfully completed the score, which contains the slow waltz-song **Look in My Heart** epitomising Novello's familiar and hugely popular song-writing style.

© Ian McMillan

Also available

The King's Singers:
Original Debut Recording
CHAN 6562

Also available



British Folksongs
CHAN 6643

Also available

Favourite English Songs
CHAN 6653

You can now purchase Chandos CDs online at our website: www.chandos.net
For mail order enquiries contact Liz: 0845 370 4994

Any requests to license tracks from this CD or any other Chandos discs should be made direct to the Finance Director, Chandos Records Ltd, at the address below.

Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House, 1 Commerce Park, Commerce Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, UK. E-mail: enquiries@chandos.net
Telephone: + 44 (0)1206 225 200 Fax: + 44 (0)1206 225 201

Recording producer Tim Oldham
Sound engineer Richard Lee
Assistant engineer Richard Smoker
Editor Richard Lee
Recording venue St Jude's Church, Central Square, London; 1 and 2 May 1992
Design and typesetting Cassidy Rayne Creative
Copyright Warner Chappell Music Ltd (tracks 1–4, 6–11, 13, 14, 16–20), Boosey & Hawkes Ltd (tracks 5 and 12), EMI Music Publishing Ltd (track 15)
℗ 1993 Chandos Records Ltd
© 2006 Chandos Records Ltd
Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO 2 8HX, England
Printed in the EU

CHANDOS COLLECT **CHAN 6677**

Ivor Novello (1893–1951)

1	Some Day My Heart Will Awake	3:00
2	Primrose	2:12
3	Love Is My Reason	2:54
4	Dark Music	4:07
5	The Little Damozel	2:53
6	When the Gypsy Played	5:14
7	On Such a Night as This	3:22
8	Fly Home, Little Heart	3:41
9	Keep the Home Fires Burning ('Till the Boys Come Home)	3:24
10	Music in May	2:45
11	A Violin Began to Play	4:18
12	Spring of the Year	2:10
13	My Dearest Dear	2:58
14	Finder, Please Return	3:34
15	Look in My Heart	3:05
16	When I Curtsied to the King	3:22
17	We'll Gather Lilacs	5:06
18	Fairy Laughter	1:47
19	Glamorous Night	4:22
20	Why Is There Ever Goodbye?	3:20
		TT 68:47

Printed in the EU | MCPS
0 95115 66772 9
LC 7038 | DDD | TT 68:47

Marilyn Hill Smith soprano
Chandos Concert Orchestra
Michael Davies leader
Gordon Langford piano
Stuart Barry

℗ 1993 Chandos Records Ltd © 2006 Chandos Records Ltd
Chandos Records Ltd • Colchester • Essex • England

IVOR NOVELLO: SONGS - Smith/Chandos Concert Orchestra/Barry
CHANDOS CHAN 6677