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# ROMANCE DU SOIR

1.	Calme des Nuits, Op.68 No.1	Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)	[3.16]
2.	Music, When Soft Voices Die	Edward Bairstow (1874-1946)	[2.15]
3.	O Happy Eyes, Op.18 No.1	Edward Elgar (1857-1934)	[3.06]
4.	Liebe, Op.17 No.2 D.983a	Franz Schubert (1797-1828)	[2.41]
5.	Love, Op.18 No 2	Edward Elgar	[2.53]
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7.	Waldesnacht, Op.62 No.3	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)	[5.12]
8.	Toutes les Nuitz	Orlande de Lassus (1532-1594)	[3.27]
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11.	Ritornelle, Op.65 No.1	Robert Schumann (1810-1856)	[2.56]
12.	Weep, Weep Mine Eyes	John Wilbye	[5.43]
13.	Traumlicht, Op.123 No.2	Richard Strauss (1864-1949)	[5.47]
14 -	17. A Lover's Journey	Libby Larsen (b.1950)	
	i. In the Still Garden		[2.52]
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	iv. Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Da	ay?	[2.57]

18. Romance du Soir, Op.118	Camille Saint-Saëns	[2.53]
19. The Long Day Closes	Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)	[4.21]
Total Timings		[69.43]

#### THE KING'S SINGERS

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## ARTISTS' NOTE

It was a joy to record this album of immediately appealing, wonderful music, plugging the gap between our recent serious and light recordings. Much of the repertoire has been in the group's library for some time and we were keen to record these golden oldies alongside brand new discoveries. The concept for this album grew from these two opposing ends. The starting point was the ever popular Sérénade d'Hiver, a charming piece which delights audiences wherever we sing it. Looking at the rest of Saint-Saëns' repertoire we found the piece which gives the album its title, Romance du Soir, a quartet, but a remarkably lush one. Next came English music from Elgar, whose feelings for love went far beyond the reputation of most buttoned-up Edwardian gentlemen, and this

was followed by pieces by some of the great Romantic German composers - Brahms, Schubert and Schumann. Our concerts most often provide a variety of sounds, colours and textures and this idea has filtered through onto CD with a few Renaissance pieces amongst the 19th and early 20th century music. What a wonderful excuse, then, to record the two outstanding madrigals by Wilbye, *Draw on Sweet Night*, and *Weep, Weep Mine Eyes!* Completing the programme we turned to the music of the American Libby Larsen, whose understanding and grasp of choral writing shines through in *A Lover's Journey*, which she wrote for us in 2001.

The King's Singers



#### PROGRAMME NOTE

By the time Elgar wrote his partsong O Happy Eyes in 1889, fresh ideas about devising concert programmes had taken firm root in the minds of composers, their publishers and audiences. Lofty works from the past, or original pieces inspired by them, were now parcelled together with new compositions, the resulting package tacitly recognised as 'classical music'. The gap between 'serious' and 'light' music, meanwhile, continued to widen. Many of the pieces in this programme, those by Elgar, Sullivan, Bairstow and Saint-Saëns expressively eloquent among them, occupied border territories between the high classics and the immediately popular. All of them speak directly to audiences, whether of romantic love, love unrequited, the pain of separation or the imaginary landscapes of evening and the night.

Five years before *O Happy Eyes* entered the world, one of Elgar's early pieces, *Sevillana*, was included on the bill for a concert by the 'orchestral band' of the Crystal Palace. It stood in company with a waltz by the junior Johann Strauss, a solo by the fashionable south London venue's resident cornet virtuoso, and Louis Gregh's tuneful *Coquetterie*. Elgar, no doubt propelled by the accolade of a Crystal Palace performance,

received a further confidence boost when one of his piano pupils accepted his proposal of marriage. Caroline Alice Roberts, daughter of major-general Sir Henry Gee Roberts, known for his part in the 'effective' suppression of the Indian Mutiny, inhabited what one biographer has described as a 'world of letters'. It was also a world of privilege and rigid class distinctions, one to which Elgar, the Roman Catholic son of a shopkeeper was naturally excluded. The couple married, against Roberts family wishes, in May 1889.

