

What should I say | ELYSIAN FIELDS



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What should I Say: Four Poems of Thomas Wyatt (Matt McMahon)

- I. Stand Whoso List. 4:29 (Track 1)
- ii. Whoso List to Hunt Prelude. 2:17 (Track 2)
- iii. Whoso List to Hunt, I Know where is an Hind. 7:05 (Track 3)
- iv. What should I say 4:33 (Track 4)
- v. They flee from me 6:04 (Track 5)

Southern Cross (Mats Norrefalk; arranged by Siebe Pogson) 4:56 (Track 6)

Dark Dreaming (Siebe Pogson) 5:29 (Track 7)

Elysium (Matt Keegan)

- I. 3:28 (Track 8)
- ii. 3:58 (Track 9)
- iii. 2:57 (Track 10)
- iv. 2:47 (Track 11)

At Carna (Matt McMahon) 6:05 (Track 12)

TOTAL 51:68

Recorded at Free Energy Device Studios Sydney, Australia

Executive Producers — Philip Pogson & Jennifer Eriksson Producer — Llew Kiek

Recorded by — Chris Doherty; Assistant Engineer - Jules Goyen; Edited by Llew Kiek

Additional edits by Matt Keegan & Ritchie Belkner

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Mixed by Ritchie Belkner; Mastered by Michael Lynch, Shoehorse Sound

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Susie Bishop - voice & violin
Matt Keegan - saxophones
Jenny Eriksson - electric viola da gamba
Matt McMahon - piano
Siebe Pogson - bass guitar
Finn Ryan - drums
Produced by Llew Kiek

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Elysian Fields is an experiment in creating improvised, composed and semi-composed repertoire for the rarest of instruments, the electric viola da gamba. The idea emerged out of a sense that I wanted to extend myself musically and personally after years of intensive work on the acoustic version of my instrument. I'd seen people playing the electric viola da gamba on You Tube and decided to try my hand at it.

Relationships were important to me in co-creating Elysian Fields. Although I am classically trained and specialise in French baroque music, I have attended jazz events for years. Matt McMahon and I got to know each chatting about music at jazz gigs. It seemed natural to ask him to write for me and to then for us to play together. I first met Matt Keegan when I taught him at school "a few years back!" Like Matt McMahon, he grasped immediately what I wanted to do with the electric gamba and writes beautifully for the band. Susie Bishop and I have collaborated on several projects across a range of genres. We have always clicked personally and musically. I am a great fan of her voice and violin playing. I love working with our talented young rhythm section: drummer, Finn Ryan and bass guitarist, Siebe Pogson. They not only keep us in time, but their youth and stream of ideas keep us honest. These people are not only amazing musicians, they are wonderful human beings. I am humbled by their generosity and patience in allowing me to become part of their musical world.

Over the past three years we've gone about developing the ensemble in a largely intuitive way. We've written and arranged charts and tried them out, learning as we go. Given the ancient roots of the viola da gamba – the viol family traces its origins back way well before that of the violin – it was inevitable that a multilayered dialogue has emerged between past and present. This involves elements of baroque, classical, jazz, world and folk music. The past-present conversation is evident in the textures we create, the musical languages we explore and even the texts we've set to music such as poems by Thomas Wyatt. In addition, I believe that the 7-string viola da gamba, which is tuned in fourths and a third like a guitar, is a naturally modal instrument and highly suited to the subtle harmonic inflections that Matt McMahon, Matt Keegan and Siebe Pogson create in their compositions. Pulling this all together has been exciting and has changed me forever. I can only hope listeners enjoy the result.

Jenny Eriksson

This CD is dedicated to my parents, John and Lorraine Eriksson, and my parents in law, Ken and Mary Pogson. Thank you for everything.

