

Roger OULTER

18 songs for voice and piano

Includes three previously unpublished songs



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Selected by David Owen Norris

HIGH VOICE



London · New York · Berlin · Sydney

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^{*} indicates a previously unpublished work

Preface

Here's a song-book to bring you joy – a selection of the very best songs and duets by Roger Quilter (1877-1953), including many long out-of-print, and some never published before. Quilter was extraordinarily sensitive to poetry, and especially to its rhythm. His best songs are masterpieces of rhetorical delivery. But be warned! A singer armed with a metronome and a desire to be 'in time' – not so very common, fortunately, since most singers love words – will never discover Quilter's secrets. He developed his techniques of declamation as he matured. Compare the dutiful (though beautiful) reflection of line-lengths in the early Now sleeps the crimson petal * with the deceptively straightforward 4/4 of Music, when soft voices die. True, it can be argued that the stillness of Tennyson's evening justifies the effect of a little gush of words cut off by the piano's interventions. But those unvarying quavers make severe demands upon the singer. Consider the words gold fin, for instance, which too often receive the same scansion as the word gold fish. In the later Shelley setting the underlying 4/4 binds the song into an independent musical structure, yet the words are not in the least hampered by the regularity. Apart from the first and seventh lines, which share a rhythm, Quilter writes a different rhythm for every half-line – that's 12 different ways of filling a 4/4 bar, even before the luxuriant half-speed final line. (Singers should read this difficult poem with particular care, and ask themselves whether 'slumber on' denotes 'continue to slumber', as many assume, or if 'Love itself' is slumbering on 'thy thoughts'.)

The mature Quilter reinforces his rhetoric, where necessary, with good old-fashioned harmony and counterpoint. Take the first two lines of *The Jealous Lover*. The piano's harmonic appoggiatura under the word mistress, where the mild discord resolves down a semitone, has the effect of emphasizing and expanding the second beat. So although the vocal line alone might suggest that Quilter has wrongly set 'My dear mistress has a heart', the harmony makes a subtler point. The voice can enter on the first beat of the bar, a reflection of the singer's happy urgency to tell us about his mistress, and yet still keep the accent right. Then hear how important her heart is, as the richer discord under that word demonstrates. At this point the singer's sense of grammar will rescue Quilter from having appeared to write a too-short 2-bar phrase. Even while expanding the time for the rich appoggiatura, the singer will be asking himself whether he's merely making the commonplace observation that his mistress has the usual bodily components, or whether the words that follow might be closely connected in their meaning. 'What sort of a heart?' he will ask himself, and carry the voice up and into the note a fourth higher, a beautiful effect to be made still more beautiful by the onomatopoeia of the word soft.

I've used the word 'he' in the preceding paragraph because Op.28 is mainly geared towards men: though I'd love to hear a woman sing Why so pale and wan? English Song does have a bias towards male singers, perhaps because so many of its composers went to single-sex schools. Gratifyingly, many of the songs in this volume are entirely appropriate for women to sing. Some of them, published here for the first time, were uncovered by Valerie Langfield, whose book on Quilter* has all the details that every performer will want to know. The duets, a very neglected aspect of singing in general, are designed for women's voices; but that need not prevent the men from singing them. You might even want to try Mixed Doubles.

Don't be afraid to experiment with keys. It's quite easy to read D major as D flat, for instance. You may want to keep complete sets of songs – Op.28, or the Blake settings – in their original relationships. Though that would mean that tenors ought to transpose Op.28/1 into E major instead of Quilter's own High Voice choice of F. Presented with the question of consistency, Quilter clearly preferred a top A!

David Owen Norris

^o Quilter published two versions of this song. In the 1904 version, which we print in the High Voice volume, accompanists will note that before the words 'Nor waves' and 'And slips' only their left thumb's repeated note helps the singer's ametrical reverie – it's a beautifully subtle point that the other notes in the chord are tied over. In the 1946 version, which we print in the Low Voice volume, the singer is given extra help at these points by unambiguous triplets, and is also offered the opportunity of an extra long phrase at the end by removing 1904's repetition of the word 'slip'. The changes were made at the suggestion of the singer Mark Raphael. There has in the past been confusion over these two versions. In my view, one should perform one or the other, rather than mix up features that happen to appeal. My own preference is for the earlier version, where the repeated 'slip' clarifies the phrase structure; but singers now have the means to make an informed choice of their own by consulting both our new volumes for high and low voice.

^{**} Roger Quilter: His Life and Music The Boydell Press, Woodbridge 2002

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY









NOW SLEEPS THE CRIMSON PETAL

Words by Tennyson

Roger Quilter Op 3, No 2







FILL A GLASS WITH GOLDEN WINE









DREAM VALLEY





THE WILD FLOWER'S SONG



The Wild Flower's Song © Copyright 1917 by Winthrop Rogers Ltd.





