



A *Shropshire Lad*

& other songs by Finzi §
Britten § Copland §

*Blake
Fischer*

*Claire
Cooper*



WINNER OF
THE CITY OF
MELBOURNE
SONG
RECITAL
AWARD

A RECITAL OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN FOLK, TRADITIONAL AND ART SONG

For years commentators have been trying to tell us that the song recital is a dead art form. Nowadays big is better: the major symphonic repertoire and grand opera. Chamber and 'early' music have loyal followers but, in general, the larger the musical form, the larger the audience. Hence the live solo vocal recital has become the province of established major opera stars. Singing 'safe' repertoire, it is they who have the drawing power to fill large concert halls with admirers. Admittedly they have developed the vocal powers to fill vast halls with sound.

In the past, however, a recital was always used as the launching pad for young singers on the brink of their careers. Rather than major operatic roles, recital repertoire is more suited to artists with developing vocal and dramatic powers. And the byways of song offer a voice interesting opportunities to be heard without direct comparison to an established 'big name'. But many of the smaller venues suitable for recitals are no longer available or acceptable to the concert-going public.

The advent of easy access to entertainment has seen the demise of small local organizations that were able to offer professional opportunities to young artists. It is difficult to interest an audience

in an intimate song recital that demands great concentration and sensitivity when they are constantly being bombarded with music in their homes and cars, in shops, elevators, restaurants; in fact almost anywhere.

But in the recording and broadcast media the recital seems to have found its saviour. As a bonus to major artists, the multinational record companies, often grudgingly, record recital programs when the latest all-star opera set is complete. However, as CDs become less prohibitively expensive to produce, younger artists no longer have to depend on contracts with the major record companies. And public broadcasting groups with FM radio band access are always looking for new talent to showcase on their programs.

A truly successful recital is not a collection of songs shunted together like a string of ill-matched freight cars. Given true commitment, atmosphere and concentration by both artists and audience, it can take you on a dramatic and/or emotional journey that will be as satisfying as a symphony, string quartet or sonata. And the audience can be one listener in the comfort of a quiet living room. The solo song recital will survive in some form.

All composers aspiring to important musical thought in song look to the great song cycles of Schubert. They are at the pinnacle of the art form. But a well-chosen program of individual songs can achieve a satisfying line of thought, even philosophy. At the same time it will show off the voice at its best.

English speaking composers have a rich

source of poetry from folk and traditional, through Shakespeare and the romantics to the contemporary. Many of the greatest British and American composers have been attracted to the song form and have found inspiration in English language poetry.

A SHROPSHIRE LAD

George Butterworth (1885-1916) /
A. E. Housman (1859-1936)

The list of Butterworth's compositions is sadly short. Having destroyed many of the manuscripts of his original compositions before leaving for the war, he never returned from the trenches in France. The brilliant son of a lawyer and railway company general manager, Butterworth became an avid collector of folksong in the company of Cecil Sharp and Vaughan Williams. While folk-like in their melodic style, all but one of the six songs from Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, are purely of Butterworth's invention.

Self-published in 1896, Housman's sixty-three poems are set in a land of lost content. This is an imagined Shropshire seen through the eyes of a soldier or young farmer. While it was not until the horrors of the First World War were being experienced that the poems gained wider popularity, Butterworth made his settings in 1911.

The journey of this cycle of songs begins with **Loveliest of trees** in which a 20-year-old lad contemplates the turn of winter into spring and the fact that his life is finite. With the piano principally capturing the stillness of the scene, Butterworth's

melody meanders with the lads thoughts. A 'traditional tune', **When I was one-and-twenty** finds the lad two years later perhaps strumming his guitar as he sings of his regret at not having taken the advice of a wiser man. Our lad has lived and learned. Or has he?

