

Scott Robert Shaw

The English Tenor

The English Tenor - Scott Robert Shaw

Five Elizabethan Songs

Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw. Piano: Luba Podgayskaya

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 1. Orpheus | 2:20 |
| 2. Tears | 3:24 |
| 3. Under the Greenwood Tree | 1:47 |
| 4. Sleep | 3:11 |
| 5. Spring | 2:45 |

Along The Field

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw. Violin: Eva de Vries

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|--------------------------------------|------|
| 6. We'll to the Woods no More | 1:16 |
| 7. Along the Field | 3:24 |
| 8. The Half-Moon Westers Low | 1:26 |
| 9. In the Morning | 1:24 |
| 10. The Sigh that Heaves the Grasses | 2:11 |
| 11. Good-Bye | 2:19 |
| 12. Fancy's Knell | 3:21 |
| 13. With Rue my Heart is Laden | 1:25 |

Four Songs, Opus 14

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw. Piano: William Drakett

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|---------------------------|------|
| 14. Autumn Evening | 3:14 |
| 15. April | 0:55 |
| 16. A Last Year's Rose | 2:48 |
| 17. Song of the Blackbird | 1:21 |

8 Folksong Arrangements for

High Voice and Harp

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw. Harp: Emilie Bastens

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|---|------|
| 18. Lord! I Married me a Wife | 1:14 |
| 19. She's Like the Swallow | 2:32 |
| 20. Lemady | 1:35 |
| 21. Bonny at Morn | 3:10 |
| 22. I Was Lonely and Forlorn
(Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn) | 2:26 |
| 23. David of the White Rock
(Dafydd y Garreg Wen) | 2:52 |
| 24. The False Knight Upon the Road | 3:17 |
| 25. Bird Scarer's Song | 0:59 |

Let Us Garlands Bring, Opus 18

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw. Piano: James Williams

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| 26. Come Away, Come Away, Death | 3:17 |
| 27. Who is Silvia | 1:37 |
| 28. Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun | 5:31 |
| 29. O Mistress Mine | 1:52 |
| 30. It Was a Lover and His Lass | 2:34 |

Total playing time 72:28

Artist's Foreword

Depending on your point of view, this recording is either entirely the result of the Coronavirus Pandemic, or several decades of immersive cultural programming.

Allow me to explain!

Whilst I am Australian by birth, the vast majority of my musical education took place within a very British structure, and particularly within the Church of England and Royal School of Church Music. My childhood years were spent singing in the St George's Cathedral choir as a treble under the tutelage of Gordon Appleton, where I sang works from the likes of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten and Gerald Finzi constantly. Later, following my voice change and subsequent move to Sydney, I sang for five years in the professional choir of St James King Street under David Barmby and David Drury, singing exactly the same repertoire. All the while, it was these experiences that would prove to be my most formative, culturally, musically, vocally and professionally, above and beyond all my other educational experiences at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Royal Conservatory of the Hague, or even the English National Opera. This was only further underscored by work singing in London as both a professional and amateur in various choirs in London, most notably with the Holst Singers under Stephen Layton. My subsequent studies and work in both The Netherlands and Germany would use these learnt skills considerably, but I was rarely singing the repertoire I had grown up with. A tilt at the windmill of opera ended almost before it started, and a deep dive into German Early Music yielded more fruit, but recent years have told me that there really is no place like home, and for me that is the world of English music.

Like many in all walks of life, the Pandemic provided me with a period of some soul-searching and a complete re-set. I began an extensive regimen of daily voice lessons via Skype with my entirely uncompromising friend, mentor and singing teacher Brett Goulding to address several decades of bad vocal habits, and for the first time in my career, develop a workable, repeatable vocal technique. Repertoire inevitably came up as part of that process, along with questions about what my next professional steps would be, and after exploring some of the options, Brett said to me one day "you know what Scotty, you're an English Tenor".

I didn't know what that meant! I had a rudimentary understanding of the German fach system, a process used to organise voices into different categories; I was therefore familiar with voice types like "character" "lyric", and "heroic", but "English Tenor" was not something I had heard before, or used practically. Brett put it to me this way: "consider a tenor, singing The Duke from Rigoletto. Using all your most clichéd and stereotyped thoughts, where is he from? What does he sound like?

Ideally, he would be Italian, or at least resemble an Italian, wouldn't he? And to do that successfully, no matter where he's from, the music and the language of Italian opera and Verdi have to be deep in his bones on a cultural level; you have to believe that he knows what Mamma's pasta sauce tastes like. The closest thing to that from your perspective is your background in English music".