As part of their marital union, Elgar set Alice's poem, *O Happy Eyes* in November, revising his partsong in 1894 when the publishing firm of Novello offered three guineas for its copyright. It finally appeared in print in 1907, issued together with *Love*, a fine setting of Arthur Maquarie's poem written on the composer's fiftieth birthday and dedicated to Alice, by now Lady Elgar. 'I am so glad for Mother's sake that Father has been knighted,' the Elgars' daughter, Carice, is said to have noted. 'You see - it puts her back where she was.' Love reflects the blend of craftsmanship and inspiration that had placed Elgar at the summit of Edwardian musical life: both qualities emerge in his treatment of Maquarie's line 'Cease to be'.

repeated four times in the bass line and richly decorated in the tenor part's flowing melody.

Few poems have been set with such frequency or variable results in the great repertory of English partsong as Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Music, When Soft Voices Die.* Edward Bairstow's version, for two tenor and two bass parts, is a miniature masterpiece of the partsong genre. The piece, published by Hawkes & Sons in 1929, elevates the virtue of textural simplicity in setting evocative, beautifully turned poetry to music. It also underlines Bairstow's innate feeling for harmonic colour and its affective powers: listen, for example, to the striking initial chordal shift and subsequent use of unprepared dissonance for 'Odours, when sweet violets sicken'.

While the combination of Chorley and Sullivan may not resonate widely today, it counted for much before the more familiar partnership of Gilbert and Sullivan took hold in the 1870s. Henry Fothergill Chorley, undeniably influential as a music critic and relentlessly ineffectual as a novelist and opera librettist, supplied the words for Arthur Sullivan's *Kenilworth* in 1864. Although their next venture, an opera originally entitled *The Sapphire Necklace*, was never performed, Chorley and Sullivan scored one of the most enduring hits of

the Victorian partsong literature following the 1868 publication of *The Long Day Closes*. The work's rich harmonic palette, its sonorous scoring for male voices and contemplative reflection on death's hour satisfied both the market demand for popular secular choral compositions and prevailing vogue for decorous expressions of mourning and grief.

Dictionary definitions of the term partsong generally stress its Anglo-Saxon roots and evolution as a catchall description of short, unaccompanied pieces for choral voices, including everything from 17th and 18th century glees and catches to Arthur Sullivan's Five Sacred Partsongs of 1871. The rise of the 19th choral society movement, coupled with a revival of interest in music of the past, led to the creation of partsongs by the thousand, many of them styled as 'madrigals'. Camille Saint-Saëns' output of secular partsongs fuelled demand from male voice choral societies, the so-called Orphéons, which regularly gathered to compete in festivals held throughout France.

His Sérénade d'hiver, written for choir of four male voice parts in 1867 and published the following year, provided 'Orphéonistes' with a delightful showpiece, one that revels in the playful

assonance and suggestive lines in Henri Cazalis' poem. It's hard to credit that the masked chorus singing so lustily here beneath a lady's window is solely populated with 'gentle men, Full of honour and courtesy'! *Calme des nuits* was published in 1883 as the first of a pair of choruses, its sustained lines, spare textures and stirring emotional gear-shift at 'L'éclat du soleil' demanding much of the amateur choirs for which it was intended. The *Romance du soir*, composed for mixed chorus in 1902 to a text by Jean-Louis Croze, recalls a gentler age disturbed only by heavenly sounds of the 'evening romance' and 'happy children'.