In **Look not in my eyes** he struggles to come to terms with his latest bout of love-sickness. Butterworth's choice of uneven and changing meter and uncertain tonality captures our lads inner turmoil and the ambiguity. Housman presents us with his reference to the Grecian lad, Narcissus, and the jonquil (genus Narcissus). **Think no more, lad** finds our lad drowning his thoughts in drink. It takes until the end of the first stanza for Butterworth to settle into the key of this song (G sharp minor), so drunk is our lad. His second stanza begins more confidently but there is a moment of introspection as the *Think no more* theme returns, augmented this time. Apparently regaining his composure, our lad reiterates his philosophical stance. But now the ground (accompaniment) is moving under him.

Our knowledge of the composers fate makes Butterworth's setting of the four stanzas of **The lads in their hundreds** chillingly prophetic. Here, he is at his simplest, most folk-like in both melody and harmony. Yet, with the senza rigore (not strictly) marking, the prosody is ideal and the whole song captures a sense of the prevailing pre-war carefree spirit. **Is my team ploughing?** may set the listener a further question. Has our lad died, or is it the ghost of his friend questioning him from the grave? If our lad is dead, he went to his grave having

achieved a happy relationship. If it is he who is alive, and that is more likely, then his happiness is haunted by the thought that he is benefiting from his friends death. From the first questioning chord, through the bluff and confident harmonies accompanying our lads replies, to the unanswered question that is the coda, Butterworth finds the perfect mix of resignation, wistfulness, self-delusion and irony. Our journey with the Shropshire lad is complete. But is his?

OLD AMERICAN SONGS

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) /
Various / Traditional

Regarded by many as the father of modern American music, Aaron Copland's major early influence was the great teacher Nadia Boulanger in Paris. While still in Europe in the twenties, he developed a recognisable personal style that often incorporated jazz rhythms and blues harmonies. He found inspiration in other, more traditional, American music as well and became the doyen of his countrys musical life.

Copland's first set of *Old American Songs* was arranged in 1950 and first performed that year at the Aldeburgh Festival by his friends Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten. The wistful melody of **Long time ago** dates from the 1830s. Copland takes his inspiration from the opening words of the ballad to create a gently rocking accompaniment reminiscent of a small boat on a lake. It was in his 1943 score for the ballet *Appalachian Spring*, choreographed by Martha Graham, that Copland first used the melody of **Simple**

Gifts, a song from the austere religious sect, the Shakers. There is gentle irony in this setting. The *simple* hymn chords that could be from a harmonium played at a Shaker meeting just don't come down in the *place just right* a phenomenon still heard in many small country and suburban churches. Tolling bell effects in the second stanza reinforce the religious connection.

Also a virtuoso pianist, Copland accompanied William Warfield (a famous Porgy) at the first performance of the second set of *Old American Songs* in 1952. **At the river** is to be performed 'with dignity' throughout. The slow bass line of this hymn tune setting walks with firm steps at first then more excitedly as we join the saints. But the dignity is never lost. As befitting a gathering at the throne of God, Copland creates a rich and shining texture by gradually weaving extra lines into the fabric of the music. Capturing the energy and spirit of the old American Minstrel Shows, **Chin-a-ring chaw** is a delightfully upbeat spiritual complete with banjo imitations by the voice.

LET US GARLANDS BRING

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) /
William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

This cycle five songs was dedicated to Finzi's friend and one-time teacher Ralph Vaughan Williams on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Finzi's is an English pastoral voice given to introspection tempered with joy in nature. Treating the songs independently of the context of the

plays from which they come, Finzi reacts to the texts in a sensitive yet direct way eschewing Shakespeare's often bawdy subtext.

Come away, death (*Twelfth Night*) has the quality of a funeral procession. Yet the text tells us that this death is that of love, not of a life. Finzi responds with a haunting melody underpinned by rich textured harmony. In contrast, **Who is Sylvia** (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*) is a light serenade with guitar effects in the accompaniment. **Fear no more the heat of the sun** (*Cymbeline*) is part of a funeral scene in the play. The arching melody over a slow-moving bass line and the recitative section show the direct influence of Purcell. It is a moving lament in which the prosody is carefully worked out so that the rise and fall of the melody is sensitive to natural speech.