DAYBREAK







THE FUCHSIA TREE

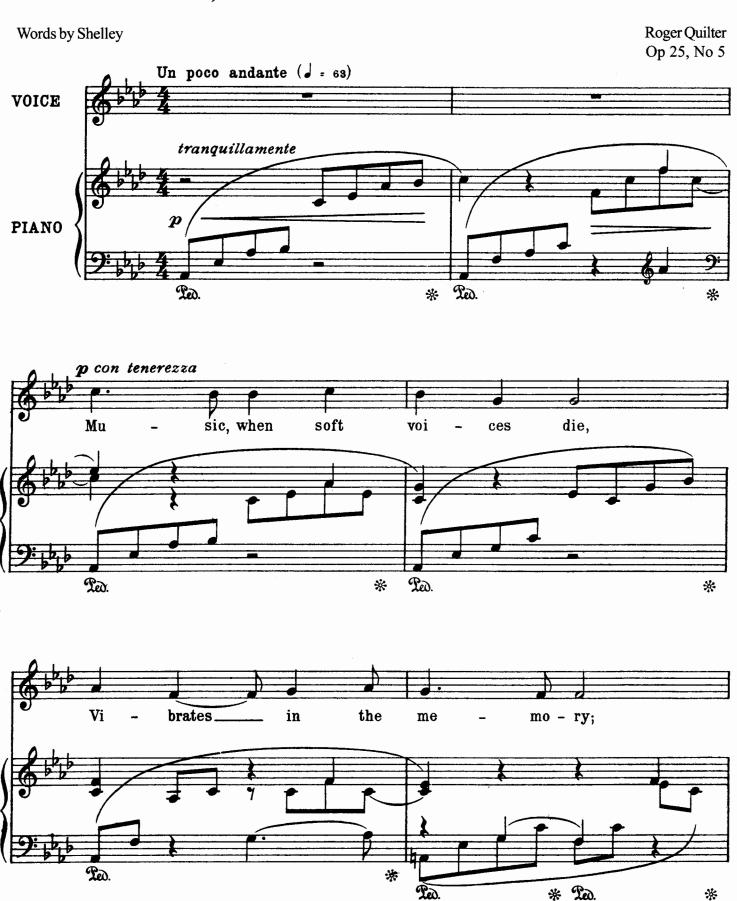




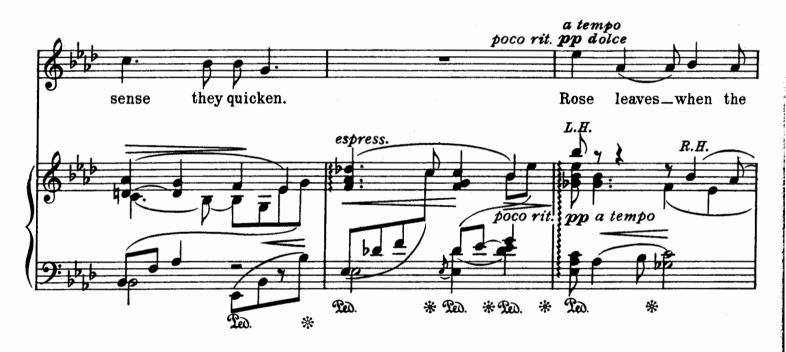


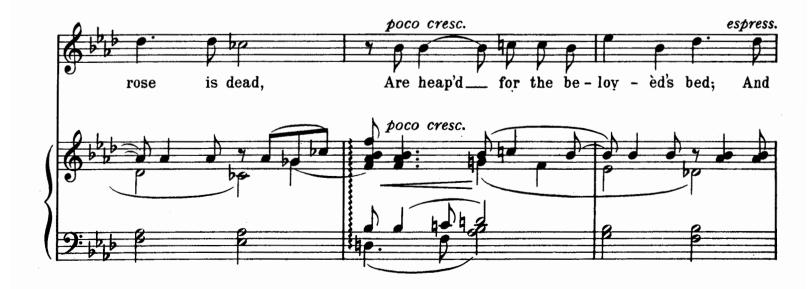
To Norah Nichols

MUSIC, WHEN SOFT VOICES DIE











THE JEALOUS LOVER









WHY SO PALE AND WAN?