Germany's tradition of romantic partsongs effectively began on 24 January 1809 when Karl Friedrich Zelter, director of Berlin's Singakademie, convened his first 'Liedertafel'. The first gathering - of 25 poets, composers and singers - developed into a regular event, at which new and occasionally ancient partsongs were performed over dinner. Other singing societies (less exclusive than Zelter's although generally still limited to men only) soon came to life, part of a wider cultural network that helped form and spread ideas of German national identity in the decades before and after the revolutionary year of 1848. Schubert was naturally drawn to what one scholar

has described as the 'gregarious music-making' of partsongs. His *Liebe*, a setting for two tenors and two basses of verses from Friedrich Schiller's affective hymn *Der Triumph der Liebe*, distills the essence of romantic love. Within a song of short span and wistful tranquility, the composer vividly intensifies 'das Ach!', the 'alas' of 'mournful nightingales'. The work, complete with optional piano or guitar accompaniment, first appeared in one of three sets of Schubert male-voice partsongs published in 1823.

Anyone in search of rare musical treasure should be captivated by Schumann's Die Rose stand im Tau, the first and finest in an anthology of seven partsongs on texts by Friedrich Rückert, published in 1849 under the title Ritornelle in canonischen Weisen ('Ritornelle in canonic styles') Op.65. The pieces were written two years earlier for the Dresden Liedertafel, which Schumann briefly served as 'Liedmeister': the position 'restored in me my ability to direct, which, in my nervous hypochondria.' he noted at the time. 'I thought was completely shattered'. Die Rose stand im Tau. for baritone soloist and male chorus of two tenor. baritone and two bass parts, blends the cerebral demands of musical canon with Rückert's artless, folk-like verse to form a richly expressive hymn to the sun's transformative power. 'The eminently convivial [Liedertafel] medium,' observes Schumann scholar John Daverio, 'was hardly immune to a strong dose of compositional artifice.'

Simplicity is key to both Johannes Brahms's Waldesnacht, the third of seven Lieder for mixed amateur choir, and Richard Strauss's male-voice chorus Traumlicht. There is great deal of the chorale about Waldesnacht, with its repeated verses and solid opening. Yet Brahms subverts the work's hymn-like tread by introducing rhythmic variety in the shape of syncopations and an unexpected moment of silence to its middle section. Traumlicht represents a genuine late flowering of the Liedertafel movement, created in 1935 at a time when so many German choirs were adopting new songs of nationalist aggression and Nazi ideology. Here, Strauss initially echoes the classic close-harmony sound of the Männergesangverein ('Male song association') before adding a noble richness of texture and expressive nuance to his composition.

It's practically impossible to resist a song dedicated to 'dearest little Elsie of my heart'! If the lyrics of Ludwig Senfl's *Ach Elslein, liebes Elselein mein* fail to hit the spot, then his plangent music almost certainly will. Martin Luther considered the Basel-born composer as being

'gifted and graced by God with the art of music', a view of Senfl apparently shared by such illustrious employers as Emperor Maximilian I and Duke William IV of Bavaria. *Ach Elslein* was one of 121 new songs by 'famous' composers published in Nuremburg in 1534 by Hans Ott under imperial privilege.

Orlande de Lassus, born in the Franco-Flemish city of Mons in the early 1530s, achieved international fame as maestro di cappella at the Bavarian court, which he served from 1556 until his death thirty-eight years later. Despite his long tenure in Munich, Lassus, as the American musicologist James Haar neatly puts it, 'never entirely let off being a Frenchman'. He wrote around 150 chansons, mostly published in the Netherlands and Paris and widely reprinted elsewhere. The five-part *Toutes les nuitz*, published in Rome in 1563, matches the elegance and subtle stresses of Clément Marot's tender love poetry.