There is laughter and drunkenness in the rhythm, melody and harmony of **O Mistress mine** (*Twelfth Night*). Yet Finzi is ready when the text expresses a fleeting serious thought. The cycle concludes with a jolly country song, complete with *hey noninos*. The jester Touchstone and his country wench bride Audrey are the subjects of **It was a lover and his lass** (*As You Like It*). Their joy is expressed in an exuberant melody over a throbbing syncopated rhythmic accompaniment. Finzi captures the brightness of this springtime idyll in his choice of key (E major) and ends with a brilliant flourish.

FOLKSONG ARRANGEMENTS

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) /
Various / Traditional

A prolific composer in all art-music forms, Britten is justifiably famous for his operas and choral works. But he also had a life-long love of the voice in more intimate settings. His song output spans his entire composing career. He wrote his first song cycle, *Tit for Tat*, in 1928 (re-thought and published in 1968). Defying the heart problems that took his life less than six months after the first performance, Britten completed his last solo vocal work in 1975 – *Phaedra*, a scena for mezzo soprano (Dame Janet Baker) and chamber ensemble. Britten gave the first performances and recorded many of his songs, the **Folksong Arrangements** amongst them, with his life-long companion the tenor Peter Pears.

Like Copland in his *Old American Songs*, in the 1940s *Folksong Arrangements*, Britten sought to take traditional melodies of high quality off the village green and into the concert hall. Britten's 'composed' accompaniments, rightly or wrongly, legitimised the folksongs and raised them into the realm of the art song. In **The Ploughboy** we see the ambitious young man walking across the pastures. Whether he achieves his fancy we will never know but Britten's merry whistling tune assures us that the lad will be happy whatever life brings. In contrast, the 'Irish Tune' *The Salley Gardens* (text by W.B. Yeats) finds Britten looking back to Chopin's *Raindrop*

Prelude in D flat (Op.28, No.15). Throughout Britten's hauntingly beautiful setting the constant even quavers express the young man's longing for a love found and lost in Dublin's popular courting place, the Phoenix Park willow tree (genus *Salix*) gardens. Is it a coincidence that D flat is also the published key of **The Salley Gardens** for medium voice?

Next taking his inspiration from Schubert's *Margaret at the spinning wheel*, Britten incorporates the unceasing movement of the mill wheel into his accompaniment of **The Miller of Dee**. Here the composer virtually ignores the jaunty melody, famous for being one of the few 'hawppy' tunes in the minor mode, and we find ourselves confronted by the rough and bitter miller's dark side as he lurches around the tavern. Finally he sinks into drunken oblivion. For most of **O Waly, Waly** Britten rows us across calm waters. But he masterfully signals the wronged lover's emotional changes of temperature with increasingly dissonant harmony and the syncopated rhythm of the rocking boat. This setting of **Oliver Cromwell** looks deceptively simple on the page but it is a virtuoso display for both singer and pianist. To toss it off with the right amount of off-hand panache takes extraordinary skill. It is a fitting end to a rewarding recital.

© ROBERT MITCHELL
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GEORGE BUTTERWORTH
**SIX SONGS FROM
'A SHROPSHIRE LAD'**
(1911) A. E. Houseman

1 Loveliest of trees

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

2 When I was one-and-twenty

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies
but keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again,
"The heart out of the bosom
Was never given in vain;
'Tis paid with signs a plenty
And sold for endless rue."
And I am two-and-twenty,
and oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

3 Look not in my eyes

Look not in my eyes, for fear
They mirror true the sight I see,
And there you find your face too clear
And love it and be lost like me.

One the long nights through must lie
Spent in star defeated sighs,
But why should you as well as I
Perish? gaze not in my eyes.

A Grecian lad, as I hear tell,
One that many loved in vain,
Looked into a forest well
And never looked away again.

There, when the turf in spring-time flowers,
With downward eye and gazes sad,
Stands a-mid the glancing showers
A jonquil, not a Grecian lad.

4 Think no more, lad

Think no more, lad; laugh, be jolly:
Why should men make haste to die?
Empty heads and tongues a-talking
Make the rough road easy walking,
And the feather pate of folly
Bears the falling sky.