I DARE NOT ASK A KISS







TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON











THE CONSTANT LOVER











I GOT A ROBE



Originally arranged by Harry Burleigh, Quilter arranged this for Marian Anderson, and she included it in her début recital at the Wigmore Hall, London, on 16 June 1928, with Quilter accompanying. She recorded it that August, under its usual title 'Heav'n, Heav'n'. Punctuation and some performance directions have been regularised. Valerie Langfield

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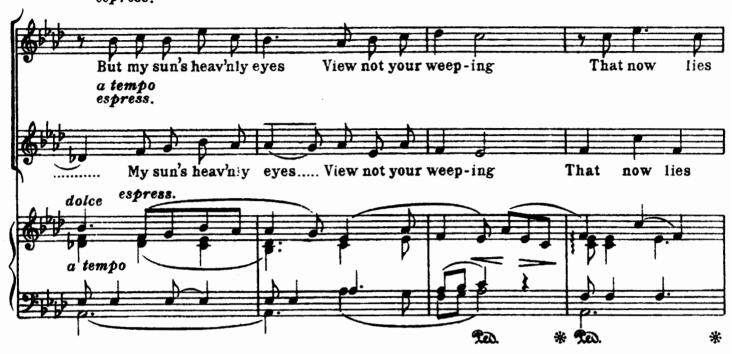


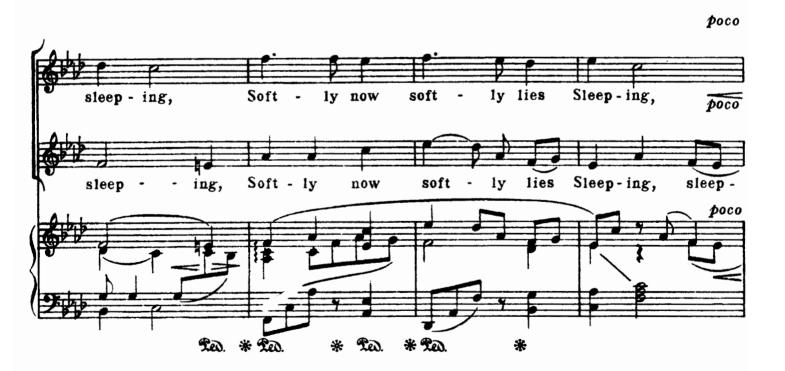


WEEP YOU NO MORE



a tempo espress.











IT WAS A LOVER AND HIS LASS

























'TIS ST VALENTINE'S DAY



The manuscript is in the British Library, Add MSS 65526, ff3-5, one of two versions for voice and piano arranged by Quilter from his setting (now lost) for medium voice, string quartet and harp.

^{*} The original manuscript shows one note for the two syllables: they can be elided as 'Val'n'; or sung as two quavers, or as a dotted quaver and semiquaver. Valerie Langfield

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written Oct 1917 altered Oct 1919

Roger OUILTER 18 songs for voice and piano



HIGH VOICE

ROGER QUETER (1877–1953) is one of England's finest artsong composers and his songs have remained firmly in the vocal repertoire since their appearance in the first half of the 20th century. In these songs he demonstrates an extraordinary skill in setting English poetry and shows what can be achieved within a miniature form.

Compiled to mark the 50th anniversary of the composer's death, this volume gathers together 18 of Quilter's songs and duets. In addition to well-known favourites such as Now sleeps the crimson petal and Love's Philosophy, it contains several works which have been unavailable for many years, as well as offering three previously unpublished songs for the first time.



ROGER QUILTER (1877–1953) est l'un des meilleurs compositeurs de mélodies d'Angleterre et ses mélodies ont gagnées une place permanente dans le répertoire vocal depuis leur publication durant la première moitié du vingtième siècle. Il montre dans ces mélodies un talent extraordinaire à mettre en musique la poésie anglaise, et ce qui peut être réalisé dans le contexte d'une forme courte.

Ce volume, qui commémore le cinquantième anniversaire de la mort du compositeur rassemble dix-huit mélodies et duos de Quilter. Il contient des oeuvres bien connues telles que *Now sleeps the crimson petal* et *Love's Philosophy*, mais également plusieurs oeuvres qui n'étaient pas disponibles depuis longtemps, et trois inédits.



ROGER QUILTER (1877–1953) ist einer der hervorragendsten englischen Komponisten auf dem Gebiet des Kunstliedes, und seine Kompositionen haben seit ihrem Erscheinen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts ihren festen Platz im Gesangs-Repertoire. In ihnen stellt er sein außergewöhnliches Können bei der Vertonung englischer Dichtung unter Beweis und zeigt, was innerhalb der Kleinform möglich ist.

Dieser Band wurde anlässlich von Quilters 50. Todestag zusammengestellt und versammelt 18 Lieder und Duette des Komponisten. Neben wohlbekannten Standards wie Now sleeps the crimson petal und Love's Philosophy enthält es verschiedene Stücke, die viele Jahre lang nicht erhältlich waren, und stellt darüberhinaus zum ersten Mal drei bisher unveröffentlichte Lieder vor.





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