Beyond sighting the evidence of a tiny metal plaque, visitors to Colchester could easily pass through the ancient town without discovering that it was home to one of England's greatest madrigalists. John Wilbye, a musician in service to the Catholic Kytson family, spent the final decade of his life in the 'great brick house' of Lady Rivers, opposite the Colchester churchyard where it is

believed he lies buried. Weep, weep mine eyes and the peerless Draw on sweet night were both published in London in 1609, part of an all-Wilbye collection offered for sale as 'The Second Set of Madrigals ... apt both for Viols and Voices'. The emotional range of Draw on sweet night, conditioned by its two clear shifts from major to minor mode and carefully ordered melodic repetitions, fully reflects the wistful melancholia of Wilbye's verse.

Andrew Stewart

## A LOVER'S JOURNEY

A Lover's Journey is a set of four pieces which chronicle the extraordinarily commonplace yet supremely elegant story of love and valentining. They are settings of three texts by William Shakespeare and one text by James Joyce, published by William Shakespeare and company in 1915. When the concert date for the premiere of our new piece was set for February the 14th, I began to search for appropriate texts and remembered Ophelia's song from Hamlet 'Good morrow! 'Tis St. Valentine's Day.' In reading about the texts' origins I came upon a curious custom practiced in some parts of Great Britain and Italy, whereby before sunrise on St. Valentine's Day, unmarried women

stand by their window, sometimes for hours, watching for a man to pass by. It's said that the first man they see (or more wisely someone who looks like him) will marry them within a year.

I decided to play with the theme in A Lover's Journey. I created four pieces beginning with the poem 'Simples' by James Joyce. Set in a moonlit garden, the lover is bedazzled by a young woman, his "bella bionda." The lover repeats these words to himself over and over again, silently summoning her. The second, quiet piece Good morrow! 'Tis Saint Valentine's Day takes place at sunrise. In it the lovers meet and undo each other. The third piece is a brief, insistent rhythmic outcry, setting words from The Taming of the Shrew 'Will you, nill you, I will marry you.' And finally, Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day completes the lover's Journey.

This piece is my Valentine to The King's Singers.

Libby Larsen, January 2001

# **BIOGRAPHY**

#### LIBBY LARSEN

Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America's most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 400 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over twelve operas. Grammy Award winning and widely recorded, including over fifty CD's of her work, she is constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, and has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory.

As a vigorous, articulate advocate for the music and musicians of our time, in 1973 Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composer's Forum, which has become an invaluable aid for composers in a transitional time for American arts. A former holder of the Papamarkou Chair at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, Larsen has also held residencies with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony and the Colorado Symphony.



@ Ann Marsden

#### **TEXTS**

#### 1 Calme des Nuits

Calme des nuits, fraîcheur des soirs, Vaste scintillement des mondes, Grand silence des antres noirs Vous charmez les âmes profondes. L'éclat du soleil, la gaité, Le bruit plaisent aux plus futiles; Le poète seul est hanté Par l'amour des choses tranquilles.

Calmness of night, coolness of evening, Vast sparkling of worlds, Great silence of dark caverns, You charm the deeper souls. The flash of sunlight, merriment, And noise please those more frivolous; Only the poet is haunted By the love of quiet things.

#### 2 Music, When soft voices die

Music, when soft voices die, Vibrates in the memory. Odours, when sweet violets sicken, Life within the sense they quicken, Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, are heaped for the beloved's bed; and so thy thoughts, when thou art gone. Love itself shall slumber on

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

## **3 O Happy Eyes**

O happy eyes, for you will see My love, my lady pass today; What I may not, that may you say And ask for answer daringly. O happy eyes.

O happy flow'rs that touch her dress, That touch her dress and take her smile, O whisper to her all the while Some words of love in idleness. O happy flowers.

O happy airs that touch her cheek, And lightly kiss and float away, So carelessly as if in play, Why take ye all the joy I seek?

O happy eyes my love to see, Alas! alas! I may not greet With word or touch my lady sweet; More happy eyes, say all for me.

Caroline Alice Elgar (1848-1920)

#### 4 Liebe

Liebe rauscht der Silberbach, Liebe lehrt ihn sanfter wallen; Seele haucht sie in das Ach! Klagenreicher Nachtigallen; Liebe, Liebe lispelt nur Auf der Laute der Natur.