The pasta sauce remark resonated with me in particular, and I considered what might connect my background with singers of the like of Peter Pears, Anthony Rolfe Johnson and Ian Partridge – or the Welsh tenor Robert Tear, a particular hero of mine. In the end I came up with the following: given the church music pedigree that connects swathes of not only English tenors but British singers and musicians of all types, we all know what the altar wine tastes like, and we know how the incense smells. And even though none of the works here are sacred, that provided much of the inspiration for the programming and recording of this album.

As suggested, the Pandemic played a big role in not only its genesis, but also in how it was put together. Projects were under constant threat of cancellation and postponement; I had to move recordings more than once following directions from the German and Dutch governments on what was allowed and with whom and when. I have particularly strong memories of recording Britten's 8 Folksong Arrangements for High Voice and Harp with Emilie Bastens during not only a lockdown but a curfew; all rehearsing and recording in The Hague and our studio in Rijswijk had to take place before 6pm on pain of a large fine. Furthermore, much of my recording of Ralph Vaughan Williams' Along The Field with Eva de Vries had to be repeated. During our first session I wasn't at all happy with my performance and began to feel physically worse and worse; upon returning home tested myself for the second time that day and realised that I had gone from negative to positive for Coronavirus in the space of a few short hours. Interestingly enough though, whilst producing a few chaotic moments, the Pandemic also provided the benefit of coming with very few distractions. Oftentimes there was very little to do but sing and think about singing. Organising recording projects and finding playing partners was also never a problem; most musicians I knew were crying out for the chance for some sort of professional collaboration, and indeed any sort of playing opportunities at all. I would never wish for it to have gone any longer than it did, but I do wonder if I am the only person for whom its end was actually a little bittersweet! This album could just as well have been called "Lockdown Lieder" by consequence.

This album is for Alan Wellstead (1943-2019).

Scott Robert Shaw
Düsseldorf, May 2023

Programme Notes

FIVE ELIZABETHAN SONGS – IVOR GURNEY

English composer Ivor Gurney (1890-1937) was a much-beloved contributor to English song composition, and was well known for his use of lyrical melodies and sensitive treatment of texts. A prolific poet and composer, he wrote more than 300 songs despite suffering from tuberculosis, bipolar disorder and multiple breakdowns. The Five Elizabethan Songs, or “The Elizas”, were composed in 1913/14 when he was still a student under Charles Villiers Stanford at the Royal College of Music in London. They are arguably his most famous collection, and include what is almost certainly his most famous and iconic song in “Sleep”. Gurney left no particular order to the set, but they are usually performed in the order published here.

ALONG THE FIELD – RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Ralph Vaughan William’s “Along The Field” was composed in 1927, and set to the poetry of A.E. Housman. This was not the first time that Vaughan Williams had set Housman’s poetry following the much more famous cycle in “On Wenlock Edge” in 1909. “Along The Field” is in sharp contrast to “On Wenlock Edge” however, given the unique choice of instrumentation; rather than string quartet, the accompanying voice here is a solo violin, in an often challenging part that uses double stops frequently.

The songs within the cycle explore themes of love, loss and the transience of life. They paint vivid musical pictures of the countryside, with Vaughan Williams’ rich, and occasionally quite oblique harmonies and lyrical melodies perfectly complementing Housman’s evocative verses.

FOUR SONGS, OPUS 14 – ROGER QUILTER

The name Roger Quilter (1877-1953) is so synonymous with English Art Song to the point that he almost needs no introduction, and no collection of English music such as this would feel complete without him. He was particularly skilled at setting English poetry to music, is considered one of the leading composers in the field in the early 20th century, and his art songs and art song collections are staples of the repertoire. His composing was strongly influenced by the late Romantic and early Impressionist styles and is characterised by lyrical melodies, expressive harmonies and sensitive word painting. Like Gerald Finzi he was particularly adept at setting Shakespearean poetry, although all poetry from the Four Songs Opus 14, one of his less well-known collections, is from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

8 FOLKSONG ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIGH VOICE AND HARP – BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Like many of the composers in this recording, Benjamin Britten's contribution to English and British Art Song is so great it scarcely warrants discussion. His arrangements of traditional folksongs in particular span a wide range of traditional melodies from the British Isles, as well as other countries including France, Germany and Russia. In all, his arrangements of such pieces number over a hundred individual songs, of which many invite exuberant, high energy delivery; The Ploughboy, Oliver Cromwell and Sweet Polly Oliver are good examples, as is The Bird Scarer's Song from the volume recorded here. The 8 Folksong Arrangements for High Voice and Harp was in fact his last volume of folksong arrangements before his death at the age of 63 in 1976, and was a present for his long time partner and collaborator Peter Pears, and the highly-regarded Welsh harpist Osain Ellis with whom Britten worked extensively.

