

FOUR SHAKESPEARE SONGS

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564. Details of his early life are uncertain, but he was probably educated at the local grammar school, and then apprenticed to one of the local trades. One account states that he became a schoolteacher. In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway, and moved to London six years later. By 1592, he had achieved considerable success as an actor and playwright, earning the patronage of the Earl of Southampton. The publication of his 154 sonnets established his reputation as one of the leading poets of the Renaissance. Shakespeare is best known for the 38 plays that he wrote or modified for his acting company and two theatres. Many of these were performed at the courts of Elizabeth I and James I. He returned to Stratford in 1608, and died there in 1616.

Shakespeare is widely recognised as the greatest dramatist in the English language. His plays communicate a deep awareness of human behaviour, revealed through a wide variety of characters and situations.

These four songs were completed in December 2005, and are taken from song texts found in four of Shakespeare's plays. They are scored for medium voice and piano.

The text of *Full Fathom Five* comes from *The Tempest*. The four-bar introduction is a nod to Eric Satie's distinctive set of *Gymnopédies*, and sets the tone of mystery in the piece. The piano accompaniment from bar 9 is a typical waltz accompaniment, but this piece requires a tempo that does not bring this across flippantly, rather, sink into each of these notes with equal weight. The tonality changes in bar 17, echoing the lines "but doth suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange."

A version of the song *A Lover and His Lass* was published by Thomas Morley one or two years before *As You Like It* was written by Shakespeare, who often introduced well-known songs into his plays. The text captures the joy of pre-marital, uninhibited outdoor courtship that the arrival of spring and summer allows. As such, this new setting of the text calls for a sense of fun, and is written in a style that borrows from both folk and madrigal traditions. Be sensitive to the speed fluctuations in the last verse.

O Mistress Mine comes from *Twelfth Night*, and is a love song encouraging us to seize opportunities for love while we are young. The continuous quavers in the accompaniment must not detract from the tune, so play these lightly. The tonality changes in the second verse, mirroring the more philosophical nature of the text, ending slowly, capturing the words "youth's a stuff will not endure."

The final song in the cycle, *When Daffodils Begin to Peer*, comes from the play *The Winter's Tale*, and again is a reflection on carefree life and love. Despite the minor tonality, this song is to be sung exuberantly, with a crescendo on the last line of each of the verses. In the final verse, the semiquaver movement of the accompaniment echoes the text referring to birdsong, but be careful that this does not overshadow the vocal line.

Ephrem Feeley
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Full Fathom Five

Words: William Shakespeare

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Mysteriously (♩ = 74)

Piano

mp

con ped.

8^{va}

7

Full fa - thom five thy fa - ther lies, of his bones are co - ral

Pno.

7

8^{va}

12

made; those are pearls that were his eyes: no-thing of him that doth fade,

Pno.

12

17

but doth suf - fer a sea - change in - to some - thing rich and strange.

Pno. *p*

22

Sea nymphs hour - - - ly ring his

Pno. *mp*

26

knell: ding - dong. Hark! Now I

Pno.

A Lover And His Lass

Words: William Shakespeare

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Merrily (♩ = 100)

Piano

It was a lo - ver

mf

con ped.

6

and his lass, with a hey, and a ho, and a hey no-ni-no, that o'er the green corn

Pno.

10

field did pass in spring-time, the on - ly pret - ty ring time, when birds do sing, hey

Pno.

15

ding a ding, ding: sweet lo-vers love the spring.

Pno.

20

Be - tween the a - cres of the rye, with a hey, and a ho, and a

Pno.

25

hey no-ni-no, these pret - ty coun - try folks would lie in spring-time, the

Pno.

O Mistress Mine!

Words: William Shakespeare

Music: Ephrem Feeley

Sweetly (♩ = 92)

Piano

O mis - tress mine! Where are you roa - ming? Oh,

mp

con ped.

Detailed description: This system contains the first four measures of the piece. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: the right hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment, and the left hand plays a similar eighth-note accompaniment. The first measure of the piano part is marked *mp* and *con ped.*

5

stay and hear your true love's co - ming, that can sing both high and low.

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 through 8. The vocal line continues with the lyrics. The piano accompaniment maintains the same rhythmic pattern as the first system. The piano part is marked *mp*.

9

Trip no fur - ther, pret - ty swee - ting; jour - neys end in lo - vers

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 9 through 12. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern. The piano part is marked *mp*.

13

mee - ting; ev - 'ry wise man's son doth

Pno.

poco rit.

17

know.

Pno.

a tempo

22

What is love? 'Tis not here - af - ter; pre - sent mirth hath pre - sent laugh - ter.

Pno.

When Daffodils Begin to Peer

Words: William Shakespeare

Music: Ephrem Feeley

With excitement (♩ = 114)

Musical score for the first system. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The tempo is marked 'With excitement' with a quarter note equal to 114 beats per minute. The piano part is marked *mf* and includes the instruction *con ped.* (con peditale). The lyrics are: 'When daf - fo-dils be - gin to peer, (With

Musical score for the second system. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: 'heigh! with heigh! the do - xy o - ver the dale) why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;'. The piano accompaniment is marked *mp*. The system is marked with a '4' at the beginning of both staves.

Musical score for the third system. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: 'for the red blood reigns in the win - ter's pale.'. The piano accompaniment is marked *mf*. The system is marked with an '8' at the beginning of both staves.

12

The white sheet blea-ching on the hedge, (With heigh! the sweet birds, O, how they sing!) doth

Pno.

16

set my pug - ging tooth on edge; for a quart of ale is a

Pno.

20

dish for a king. The lark, that tir - ra - lir - ra chants, (With

Pno.