Oh, 'tis jesting, dancing, drinking
Spins the heavy world around.
If young hearts were not so clever,
Oh, they would be young for ever:
Think no more; 'tis only thinking
Lays lads underground

5 The lads in their hundreds

The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair,
There's men from the barn and the forge and the mill and the fold,
The lads for the girls and the lads for the liquor are there,
And there with the rest are the lads that will never be old.

There's chaps from the town and the field and the till and the cart,
And many to count are the stalwart, and many the brave,
And many the handsome of face and the handsome of heart,
And few that will carry their looks or their truth to the grave.

I wish one could know them, I wish there were tokens to tell
The fortunate fellows that now you can never discern;
And then one could talk with them friendly and wish them farewell
And watch them depart on the way that they will not return.

But now you may stare as you like and there's nothing to scan;

And brushing your elbow unguessed at and not to be told
They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man,
The lads that will die in their glory and never be old.

6 Is my team ploughing?

Is my team ploughing,
That I was used to drive
And hear the harness jingle
When I was man alive?"

Ay, the horses trample,
The harness jingles now;
No change though you lie under
The land you used to plough.

"Is football playing
Along the river-shore,
With lads to chase the leather,
Now I stand up no-more?"

Ay, the ball is flying,
The lads play heart and soul;
The goal stands up, the keeper
Stands up to keep the goal.

"Is my girl happy,
That I thought hard to leave,
And has she tired of weeping
As she lies down at eve?"

Ay, she lies down lightly,
She lies not down to weep:
Your girl is well contented.
Be still, my lad, and sleep.

"Is my friend hearty,
Now I am thin and pine,
and has he found to sleep in
A better bed than mine?"

Yes, lad, I lie easy,
I lie as lads would choose;
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,
Never ask me whose.

AARON COPLAND
Old American Songs

7 Long Time Ago

On the lake where droop'd the willow
Long time ago
Where the rock threw back the billow
Brighter than snow.

Dwelt a maid beloved and cherish'd
By high and low
But with autumn leaf she perish'd
Long time ago.

Rock and tree and flowing water
Long time ago
Bird and bee and blossom taught her
Love's spell to know.

While to my fond words she listen'd
Murmuring low
Tenderly her blue eyes glisten'd
Long time ago.

8 Simple Gifts

'Tis the gift to be simple
'Tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where you ought to be
And when we find ourselves
In the place just right
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed
To turn, turn will be our delight
'Till by turning, turning, we come round right.

9 At the River

Shall we gather by the river,
Where bright angel's feet have trod,
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God.

Yes we'll gather by the river
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints by the river
That flows by the throne of God.

Soon we'll reach the shining river,
Soon our pilgrimage will cease,
Soon our happy hearts will quiver
With the melody of peace.

Yes we'll gather by the river
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints by the river
That flows by the throne of God,
That flows by the throne of God.

10 Ching-a-Ring Chaw

Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching,
Ho-a ding-a kum lar-kee
Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching,
Ho-a ding kum lar-kee

Brothers gather round,
Listen to this story,
'Bout the promised land,
An' the promised glory.

You don' need to fear,
If you have no money,
You don' need none there,
To buy you milk and honey.

There you'll ride in style,
Coach with four white horses,
There the evening meal,
Has one two three four courses.

Ching-a-ring-a ring ching, ching-a ring ching,
Ho-a ding-ding kum lar-kee,
Ching-a-ring-a ring ching,
Ho-a ding kum lar-kee.

Nights we all will dance,
To the harp and fiddle,
Waltz and jig and prance,
"Cast off down the middle."

When the mornin' come,
All in grand and splendour,
Stand out in the sun,
And hear the holy thunder.

Brothers hear me out,
The promised land's a-come-in',
Dance and sing and shout,
I hear them harps a-strummin'.