LET US GARLANDS BRING, OPUS 18 – GERALD FINZI

"Let Us Garlands Bring", a collection of five songs set to Shakespearean texts, was first published in 1942 and remains one of Finzi's most popular, frequently performed and highly-regarded works. The original setting of the songs is for "low voice", and depending on the piece, was composed either a minor or major third lower than these recordings. Despite this higher setting, the pieces still sit quite low, and this is the key challenge that a tenor must meet in order to perform this cycle successfully. "O Mistress Mine" and "It Was a Lover and His Lass" have significant moments on low D flats and C naturals respectively, and "Fear No More The Heat O' The Sun" begins its opening motif on a D natural and repeats this several times during the piece.

Five Elizabethan Songs:

Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)

Orpheus – William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain-tops that freeze,
Bow themselves, when he did sing:

To his music, plants and flowers
Ever sprung; as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by.

In sweet music is such art:
Killing care and grief of heart
Fall asleep, or, hearing, die.

Tears – John Fletcher (1579-1625)

Weep you no more, sad fountains;
What need you flow so fast?
Look how the snowy mountains
Heaven's sun doth gently waste!
But my sun's heavenly eyes
View not your weeping,
That now lies sleeping,
Softly now, softly lies
Sleeping.

Sleep is a reconciling,
A rest that peace begets;
Doth not the sun rise smiling
When fair at e'en he sets?
Rest you, then, rest, sad eyes!
Melt not in weeping,
While she lies sleeping,
Softly now, softly lies
Sleeping.

Under the Greenwood Tree – William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

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 pleas'd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

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 pleas'd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Sleep – John Fletcher (1579-1625)

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!

Spring - Thomas Nashe (1567-c.1601)

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-witta-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-witta-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-witta-woo!
Spring! The sweet Spring!

Along the Field:

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Texts by A.E. Housman (1859-1936)

We'll to the Woods no More

We'll to the woods no more
The laurels all are cut,
The bowers are bare of bay
That once the Muses wore.
The year draws in the day
And soon will evening shut:
The laurels all are cut

We'll to the woods no more.
Oh, we'll no more, no more
To the leafy woods away,
To the high wild woods of laurel
And the bowers of bay no more.

Along the Field

Along the field as we came by
A year ago, my love and I,
The aspen over stile and stone
Was talking to itself alone.
"Oh who are these that kiss and pass?
A country lover and his lass;
Two lovers looking to be wed;
And time shall put them both to bed,
But she shall lie with earth above,
And he beside another love."

And sure enough beneath the tree
There walks another love with me,
And overhead the aspen heaves
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;
And I spell nothing in their stir;
But now perhaps they speak to her,
And plain for her to understand
They talk about a time at hand
When I shall sleep with clover clad,
And she beside another lad.

The half-moon Westers Low

The half-moon westers low, my love,
And the wind brings up the rain;
And wide apart we lie, my love,
And seas between the twain.

I know not if it rains, my love,
In the land where you do lie;
And oh, so sound you sleep, my love.
You know no more than I.

In the Morning

In the morning, in the morning,
In the happy field of hay,
Oh they looked at one another
By the light of day.

In the blue and silver morning
On the haycock as they lay,
Oh they looked at one another
And they looked away.

The Sigh that Heaves the Grasses

The sigh that heaves the grasses
Whence thou wilt never rise
Is of the air that passes
And knows not if it sighs.

The diamond tears adorning
Thy low mound on the lea,
Those are the tears of morning,
That weeps, but not for thee.

Good-Bye

Oh see how thick the goldcup flowers
Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours
That never are told again.
Oh may I squire you round the meads
And pick you posies gay?
- 'Twill do no harm to take my arm.
"You may, young man, you may."

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
'Tis now the blood runs gold,
And man and maid had best be glad
Before the world is old.
What flowers to-day may flower to-morrow,
But never as good as new.
- Suppose I wound my arm right round -
"'Tis true, young man, 'tis true."

Some lads there are, 'tis shame to say,
That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
'Tis little enough they leave.
Then keep your heart for men like me
And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true and all for you.
"Perhaps, young man, perhaps."

Oh, look in my eyes, then, can you doubt?
- Why, 'tis a mile from town.
How green the grass is all about!
We might as well sit down.
- Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
Why must true lovers sigh?
Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty, -
"Good-bye, young man, good-bye."

Fancy's Knell

When lads come home from labour
At Abdon under Clew
A man would call his neighbour
And both would send for me.
And where the light in lances
Across the mead was laid,
There to the dances
I fetched my flute and played.