Weisheit mit dem Sonnenblick, Weisheit große Göttin tritt zurück, Weiche vor der Liebe. Nie Erob'rern, Fürsten nie, Beugtest du ein Sklavenknie, Beug es ietzt der Liebe.

from Der Triumph der Liebe, Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805)

The silver stream murmurs with love; Love teaches it to flow softer. Love buffets the soul to the alas! Of mournful nightingales; Love, love whispers only On the lute of nature.

Wisdom with your sunny glance, Wisdom, great goddess, step back; Retreat to make way for love. Never to conquerers, never to princes You bent your knee like a slave. Now bend it for love.

## 5 Love

Like the rosy northern glow Flushing on a moonless night Where the world is level snow, So thy light.

In my time of outer gloom
Thou didst come, a tender lure;
Thou, when life was but a tomb,
Beamedst pure.
Thus I looked to heaven again,
Yearning up with eager eyes,
As sunflow'rs after dreary rain
Drink the skies

Oh glow on and brighter glow, Let me ever gaze on thee, Lest I lose warm hope and so Cease to be

Arthur Macquarie (1874 - ??)

## 6 Draw on sweet night

Draw on, sweet night, best friend unto those cares That do arise from painful melancholy. My life so ill through want of comfort fares, that unto thee I consecrate it wholly. Sweet night, draw on My griefs when they be told to shades and darkness find some ease from paining, And while thou all in silence dost enfold, I then shall have best time for my complaining.

#### Waldesnacht

Waldesnacht, du wunderkühle, Die ich tausend Male grüß', Nach dem lauten Weltgewühle, O wie ist dein Rauschen süß! Träumerisch die müden Glieder, Berg' ich weich ins Moos, Und mir ist, als würd' ich wieder All der irren Qualen los.

Fernes Flötenlied, vertöne,
Das ein weites Sehnen rührt,
Die Gedanken in die Schöne,
Ach, missgönte Ferne führt!
Laß die Waldesnacht mich wiegen,
Stillen jede Pein,
Und ein seliges Genügen
Saug' ich mit den Düften ein.

In dem heimlich engen Kreisen, Wir dir wohl, du wildes Herz, Und ein Friede schwebt mit leisen Flügelschlägen niederwärts. Singet, holde Vögellieder, Mich in Schlummer sacht! Irre Qualen, löst euch wieder; Wildes Herz, nun gute Nacht!

Paul Heyse (1830-1914)

Woodland night, so magic and cool, A thousandfold I greet you; After the loud turmoil of the world, O, how sweet is your rusting! Dreamily I nestle my weary limbs In your soft moss, And it is as if I were freed again From all my maddening torments.

Sound distant flute song
That stirs a great longing
And leads my thoughts into the lovely,
Ah, so bitterly envied distance.
Let the woodland night lull me,
Relieve all pain,
And a blissful contentment
I breathe in with thy fragrances.

In these quiet, close confines You will heal, wild heart, And a peace floats downwards On soft beating wings. Sing me, lovely birdsongs, Into gentle slumber! Maddening torments, be gone, Turbulent heart, now goodnight!

#### 8 Toutes les nuitz

Toutes les nuitz que sans vous je me couche, Pensant à vous ne fais que sommeiller, Et en rêvant jusques au réveiller Incessamment vous quiers parmi la couche, Et bien souvent au lieu de votre bouche En soupirant je baise l'oreiller.

Every night that I go to bed without you, thinking of you, I sleep restlessly; dreaming until I awake I continually look for you among the bedclothes, and all too often, for want of your mouth, sighing I kiss the pillow.

Translation © Clifford Bartlett

#### 9 Sérénade d'hiver

La, Ia, Ia, etc. Nous venons pour chanter, Madame, La Sérénade en votre honneur: Puissions-nous avoir le bonheur Que la chanson plaise à votre âme.