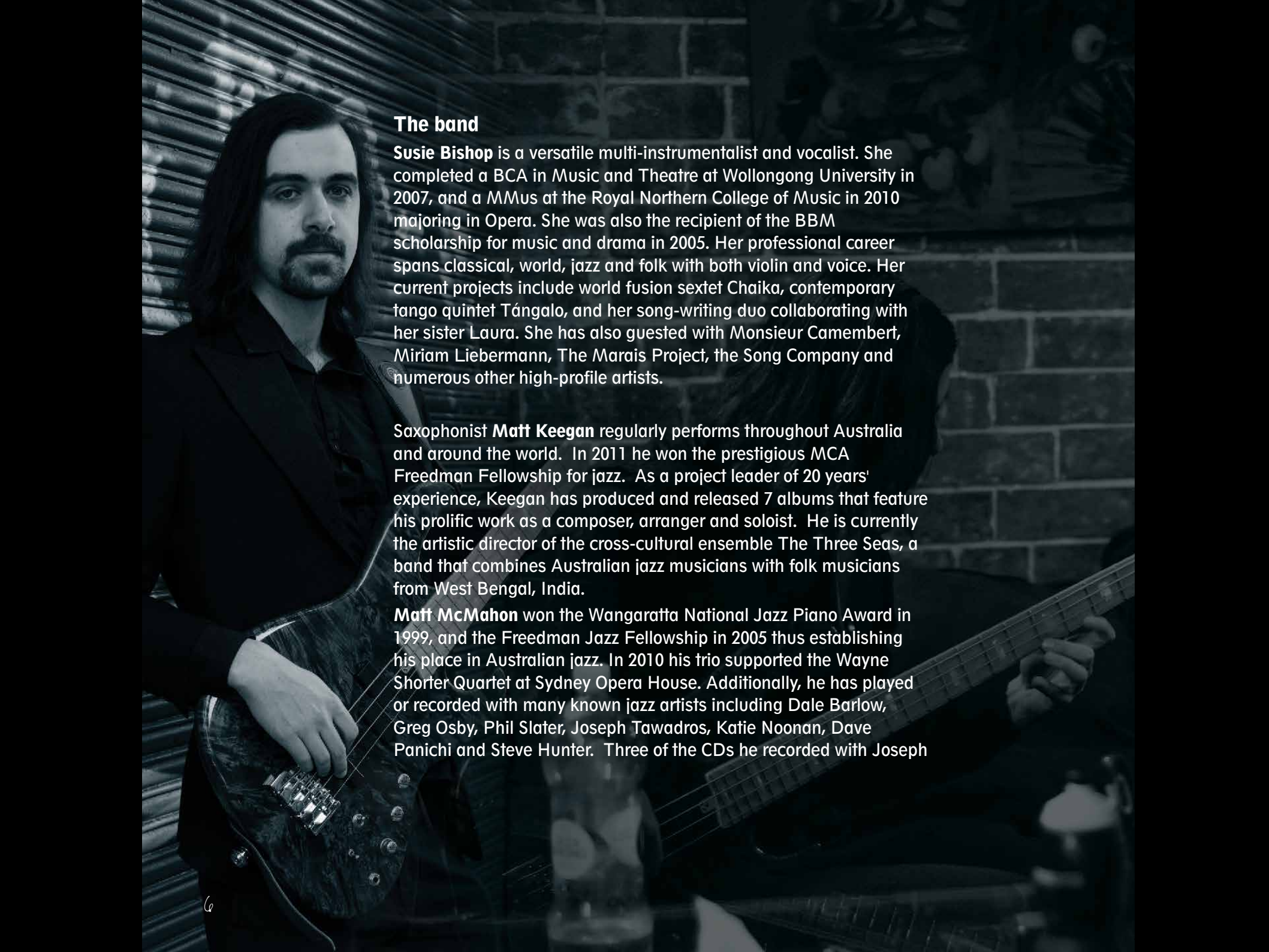




Thanks

In my experience the art is best made in community. Special thanks to those who have supported and encouraged me and the band: Kevin Hunt; Dave Ellis; Geoff Sirmay; Chris Doherty; Jeff Mallia; Keyna Wilkins; James Fraser; Philip Pogson; Michelle Stewart; Copiworld North Sydney; Emily-Rose Šárkova; Steve Elphick; Paul Cutlan; Jan Goorissen; Ritchie Belkner; Jonathan Zwartz; Mara and Llew Kiek; Damien Ricketson; Gun and Dick Norrefalk, Jan Gunnar Hoff, Mats Norrefalk, SIMA and Peter Rechniewski/Foundry616.

We are grateful to those who donated towards the making this CD.



The band

Susie Bishop is a versatile multi-instrumentalist and vocalist. She completed a BCA in Music and Theatre at Wollongong University in 2007, and a MMus at the Royal Northern College of Music in 2010 majoring in Opera. She was also the recipient of the BBM scholarship for music and drama in 2005. Her professional career spans classical, world, jazz and folk with both violin and voice. Her current projects include world fusion sextet Chaika, contemporary tango quintet Tángalo, and her song-writing duo collaborating with her sister Laura. She has also guested with Monsieur Camembert, Miriam Liebermann, The Marais Project, the Song Company and numerous other high-profile artists.