Ours were idle pleasures,
Yet oh, content we were,
The young to wind the measures,
The old to heed the air;
And I to lift with playing
From tree and tower and steep
The light delaying,
And flute the sun to sleep.

The youth toward his fancy
Would turn his brow of tan,
And Tom would pair with Nancy
And Dick step off with Fan;
The girl would lift her glances
To his, and both be mute:

Well went the dances
At evening to the flute.

Wenlock Edge was umbered,
And bright was Abdon Burf,
And warm between them slumbered
The smooth green miles of turf;
Until from grass and clover
The upshot beam would fade,
And England over
Advanced the lofty shade.

The lofty shade advances,
I fetch my flute and play:
Come, lads, and learn the dances
And praise the tune to-day.
To-morrow, more's the pity,
Away we both must hie,
To air the ditty,
And to earth I.

With Rue my Heart is Laden

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

Four Songs, Opus 14

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

Autumn Evening – Arthur Maquarie (1874-1955)

The yellow poplar leaves have strown
Thy quiet mound, thou slumberest
Where winter's winds will be unknown;
So deep thy rest,
So deep thy rest.

Sleep on, my love, thy dreams are sweet,
If thou hast dreams: the flowers I brought
I lay aside for passing feet,
Thou needest nought,
Thou needest, needest nought.

The grapes are gather'd from the hills,
The wood is piled, the song bird gone,
The breath of early evening chills;
My love, my love, sleep on;
My love, my love, sleep on.

April – William Watson (1858-1935)

April, April,
Laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then, the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears!
April, that mine ears
Like a lover greetest,
If I tell thee, sweetest,
All my hopes and fears,
April, April,
Laugh thy golden laughter,
But, the moment after,
Weep thy golden tears!

A Last Year's Rose – W.E. Henley (1849-1903)

From the break the Nightingale
Sings exulting to the Rose;
Though he sees her waxing pale
In her passionate repose
While she triumphs waxing frail,
Fading even while she glows;
Though he knows
How it goes -
Knows of last year's Nightingale,
Dead with last year's Rose.

Wise the enamoured Nightingale,
Wise the well-beloved Rose!
Love and life shall still prevail,
Nor the silence at the close
Break the magic of the tale
In the telling, though it shows -

Who but knows
How it goes!
Life a last year's Nightingale,
Love a last year's Rose.

Song of the Blackbird – W.E. Henley (1849-1903)

The Nightingale has a lyre of gold,
The Lark's is a clarion call,
And the Blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
But I love him, I love him best of all...

For his song is all of the joy's of life,
And we in the mad spring weather;
We two have listened 'till he sang
Our hearts and lips together

8 Folksong Arrangements for High Voice and Harp:

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Lord! I Married me a Wife

Lord! I married me a wife!
She gave me trouble all my life!
Made me work in the cold rain and snow.

She's Like the Swallow

She's like the swallow that flies so high,
She's like the river that never runs dry,
She's like the sunshine on the lee shore,
I love my love and love is no more.

'Twas out in the garden this fair maid did go,
A-picking the beautiful primrose;
The more she pluck'd the more she pulled
Until she got her apron full.

It's out of those roses she made a bed,
A stony pillow for her head.
She laid her down, no word did say,
Until this fair maid's heart did break.

She's like the swallow that flies so high,
She's like the river that never runs dry,
She's like the sunshine on the lee shore,
I love my love and love is no more.

Lemady

One midsummer's morn as I were a-walking
The fields and the meadows were covered with green,
The birds a-sweetly singing so pleasant and so charming,
So early in the morning by the break of the day.

Arise, arise, go pluck your love a posy
of the prettiest flowers that grows in yonder green.
O yes I'll arise and pluck lilies, pinks and roses
All for my dearest Lemady, the girl I adore.

O Lemady, O Lemady what a lovely lass thou art
Thou art the fairest creature that ever my eye did see!
I'll play you a tune all on the pipes of ivory
So early in the morning by the break of the day.

Bonny at Morn

The sheep's in the meadows, the kye's in the corn,
Thou's ower lang in thy bed, bonny at morn.
Canny at night, bonny at morn,
Thou's ower lang in they bed,
Bonny at morn.

The bird's in the nest, the trout's in the burn,
Thou hinders thy mother in many a turn.
Canny at night, bonny at morn,
Thou's ower lang in they bed,
Bonny at morn.

We're all laid idle wi' keeping the bairn,
The lad winnot work and the lass winnot lairn.
Canny at night, bonny at morn,
Thou's ower lang in they bed,
Bonny at morn.

I was Lonely and Forlorn (Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn)

I was lonely and forlorn
Among the meadows mourning;
For I had wooed her oft and long,
Yet others reaped her loving.