Ching-a-ring ching ching,
Ching-a-ring ching ching,
Ching-a-ching ching-a-ching
Ching-a-ching Ching-a-ching
Ching-a-ring-a ching ching
Ching-a-ring-a ching ching
Ching-a-ring-a Ching-a-ring-a
Ching-a-ring-a
Ring ching ching ching chaw.

GERALD FINZI

LET US GARLANDS BRING op. 18

William Shakespeare

11 Come away, come away, death

(1938) 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, when 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!

12 Who is Silvia?

(1929) from *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 heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admiréd 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.

13 Fear no more the heat o' the sun

(1929) from *Cymbeline*, 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 they 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 sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust

Fear no more the lighting-flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou has 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 renownéd be they grave!

14 O Mistress mine

(1942) from *Twelfth Night*, Act II, scene 3

O Mistress mine, where are your 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

15 It was a lover and his lass

(1940) 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 ...

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 ...

And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crownéd with the prime
In spring time ...

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Folk Song Arrangements – British Isles

16 The Ploughboy

A flaxen headed cowboy,
As simple as may be,
And next a merry ploughboy,
I whistled o'er the lea;
But now a saucy footman
I strut in worsted lace,
And soon I'll be a butler
And whey my jolly face.

When steward I'm promoted
I'll snip the tradesmen's bill,
My master's coffer's empty,
My pockets for to fill.
When lolling in my chariot
So great a man I'll be,
So great a man, so great a man,
So great a man I'll be,
You'll forget the little ploughboy,
Who whistled o'er the lea,
You'll forget the little ploughboy
Who whistled o'er the lea.

I'll buy votes at elections,
And when I've made the pelf,
I'll stand poll for the parliament,
And then vote in myself.
Whatever's good for me, sir,
I never will oppose:
When all my ayes are sold off,
Why then I'll sell my noes.
I'll joke, harangue and paragraph,
With speeches charm the ear,
And when I'm tired on my legs,
Then I'll sit down a peer.

In court or city honour
So great a man I'll be
So great a man, so great a man
So great a man I'll be,
You'll forget the little ploughboy,
Who whistled o'er the lea,
You'll forget the little ploughboy
Who whistled o'er the lea.

17 The Salley Gardens

Down by the Salley gardens
My love and I did meet,
She passed the Salley gardens
With little snow white feet,
She bid me take love easy
As leaves grow on the tree,
But I being young and foolish
With her did not agree.

In a field by the river
My love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder
She laid her snow white hand;
She bid me take life easy
As the grass grows on the weirs,
But I was young and foolish,
And now am full of tears.

18 The Miller of Dee

There was a jolly miller once
Lived on the river Dee;
He worked and sung from morn till night,
No lark more blithe than he.
And this the burden of his song
Forever used to be,
"I care for nobody, no, not I,
Since nobody cares for me.

I love my mill
She is to me like parent, child, and wife,
I would not change my station
For any other in life.
Then push, push, push the bowl,
My boys, and pass it round to me,
The longer we sit here and drink,
The merrier we shall be."

So sang the jolly miller
Who lived on the river Dee;
He worked and sung from morn till night
No lark more blithe than he.

And this the burden of his song
Forever used to be ...
"I care for nobody, no not I,
Since nobody cares for me,
I care for nobody, no not I,
Since nobody cares for me."

19 O Waly Waly

The water is wide, I cannot get o'er
And neither have I wings to fly
Give me a boat that will carry two
And both shall row, my love and I.

O, down in the meadows the other day,
Agath'ring flowers both fine and gay,
Agath'ring flowers both red and blue,
I little thought what love can do.

I leaned my back up against some oak
Thinking that he was a trusty tree
But first he bended and then he broke
And so did my false love to me.

A ship there is, and she sails the sea,
She's loaded deep, as deep can be,
But not so deep as the love I'm in:
I know not if I sink or swim.

O, love is handsome and love is fine,
And love's a jewel while it is new,
But when it is old, it groweth cold,
And fades away like morning dew.

20 Oliver Cromwell

Oliver Cromwell lay buried and dead,
Hee-haw – buried and dead,
There grew an old apple tree over his head,
Hee-haw – over his head.

