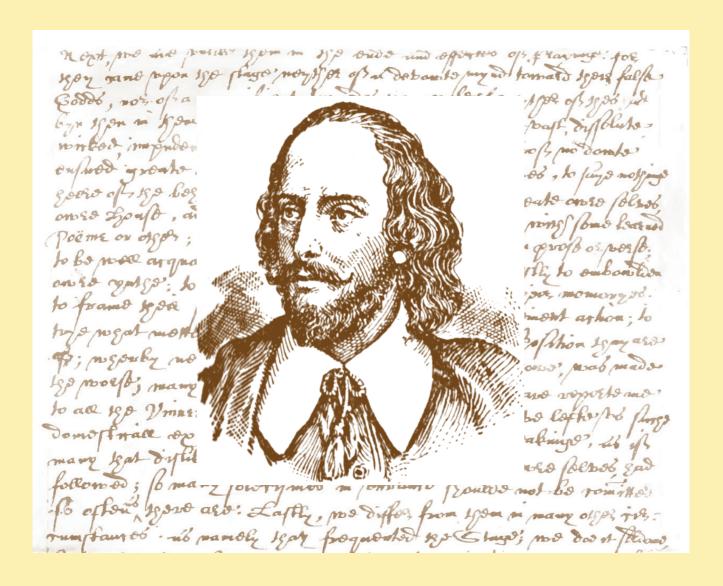
Four Shakespeare Songs



EPHREM FEELEY

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 *Gymnopedies*, 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."

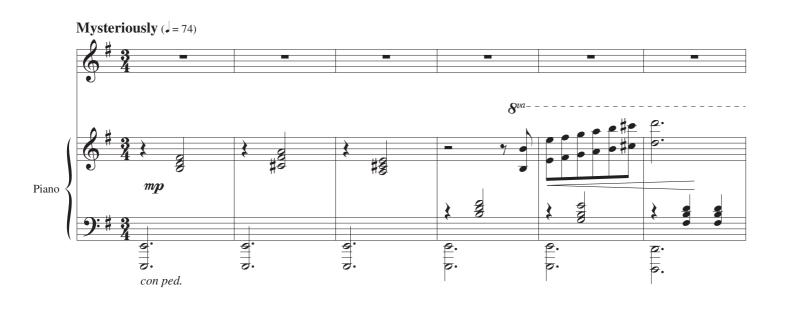
A version of the song *A Lover and His Lass* was published by Thomas Morley one or two years before *As You Like It* was written by Shakespeare, who often introduced well-known songs into his plays. The text captures the joy of pre-marital, uninhibited outdoor courtship that the arrival of spring and 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.

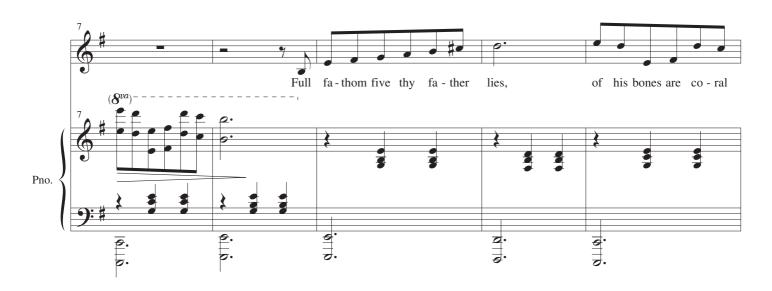
O Mistress Mine comes from Twelfth Night, and is a love song encouraging us to seize opportunities for love while we are young. The continuous quavers in the accompaniment must not detract from the tune, so play these lightly. The tonality changes in the second verse, mirroring the more philosophical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