Not to me this maid did come
To cure my painful yearning.
Yet I had watched,
The fields among,
Her beauty and her blooming

Whilst the seas do ebb and flow
And minutes do not falter;
And while my heart beats in my breast,
My 'fliction ne'er will alter.

Ne'er shall I kiss her cheeks so fair,
Nor feel her arms embracing;
For I had watched the ripening wheat,
Yet others reaped her loving

David of the White Rock (Dafydd y Garreg Wen)

Life and its follies are fading away,
Love hath departed, why then should I stay?
Cold is my pale cheek and furrowed with care,
Dim is my eyesight, and snow-white my hair.

Near me, in silence, my harp lies unstrung,
Weak are my fingers, and falt'ring my tongue!
Tuneful companion, we parted must be;
Thou canst no longer bring comfort to me.

Yet ere we sever, thy master would fain
Swanlike expire in a last dying strain;
And when above him the cypress bough wave,
Spirits shall murmur it over his grave.

The False Knight Upon the Road

The knight met the child in the road.
O where are you going to?
said the knight in the road.
I am going to my school,
said the child as he stood.
He stood and he stood and it's well because he stood.
I am going to my school,
said the child as he stood.

O what are you going there for?
said the knight in the road.
For to learn the Word of God,
said the child as he stood.
He stood and he stood and it's well because he stood.
For to learn the Word of God,
said the child as he stood.

O what have you got there?
said the knight in the road.
I have got my bread and cheese,
said the child as he stood.
He stood and he stood and it's well because he stood.
I have got my bread and cheese,
said the child as he stood.

O won't you give me some?
said the knight in the road.
No, ne'er a bite nor crumb,
said the child as he stood.
He stood and he stood and it's well because he stood.
No, ne'er a bite nor crumb,
said the child as he stood.

I wish you was on the sands,
said the knight in the road.
Yes, and a good staff in my hands,
said the child as he stood.
He stood and he stood and it's well because he stood.
Yes, and a good staff in my hands,
said the child as he stood.

I wish you was in the sea,
said the knight in the road.
Yes, and a good boat under me,
said the child as he stood.
He stood and he stood and it's well because he stood.
Yes, and a good boat under me,
said the child as he stood.

I think I hear a bell,
said the knight in the road.
Yes, and it's ringing you to hell,
said the child as he stood.
He stood and he stood and it's well because he stood.
Yes, and it's ringing you to hell,
said the child as he stood.

Bird Scarer's Song

Shoo all 'er birds you be so black,
When I lay down to have a nap.
Shoo arlo arlo arlo arlo arlo arlo birds.
Hi shoo all 'er birds!

Out of master's ground into Tom Tucker's ground,
Out of Tom Tucker's ground into Luke Coles's ground
Out of Luke Coles's ground into Bill Veater's ground.
Shoo arlo arlo arlo arlo arlo arlo arlo birds.
Ha! Ha!

Let Us Garlands Bring, Opus 18:

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

All texts by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Come Away, Come Away, Death

From Twelfth Night, Act II, Scene 4

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it!

My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.
Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand, thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

Who is Silvia?

From The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act IV, Scene 2

Who is Silvia? what is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair and wise is she;
The heavens such grace did lend her,
That she might admirèd be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness,
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia, let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling;
To her let us garlands bring.

Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun

From Cymbelline, Act IV, Scene 2

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The scepter, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renownèd be thy grave!

O Mistress Mine

From Twelfth Night, Act II, Scene 3

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low;
Trip no further; pretty sweeting;

Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

It Was a Lover and His Lass

From As You Like It, Act V, Scene 3

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

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that life was but a flower
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a 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 spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Vorwort des Künstlers

Je nach Betrachtungsweise ist diese Aufnahme entweder gänzlich das Ergebnis der Coronavirus-Pandemie oder mehrerer Jahrzehnte tiefergehender kultureller Prägung.

Gestatten Sie mir eine Erklärung!