Toutes les portes nous sont closes, Que l'âme du moins s'ouvre à nous, Qui ne demandons à genoux Qu'un sourire à vos lèvres roses.

Il vente, il fait froid, mais qu'importe Si votre visage vermeil Nous jette un rayon de soleil Qui nous réchauffe à votre porte.

Du printemps la lumière aimante Rit chez vous en toute saison, Et, Madame, en votre maison Tous les jours le rossignol chante. Ah!

Maintenant voulez-vous connaître Qui sont ces gens masqués de noir Vous venant dire le bonsoir Et chanter sous votre fenêtre?

Daignez apprendre qui nous sommes: Nos yeux sont cachés sous des loups, C'est pour mieux rire des jaloux Mais nous sommes des gentils hommes. Pleins d'honneur et de courtoisie, Gardant deux amours en nos coeurs, Les Dames et la poésie, Les Dames et la poésie. La, la, la, etc.

Henri Cazalis (1840-1909)

La, la, la, etc.
We come to sing, madam,
The serenade in your honour;
May we have the happiness
That the song pleases your soul.

All doors are closed to us, May the soul open to us, Who only ask on bended knee For a smile from your red lips.

The wind blows, it is cold, but what matter If your rosy face Casts a ray of sun on us To warm us at your door.

The balmy light of spring Smiles in you in all seasons, And, dear lady, in your house A nightingale sings every day. Ah! Now do you wish to know Who these strangers masked in black are Coming to bid you good evening And singing beneath your window?

Deign to learn who we are:
Our eyes are hidden by masks,
The better to laugh at the jealous,
But we are gentle men,

Full of honour and courtesy, Cherishing two loves in our hearts: Ladies and poetry. La, la, la, etc.

#### 10 Ach Elslein

Ach Elslein, liebes Elselein mein, Wie gern wär ich bei dir! So sein zwei tiefe Wasser Wohl zwischen dir und mir.

Das bringt mir grosse Schmerzen, Herzallerliebster Gsell! Red' ich von ganzem Herzen Habs für gross Ungefäll.

Hoff' Zeit wird es wohl enden, Hoff' Glück wird kommen drein, Sich in all's Güts verwenden, Herzliebstes Elselein.

Hans Ott (1533-1550)

Oh Elsie, my dear little Elsie, How I wish I were with you But two deep waters Are between you and me.

It gives me great pain Beloved companion. I say with my whole heart It is a great misfortune for me.

I hope time will bring it to an end I hope luck will come That everything will change for good, My dearest little Elsie.

#### 11 Ritornelle

Die Rose stand im Tau, es waren Perlen grau, als Sonne sie beschienen, wurden sie zu Rubinen.

Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866)

The rose stood amongst a dew Of grey pearls; And as the sun shone they became rubies.

## 12 Weep, weep mine eyes

Weep, weep, mine eyes, my heart can take no rest.
Weep, weep, my heart, mine eyes shall ne'er be blest.
Weep eyes, weep heart, and both this accent cry:
A thousand deaths I die, Flaminia.
Ay me, ah ah cruel Fortune! ay me.
Now, Leander, to die I fear not.
Death, do thy worst! I care not!
I hope when I am dead in Elysian plain
To meet, and there with joy we'll love again.

#### 13 Traumlicht (from Drei Männerchöre)

Ein Licht im Traum hat mich besucht, Es nahte kaum und nahm die Flucht. Der Blick ist tief hier eingesenkt, Den, als ich schlief du mir geschenkt.

Hell dämmert mild am Tage wach, O Nachtgebild' dein Glanz mir nach. Komm oft, o Stern, in meiner Ruh'! Dir schließ ich gern die Augen zu. Hell dämmert mild ein Licht in Traum Am Tage mir nach. Komm oft, o Stern, in meiner Ruh'! Dir schließ ich gern die Augen zu.

Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866)

A light came towards me in my dream, it drew near and back again.
In my heart I keep the look you gave me While I was sleeping.

Your vision of the night, your shine Follows me through the day.
Come often to my slumber, you star!
I will gladly close my eyes for you.

I often see the bright light of my dream During the day. Come often to my slumber, you star! I will gladly close my eyes for you.

## 14 - 17 A Lover's Journey

#### i. In The Still Garden

O bella bionda, Sei come l' onda! Of cool sweet dew and radiance mild The moon a web of silence weaves In the still garden where a child Gathers the simple salad leaves.

A moondew stars her hanging hair And moonlight kisses her young brow And, gathering, she sings an air: Fair as the wave is, fair art thou!

Be mine, I pray, a waxen ear To shield me from her childish croon And mine a shielded heart for her Who gathers simples of the moon.

Simples, 1915, James Joyce (1882-1941). Published by Shakespeare & Company. Paris. 1927

## ii. St. Valentine's Day

Good morning, it's St. Valentine's Day, So early before sunshine. I, young maid at the window, Will be your Valentine.

The young man put trousers on, Opened the chamber door, Let in the maid who as a maid Departed nevermore. By St. Nicholas and Charity,
A shameless breed!
A young man does it when he can,
For truth, that is not right.
She said: Before you trifled with me,
You promised not to wed.
I'd not by sunlight break my word
If you had not come in.

after *Hamlet*, Act V, Scene V, William Shakespeare Karl Joseph Simrock (1802-1876)

#### iii. Will you, nill You

Will you, nill you, I will marry you.

From *The Taming of the Shrew,* Act II, Scene I, William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

## iv. Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?

Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed:
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st, Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade, When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, So long loves this, and this gives life to thee.

William Shakespeare

#### 18 Romance du Soir

La romance du soir dans les airs s'évapore, Mille voix à la Nuit qui déjà nous atteint Doucement vont la dire encore Jusqu'au matin.

Aux lèvres des amants les baisers ont fleuri; De ce bruit divin l'ombre est pleine; La rose en s'effeuillant exhale son haleine, Les enfants en dormant à leur mère ont souri. Au bord de l'étang la lune se penche Par dessus le front des saules d'argent; Le poète rêve et croit voir, songeant Devant son miroir, quelque dame blanche.

J.L. Croze, circa. 19th Century

The evening romance disappears into air, As a chorus of voices takes up its refrain From the new-fallen dusk To the first morning light.
On the lips of lovers, kisses have blossomed;
The shadows are full of this heavenly sound;
The rose, as its petals fall, sighs out its breath,
Happy children, asleep, give their mother a smile.
The moon peers over the edge of the pool
With silvery willows adorning its fringe;
The poet, in reverie, stares at his mirror
And therein perceives a white lady, unknown.

## 19 The Long Day Closes (from Seven Partsongs)

No star is o'er the lake, Its pale watch keeping, The moon is half awake, Through gray mists creeping, The last red leaves fall round The porch of roses, The clock hath ceased to sound, The long day closes.

Sit by the silent hearth In calm endeavour, To count the sounds of mirth, Now dumb for ever. Heed not how hope believes And fate disposes: Shadow is round the eaves, The long day closes. The lighted windows dim Are fading slowly. The fire that was so trim Now quivers lowly. Go to the dreamless bed Where grief reposes; Thy book of toil is read, The long day closes.