Saxophonist **Matt Keegan** regularly performs throughout Australia and around the world. In 2011 he won the prestigious MCA Freedman Fellowship for jazz. As a project leader of 20 years' experience, Keegan has produced and released 7 albums that feature his prolific work as a composer, arranger and soloist. He is currently the artistic director of the cross-cultural ensemble The Three Seas, a band that combines Australian jazz musicians with folk musicians from West Bengal, India.

Matt McMahon won the Wangaratta National Jazz Piano Award in 1999, and the Freedman Jazz Fellowship in 2005 thus establishing his place in Australian jazz. In 2010 his trio supported the Wayne Shorter Quartet at Sydney Opera House. Additionally, he has played or recorded with many known jazz artists including Dale Barlow, Greg Osby, Phil Slater, Joseph Tawadros, Katie Noonan, Dave Panichi and Steve Hunter. Three of the CDs he recorded with Joseph



Tawadros won the Australian Recording Industry Award for the best World Music Album. McMahon leads his own band The Matt McMahon Trio with bassist Jonathan Brown and drummer Simon Barker, and co-leads the Band of Five Names with trumpeter Phil Slater and drummer Simon Barker.

Jenny Eriksson is one of Australia's best known acoustic viola da gambists and the only performer on the electric version of her instrument. She trained as a cellist at Sydney Conservatorium and undertook post graduate study on the viola da gamba in Holland for three years. She plays a Ruby electric instrument made for her in The Netherlands by Jan Goorissen. She formed Elysian Fields in 2015 with Matt McMahon and Matt Keegan and co-leads the band with them. Jenny commissioned the set list for this CD. She also leads the early music ensemble, The Marais Project and the Musica Viva in Schools group, Da Vinci's Apprentice.

Siebe Pogson learned piano and cello from an early age and took up electric bass at high school. In 2014 he graduated with Bachelor of Music Studies at Sydney Conservatorium majoring in classical piano with Gerard Willems. At high school he studied jazz piano with Kevin Hunt while his initial electric bass lessons were undertaken with Saul Richardson then subsequently with Steve Hunter and Anthony Wellington. Siebe is the founder of jazz-funk five-piece, Funk Engine, who have released two CDs of his original charts.

Finn Ryan originates from the South Coast of Sydney. He inherited a love of music from his father and was brought up with the sounds of post-bop Jazz and improvisation. By the age of 18 he was undergoing apprenticeships with the likes of Tony Buck, Clayton Thomas and Dale Gorfinkel, and had recorded with The Splinter Orchestra and piano trio 3ofmillions (Adrian Klumpes, Abel Cross). These days he can be heard playing anything from AfroBeat with Lyre Byrdland or Hip-Hop with Sydney mc Rapaport, to open improvisations with the Grey Wing Trio (Luke Sweeting, Ken Allars) and psychedelic experiments with free jazz heroes, Prophets.



The Music

What should I say

What should I say has its roots in one of the first pieces I wrote for Jenny, For Thomas Wyatt. Jenny asked me who Thomas Wyatt was and I told her he was one of my favourite poets and had been since my first year University English literature courses. Wyatt was a great innovator and is credited with bringing the sonnet form to England both in translation of Latin verse and in his original poetry. In 2017 Jenny asked if I would like to set some of his poems for Elysian Fields. By this stage singer/violinist Susie Bishop had joined the band and I had in mind her superb music intelligence and excellent diction as well as the ability to use the electrical version of the viola da gamba, an instrument that in its acoustic form would have been well known during Wyatt's lifetime. Each of the poems is first heard in a simple setting, often over a pedal point, then again with more elaborate instrumental accompaniment. (Matt McMahon)

Southern Cross

I first heard this song when holidaying in the Baltic town of Oskarshamn with one of my Swedish cousins, Gun and her husband, Dick Norrefalk. We were talking about jazz when Dick mentioned that his brother Mats Norrefalk was a famous guitarist. He put on a DVD and the first track was of Mats' amazing band playing Southern Cross. I knew immediately that the chart would work for Elysian Fields and asked Siebe to arrange it. I've since found out just how well-known Mats was and is in northern Europe going way back to the early 70s when he was a member of the Swedish fusion band, Saga. Mats wrote the song when he was on national service in the southern hemisphere and saw the southern cross for the first time. I finally got to meet Mats and hear him play while in Stockholm in July 2018. (Jenny Eriksson)