Ich bin zwar gebürtiger Australier, der größte Teil meiner musikalischen Ausbildung fand jedoch in einer britisch geprägten Struktur statt, insbesondere in der Church of England und der Royal School of Church Music. In meiner Kindheit sang ich als Sopran im Chor der St. George's Cathedral unter Anleitung von Gordon Appleton, wo ich immer wieder Werke von Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten und Gerald Finzi vortrug. Nach meinem Stimmbruch und dem anschließenden Umzug nach Sydney sang ich fünf Jahre lang im professionellen Chor von St. James King Street unter David Barmby und David Drury das gleiche Repertoire. Diese Erfahrungen haben mich in kultureller, musikalischer, stimmlicher und beruflicher Hinsicht am meisten geprägt, weit mehr als all meine anderen Ausbildungserfahrungen am Sydney Conservatorium of Music, am Königlichen Konservatorium in Den Haag oder sogar an der English National Opera. Durch die Arbeit als Sänger in verschiedenen Chören in London, vor allem bei den Holst Singers unter Stephen Layton, wurde dies noch weiter vertieft. Bei meinem späteren Studium und meiner Arbeit sowohl in den Niederlanden als auch in Deutschland konnte ich diese erlernten Fähigkeiten gut einsetzen, dennoch sang ich selten das Repertoire, mit dem ich aufgewachsen war. Ein aussichtsloser Kampf in der Oper endete, bevor er überhaupt begonnen hatte; ein tieferes Eintauchen in die Alte Musik, meist deutschsprachig, brachte mehr Erfolg. Dennoch haben mir die letzten Jahre gezeigt, was mir Heimat bedeutet und das ist für mich die Welt der englischen Musik.

Wie für viele Menschen aus allen Bereichen des Lebens war auch für mich die Pandemie eine Zeit des Insichgehens und des Neustarts. Ich begann ein umfangreiches Programm mit täglichem Gesangsunterricht über Skype bei meinem kompromisslosen Freund, Mentor und anspruchsvollen Gesangslehrer Brett Goulding, um mehrere Jahrzehnte schlechter Gesangsgewohnheiten auszumerzen und zum ersten Mal in meiner Karriere eine geeignete, wiederholbare Gesangstechnik zu entwickeln. Dabei kam zwangsläufig das Repertoire zur Sprache, ebenso wie die Frage, was meine nächsten beruflichen Schritte sein würden. Nachdem ich einige der Optionen durchgespielt hatte, sagte Brett eines Tages zu mir: „Weißt du was, Scotty, du bist ein englischer Tenor.“

Ich wusste nicht, was das bedeutet! Ich hatte ein rudimentäres Verständnis des deutschen Fachsystems, ein Verfahren, mit dem Stimmen in verschiedene Kategorien eingeteilt werden. Daher war ich mit Stimmtypen wie „Charakter“, „Lyrisch“ und „Helden“ vertraut, aber „Englischer Tenor“ war etwas, das ich noch nie gehört oder praktisch verwendet hatte. Brett erklärte es mir

folgendermaßen: „Stell dir einen Tenor vor, der den Herzog aus Rigoletto singt. Woher kommt er, wenn man die gängigsten Klischees und Stereotypen heranzieht? Wie klingt er? Im Idealfall wäre er italienisch oder hätte zumindest Ähnlichkeit mit einem Italiener, nicht wahr? Um das erfolgreich umzusetzen, muss er unabhängig von seiner Herkunft die Musik und die Sprache der italienischen Oper und von Verdi kulturell tief verinnerlicht haben. Man muss ihm glauben, dass er weiß wie die Pastasauce von Mamma schmeckt. Das, was dem aus deiner Sicht am nächsten kommt, ist dein Hintergrund in englischer Musik.“

Vor allem der Hinweis auf Pastasauce ließ mich aufhorchen. Ich überlegte, was mich mit Sängern wie Peter Pears, Anthony Rolfe Johnson und Ian Partridge verbinden könnte – oder mit dem walisischen Tenor Robert Tear, einem meiner größten Helden. Am Ende kam ich zu folgendem Schluss: In Anbetracht des kirchenmusikalischen Hintergrunds, der nicht nur englische Tenöre sondern britische Sänger und Musiker aller Art miteinander verbindet, wissen wir alle wie Messwein schmeckt und wie Weihrauch riecht. Auch wenn keines der Werke auf diesem Album sakral ist, diente dies als Inspiration für die Gestaltung und Aufnahme der Stücke.