Henry F. Chorley (1808-1872)

- 18 -

# **BIOGRAPHY**

#### THE KING'S SINGERS

David Hurley, counter-tenor Robin Tyson, counter-tenor Paul Phoenix, tenor Philip Lawson, baritone Christopher Gabbitas. baritone Stephen Connolly, bass

Described as possessing an "impeccably manicured vocal blend, enchanting the ear from first to last note" (Gramophone Magazine), The King's Singers maintain the highest calibre of a cappella performance, and continue to be one of the most sought-after and critically acclaimed vocal ensembles in the world

Their concert diary includes in excess of 125 performances annually, delighting their widespread and enthusiastic fan-base. Recent highlights include performances in London's Royal Albert Hall, Windsor Castle, The Sage Gateshead, King's College Chapel, Birmingham Symphony Hall, Berlin Philharmonie, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Salzburg Mozarteum and Paris Salle Gaveau. In the US, concerts include Cincinnati, Lincoln Center (New York), Dallas, Salt Lake City (with the Utah

Symphony), Princeton University, and New York City's Carnegie Hall.

Since its inception at King's College, Cambridge in 1968 the group has performed to sell-out audiences as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and sung to audiences in Lebanon, Tel Aviv, the Azores and Bermuda. They undertake regular visits to the Far East, singing in Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. In recent seasons they have been in mainland China, at Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts and at the Shanghai Concert Hall.

Always interested in different styles and genres of music, The King's Singers foster musical collaborations that are often recorded by radio and TV, or for CD and DVD. They have worked with the international music ensemble Sarband, viol consort Concordia, the WDR Big Band, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, and the early music improvisation band L'Arpeggiata. Soloists with whom they have worked include pianist Emanuel Ax, jazz legend George Shearing, soprano Dame Kiri te Kanawa, accompanist Roger Vignoles and the percussionist Evelvn Glennie.



The King's Singers recordings have garnered both awards and significant critical acclaim. In 2001, 'Circle of Life' received a Grammy Award nomination. 'Chanson d'Amour' reached the top ten on the Billboard crossover charts. Other recordings in the canon range from 'Annie Laurie - Folk Songs of the British Isles' to 'Good Vibrations'. 'From Byrd to the Beatles', a recent documentary of the group available on DVD, provides a fascinating behindthe-scenes look in the recording studio, as the six King's Singers tackle the technical feat of singing Thomas Tallis's 40-part motet 'Spem in Alium'. Now recording for Signum Classics, the group has covered music from the renaissance in 'The Golden Age: Siglo de Oro' ("unmissable". Classic FM Magazine), to 'Landscape & Time', a contemporary album ("impeccable singing", Gramophone Magazine) and a studio album of folk, spiritual and pop 'Simple Gifts', released in the group's 40th anniversary season, which went to No.1 in the iTunes crossover charts and is nominated for a Grammy in 2009. Their most recent recordings are 'Romance du Soir', containing music by Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Schubert and others, and a live performance CD and DVD from the Royal Albert Hall at the BBC Proms.

Expanding the scope of their repertoire The King's Singers have commissioned over 200 works from a host of prominent contemporary composers including György Ligeti, Richard Rodney Bennett, Luciano Berio, Peter Maxwell Davies, Steve Martland, Gian Carlo Menotti, Krysztof Penderecki, Ned Rorem, John Rutter, Eric Whitacre, Toru Takemitsu and John Tavener. This branch of their work is constantly expanding.

The charm and wit of The King's Singers is everpresent on the concert platform and in recordings, but is also passed down through workshops and masterclasses. The group is 'Prince Consort Ensemble in Residence' at The Royal College of Music in London, and holds a bi-annual summer course for ensembles at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival in Germany. Unique musical arrangements often used by choirs and ensembles are available through the group's publisher, Hal Leonard Corporation. On DVD 'The King's Singers: A Workshop', an educational programme produced in the USA by the Hal Leonard Corporation, features excerpts from these masterclasses and concerts.

The group's latest news and blog entries, information on concert dates, shop plus streaming audio and video can be found at:

www.kingssingers.com www.myspace.com/thekingssingers With thanks to the Vicar and parishoners of St Andrew's Toddington, Christine Held and Marcus Stäbler.

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Producer - Adrian Peacock
Fditor - Dave Hinitt

Language coaches: Norbert Meyn, German Nicole Tibbels, French

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