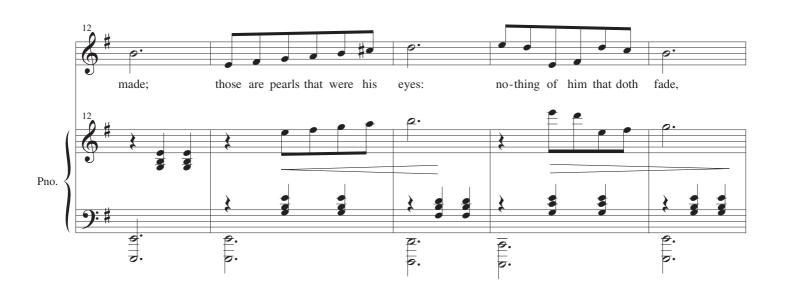
The final song in the cycle, *When Daffodils Begin to Peer*, comes from the play *The Winter's Tale*, and again is a reflection on carefree life and love. Despite the minor tonality, this song is to be sung exuberantly, with a crescendo on the last line of each of the verses. In the final verse, the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

Ephrem Feeley 18 December 2006

Full Fathom Five





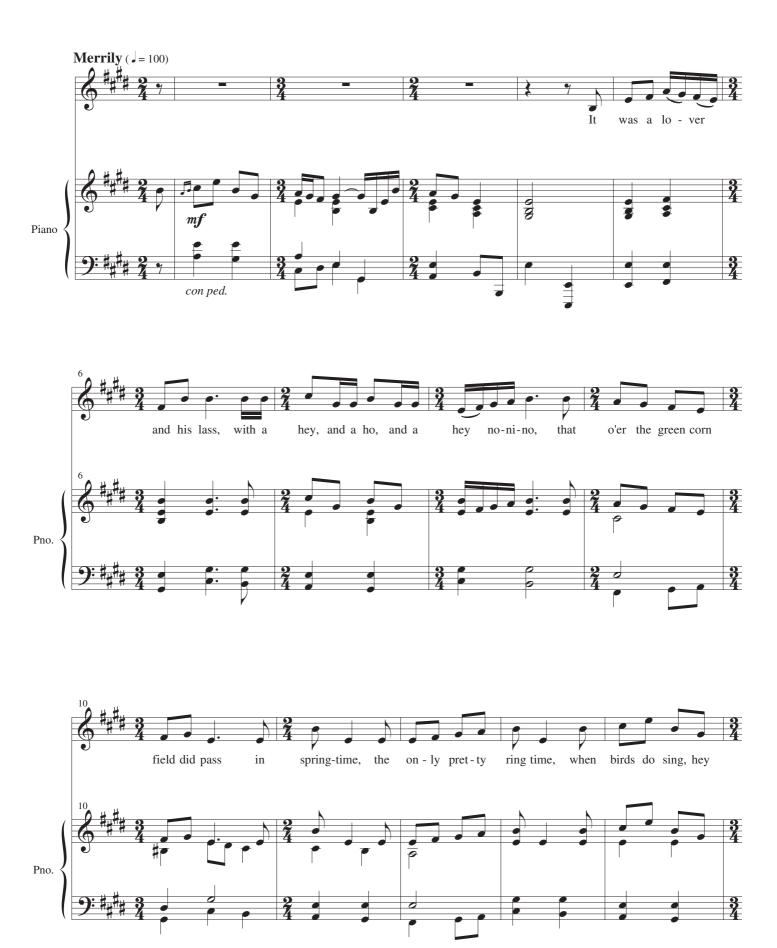




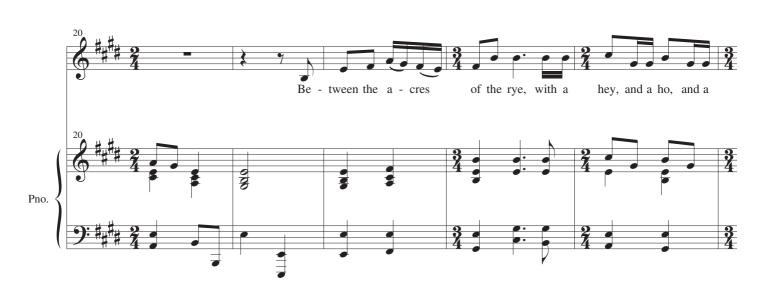


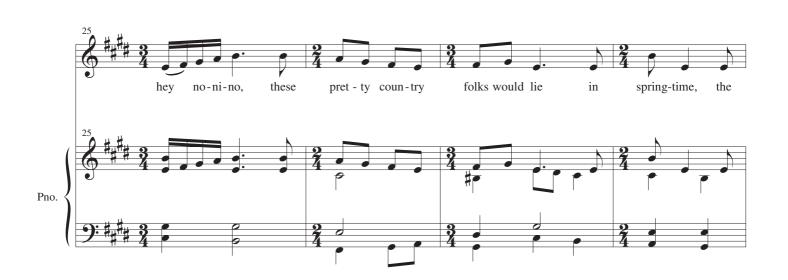


A Lover And His Lass



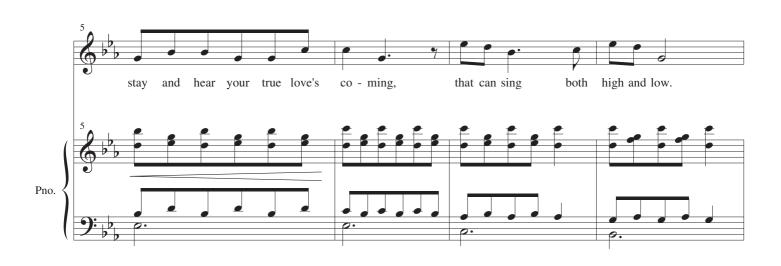


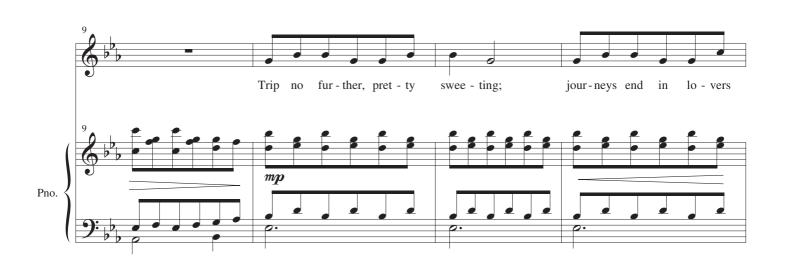


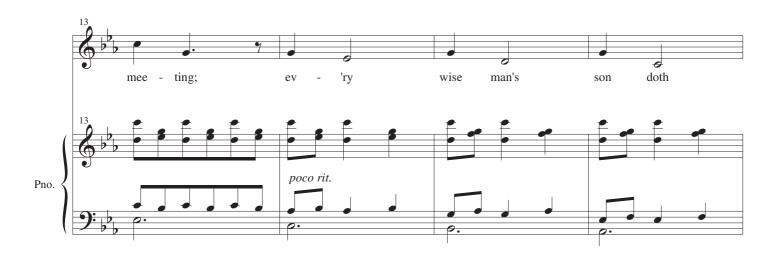


O Mistress Mine!

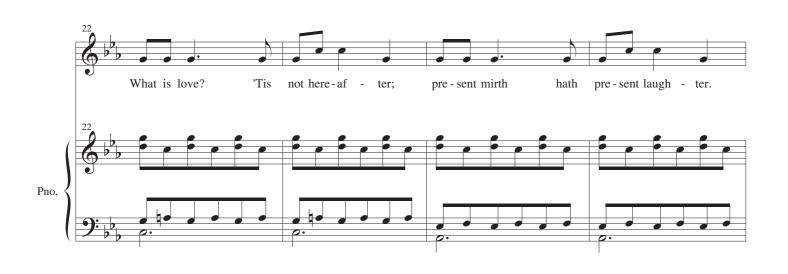












When Daffodils Begin to Peer