Wie bereits angedeutet, spielte die Pandemie nicht nur bei der Entstehung des Albums eine große Rolle, sondern auch bei seiner Zusammenstellung. Vorhaben waren ständig von Streichung und Aufschiebung bedroht. Mehr als einmal musste ich Aufnahmen verschieben, um den Vorgaben der deutschen und niederländischen Regierung zu folgen, was wann mit wem erlaubt war. Besonders gut erinnere ich mich an die Aufnahme von Brittens 8 Volkslied-Arrangements für hohe Stimme und Harfe mit Emilie Bastens, als nicht nur ein Lockdown, sondern auch eine Ausgangssperre verhängt wurde. Alle Proben und Aufnahmen in Den Haag und in unserem Studio in Rijswijk mussten bei Androhung einer hohen Geldstrafe vor 18 Uhr stattfinden. Außerdem musste ein Großteil meiner Aufnahme von Along The Field von Ralph Vaughan Williams mit Eva De Vries wiederholt werden. Bei unserer ersten Sitzung war ich mit meiner Darbietung überhaupt nicht zufrieden und fühlte mich körperlich immer schlechter. Als ich nach Hause kam, testete ich mich zum zweiten Mal an diesem Tag und stellte fest, dass mein Testergebnis innerhalb weniger Stunden von negativ auf positiv für das Coronavirus umgeschlagen war. Interessanterweise hatte die Pandemie zwar einige chaotische Momente, aber auch den Vorteil, dass es kaum Ablenkungen gab. Oft gab es nur wenig zu tun, außer zu singen und über das Singen nachzudenken. Es war auch nie ein Problem, Aufnahmeprojekte zu organisieren und Spielpartner zu finden. Die meisten Musiker, die ich kannte, sehnten sich nach der Möglichkeit einer professionellen Zusammenarbeit oder überhaupt nach Gelegenheiten zum Musizieren. Ich würde mir nie wünschen, dass die Pandemie länger gedauert hätte, aber ich frage mich, ob ich die einzige Person bin, für die das Ende ein wenig bittersüß war! Dieses Album hätte also genauso gut „Lockdown-Lieder“ heißen können.

Dieses Album ist für Alan Wellstead (1943-2019)

Scott Robert Shaw - Düsseldorf, Mai 2023

Programmhinweise

ÜNF ELISABETHANISCHE GESÄNGE – IVOR GURNEY

Der englische Komponist Ivor Gurney (1890–1937) war ein beliebter Vertreter der englischen Liedkomposition und bekannt für seine lyrischen Melodien und die einfühlsame Aufarbeitung von Texten. Als produktiver Dichter und Komponist schrieb er mehr als 300 Lieder, obwohl er an Tuberkulose, einer bipolaren Störung und mehreren Zusammenbrüchen litt. Er komponierte die Fünf Elisabethanischen Gesänge bzw. „The Elizas“ in den Jahren 1913/14, als er noch Student bei Charles Villiers Stanford am Royal College of Music in London war. Es handelt sich um seine wohl berühmteste Sammlung, zu der mit „Sleep“ auch sein sicherlich bekanntestes und symbolträchtigstes Lied gehört. Gurney gab der Sammlung keine bestimmte Anordnung, die Lieder werden jedoch in der Regel in der hier veröffentlichten Reihenfolge aufgeführt.

ALONG THE FIELD – RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Das Werk „Along The Field“ von Ralph Vaughan William wurde 1927 komponiert und vertont die Gedichte von A.E. Housman. Es war nicht das erste Mal, dass Vaughan Williams Gedichte von Housman vertonte, nachdem er 1909 mit „On Wenlock Edge“ einen viel berühmteren Zyklus veröffentlicht hatte. „Along The Field“ steht mit seiner einzigartigen Instrumentierung allerdings in scharfem Kontrast zu „On Wenlock Edge“: Anstelle eines Streichquartetts ist die Begleitung eine Solovioline in einem oft anspruchsvollen Part, der häufig Doppelgriffe verwendet.

Die Lieder des Zyklus behandeln Themen wie Liebe, Verlust und die Vergänglichkeit des Lebens. Sie malen lebendige musikalische Bilder der Landschaft, wobei die reichen und gelegentlich recht schrägen Harmonien und lyrischen Melodien von Vaughan Williams die stimmungsvollen Verse von Housman perfekt ergänzen.

4 SONGS, OPUS 14 – ROGER QUILTER

Der Name Roger Quilter (1877–1953) steht so sehr für das englische Kunstlied, dass man ihn fast nicht mehr vorstellen muss. Keine Sammlung englischer Musik wie diese wäre ohne seine Kompositionen vollständig. Er vertonte vor allem englische Lyrik, gilt als einer der führenden Komponisten auf diesem Gebiet im frühen 20. Jahrhundert und seine Kunstlieder und Kunstliedsammlungen sind feste Bestandteile des Repertoires. Seine Kompositionen sind stark von der Spätromantik und dem frühen

Impressionismus geprägt und zeichnen sich durch lyrische Melodien, ausdrucksstarke Harmonien und sensible Wortmalerei aus. Wie Gerald Finzi vertonte er vor allem Werke von Shakespeare, obwohl alle Gedichte in den 4 Songs Opus 14, einer seiner weniger bekannten Sammlungen, aus dem 19. und 20. Jahrhundert stammen.