The apples were ripe and ready to fall;
Hee-haw – ready to fall,
There came an old woman to gather them all,
Hee-haw – gather them all.

Oliver rose and gave her a drop,
Hee-haw – gave her a drop,
Which made the old woman go hippety hop,
Hee-haw – hippety hop.

The saddle and bridle, they lie on the shelf
Hee-haw – lie on the shelf
If you want any more you can sing it yourself,
Hee-haw – sing it yourself.



Art Song is distinguished from other forms of singing by the close attention paid to the mood of the lyrics and the importance of the accompanying piano. It is an intimate and powerful art form bringing together poet, composer, pianist, singer and audience member. But the performance of Art Song is all too rare today. A concern to reverse the diminishing numbers of practitioners and audiences led to the creation of the Song Recital Award in 1995 by Mietta O'Donnell and Tony Knox under the patronage of the distinguished contralto Lauris Elms. Committee members include Professor John Poynter (chair), Michael Bertram, Arnold Bram, Stephen Dee, Margaret Haggart, Daniele Kemp, Tony Knox, Hartley Newnham, Linnhe Robertson, Mary Ryan, Joan Spiller and Maria Vandamme. **Blake Fischer**, with his accompanist **Claire Cooper**, won the Award in 1998. Judges were Margaret Haggart, Maria Vandamme, David Miller, Professor John Poynter.

Introductory notes: Robert Mitchell
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Baritone Blake Fischer graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1995 with a Bachelor Degree in Music. He has since appeared with the Victoria State Opera, Opera Australia, and in various musicals, including *My Fair Lady* and *Chess*. He joined the full-time chorus of Opera Australia in 1997 and has understudied and performed lead roles. Blake and his accompanist Claire Cooper won the Song Recital Award in 1998, which took them to engagements across the country and a recital of Finzi, Butterworth, Britten and Copeland songs, broadcast on ABC Classic FM. He was also a winner in the 1998 Marianne Mathy Award which enabled him to commence his current period of study at the Royal Northern College Of Music in Manchester.
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Claire Cooper (piano) studied with John Winther at the Canberra School of Music, and later at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. She spent five years as répétiteur and accompanist at the Victorian College of the Arts and is currently a member of staff at the Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne as an accompanist. Claire has worked extensively in Melbourne with major music organisations and festivals, and has an extensive and wide-ranging repertoire.





A Shropshire Lad

Blake
Fischer

Claire
Cooper

GEORGE BUTTERWORTH
SIX SONGS FROM 'A SHROPSHIRE LAD'
(1911) A. E. Houseman

- 1 Loveliest of trees** 2'29"
- 2 When I was one-and-twenty** 1'17"
- 3 Look not in my eyes** 1'57"
- 4 Think no more, lad** 1'16"
- 5 The lads in their hundreds** 2'13"
- 6 Is my team ploughing?** 3'25"

AARON COPLAND
Old American Songs

- 7 Long Time Ago** 2'34"
- 8 Simple Gifts** 1'56"
- 9 At the River** 2'46"
- 10 Ching-a-Ring Chaw** 1'38"

GERALD FINZI
LET US GARLANDS BRING op. 18
William Shakespeare

- 11 Come away, come away, death** 3'18"
(1938) from *Twelfth Night*, Act II, scene 4
- 12 Who is Silvia?** 1'29"
(1929) from *Two Gentlemen of Verona* Act IV, scene 2
- 13 Fear no more the heat o' the sun** 5'20"
(1929) from *Cymbeline*, Act IV, scene 2
- 14 O Mistress mine** 2'02"
(1942) from *Twelfth Night*, Act II, scene 3
- 15 It was a lover and his lass** 2'29"
(1940) from *As You Like It* Act V, scene 3

BENJAMIN BRITTEN
Folk Song Arrangements – British Isles

- 16 The Ploughboy** 1'47"
- 17 The Salley Gardens** 2'41"
- 18 The Miller of Dee** 1'38"
- 19 O Waly Waly** 3'29"
- 20 Oliver Cromwell** 0'42"