8 VOLKSLIED-ARRANGEMENTS FÜR HOHE STIMME UND HARFE – BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Wie bei vielen anderen Komponisten auf diesem Album ist der Beitrag von Benjamin Britten zum englischen und britischen Kunstlied so bedeutend, dass er eigentlich kaum erwähnt werden muss. Insbesondere seine Interpretationen traditioneller Volkslieder umfassen ein breites Spektrum traditioneller Melodien von den Britischen Inseln, aber auch aus anderen Ländern wie Frankreich, Deutschland und Russland. Insgesamt hat er mehr als einhundert solcher Stücke arrangiert, von denen viele zu einer überschwänglichen, energiegeladenen Darbietung einladen. The Ploughboy, Oliver Cromwell und Sweet Polly Oliver sind gute Beispiele dafür, ebenso wie The Bird Scarer's Song aus dem hier aufgenommenen Band. The 8 Folksong Arrangements for High Voice and Harp war seine letzte Sammlung von Volkslied-Arrangements vor seinem Tod im Alter von 63 Jahren im Jahr 1976. Das Werk war ein Geschenk für seinen langjährigen Partner und Mitarbeiter Peter Pears und den hochgeschätzten walisischen Harfenisten Osian Ellis, mit dem Britten häufig zusammenarbeitete.

LET US GARLANDS BRING, OPUS 18 – GERALD FINZI

„Let Us Garlands Bring“ ist ein Zyklus von fünf Liedern basierend auf Texten von William Shakespeare. Das im Jahr 1942 uraufgeführte Werk zählt noch immer zu den beliebtesten, am häufigsten aufgeführten und am meisten geschätzten Kompositionen von Finzi. Die ursprüngliche Stimmlage der Lieder ist „tief“ und wurde je nach Stück eine kleine oder große Terz tiefer komponiert als diese Aufnahmen. Trotz dieser höheren Fassung bleiben die Stücke recht tief. Das ist die größte Herausforderung, die ein Tenor meistern muss, um diesen Zyklus erfolgreich vorzutragen. „O Mistress Mine“ und „It Was a Lover and His Lass“ enthalten bedeutsame Momente mit tiefen Des- und C-Klängen, „Fear No More The Heat O' The Sun“ beginnt sein Anfangsmotiv in D und wiederholt es im Laufe des Stücks mehrmals.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the making of this album, but none more than my friend, singing teacher and mentor, Brett Goulding. Without him, none of this would have been possible, or even considered. To my players, Luba Podgayskaya, Eva de Vries, William Drakett, Emilie Bastens and James Williams: it was a great pleasure working with you all, let's do it again sometime! To my sound engineers, Georg Bongartz, and in particular Jan Maarten van den Boom of Yoursonics Studio, heartfelt thanks. Many thanks also to Aleksandra Renska for her fantastic photography, and Timothy Collins who helped with pronunciation and tempi. I'm also really grateful that I was able to reconnect with James Cardell-Oliver of Divine Arts Records, who I know went above and beyond in the making of this album and didn't complain even once at the sound of all those deadlines rushing by. And for my wife, Elisa Rabanus-Wellstead, who was there from day one of the new technical regimen and bore all the heartache and pain that brought with kindness, patience and love.

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Five Elizabethan Songs – Ivor Gurney

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw
Piano: Luba Podgayskaya
Engineer: Jan Maarten van den Boom
Producer: Scott Robert Shaw
Editor: Jan Maarten van den Boom
Recorded in Yoursonics Studio Rijswijk, Netherlands,
October 2021

Along The Field – Ralph Vaughan Williams

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw
Violin: Eva de Vries
Engineer: Jan Maarten van den Boom
Producer: Scott Robert Shaw
Editor: Jan Maarten van den Boom
Recorded in Yoursonics Studio, June 2022 and January 2023

Four Songs, Opus 14 – Roger Quilter

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw
Piano: William Drakett
Engineer: Georg Bongartz
Producer: Scott Robert Shaw
Editor: Georg Bongartz
Recorded in Auferstehungskirche Düsseldorf, Germany,
May 2021

8 Folksong Arrangement for High Voice and Harp – Benjamin Britten

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw
Harp: Emilie Bastens
Engineer: Jan Maarten van den Boom
Producer: Scott Robert Shaw
Editor: Jan Maarten van den Boom
Recorded in Yoursonics Studio, March 2021

Let Us Garlands Bring, Opus 18 – Gerald Finzi

Tenor: Scott Robert Shaw
Piano: James Williams
Engineer: Jan Maarten van den Boom
Producer: Scott Robert Shaw
Editor: Jan Maarten van den Boom
Recorded in Yoursonics Studio, July 2021 and May 2023

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**For further information on Scott Robert Shaw
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