Dark Dreaming

Dark Dreaming started life as a duo for electric viola da gamba and bass guitar. As far as I know, it was the first Australian chart written for that combination, which is not surprising! When Elysian Fields was formed I added parts for piano, saxophone and drums. The piece originates from an image that came to me of a man trapped in a terrible dream he couldn't get out of, so much so that he began to perceive the dream as reality. I was improvising with some chords on my bass and I heard a melody in my head being played on the gamba. I am one of those rare people that has been around the sound of the viola da gamba my entire life, so it was not that hard to write for it. (Siebe Pogson) of what the essence of the band is and how we work together live and in the studio. (Matt Keegan)

Elysium

Elysium is the second piece I've written for Jenny's electric viola da gamba, the first being several charts I composed when I asked her to play with the Matt Keegan Band. At that time, I was really attracted to the fact that Jenny was keen to take herself out of her comfort zone and push into new territory. I thought this was a positive, inspiring energy to harness. In Elysium, which we premiered at the band's first gig in 2015, I've made a conscious effort to exploit the inherent sonic possibilities of the electric gamba. I thought a lot about open strings, keys and range. I wanted Jenny to feel comfortable exploring improvisation and created spaces accordingly. I paid attention to rhythm and how to make a more classically-orientated musician sound and feel comfortable with a band. Melodically, I had in mind the idea of the gamba as a vocalist (most of the time). Jenny told me once that traditionally many musicians saw the gamba as having the sound most like the human voice. There are lots of passages in harmony with the singer which also exploit the vocalising idea. Over the past three years we've played the piece several times. I feel it has really settled as we've got a sense of what the essence of the band is and how we work together live and in the studio. (Matt Keegan)



At Carna

At Carna is one of two pieces commissioned by Jenny for a concert at Sydney Conservatorium in October 2014. Although my background is in jazz and improvised music I've brought other influences and history to this project. I grew up with a love of traditional Irish music in my family and this reveals itself sometimes in my composing. Writing for the electric viola da gamba opens possibilities for the use of piano rather than theorbo (bass lute) or harpsichord because of the electric instrument's extra projection. This allows for an approach that takes the gamba out of its traditional setting. I've tried to compose music that makes use of the natural qualities of the instrument but with a different sound world as its frame. (Matt McMahon)

What should I say: Four Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) was a politician, member of Henry VIII's Court, and lyric poet. He is credited with introducing the sonnet to English literature. He also served as England's ambassador to France and Italy. Wyatt's travels abroad exposed him to different forms of poetry, which he adapted for the English language, most notably, the sonnet. Rumoured to be Anne Boleyn's lover - Boleyn being one of Henry's ill-fated six wives - Wyatt spent a month in the Tower of London until Boleyn's execution for adultery. Many consider him lucky to have escaped death himself. His poem "Whoso List to Hunt", the second song set by Matt McMahon, is thought to be about Boleyn.

1. Stand Whoso List

Stand whoso list upon the slipper top
Of court's estates, and let me here rejoice;
And use me quiet without let or stop,
Unknown in court, that hath such brackish joys:
In hidden place, so let my days forth pass,
That when my years be done, withouten noise,
I may die agèd after the common trace,
For him death gripeth right hard by the crope
That is much known of other; and of himself alas,
Doth die unknown, dazed with dreadful face.

2. Whoso List to Hunt, I Know where is an Hind

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,
But as for me, hélas, I may no more.
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,
I am of them that farthest cometh behind.
Yet may I by no means my wearied mind
Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore
Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,
Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind.
Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,
As well as I may spend his time in vain.
And graven with diamonds in letters plain
There is written, her fair neck round about:
Noli me tangere, for Caesar's I am,
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

3. What should I say

What should I say,
Since faith is dead,
And truth away
From you is fled?
Should I be led
With doubleness?
Nay, nay, mistress!
Though for to take
It is not my mind,
But to forsake [One so unkind]
And as I find,
So will I trust:
Farewell, unjust!
I promised you,
And you promised me,
To be as true
As I would be.
But since I see
Your double heart,
Farewell my part!
Can ye say nay?
But you said
That I alway
Should be obeyed?
And thus betrayed
Or that I wiste
Farewell, unknissed.

4. They flee from me

They flee from me that sometime did me seek
With naked foot, stalking in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,
That now are wild and do not remember
That sometime they put themself in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range,
Busily seeking with a continual change.
Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise
Twenty times better; but once in special,
In thin array after a pleasant guise,
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small;
Therewithall sweetly did me kiss
And softly said, "Dear heart, how like you this?"
It was no dream: I lay broad waking.
But all is turned thorough my gentleness
Into a strange fashion of forsaking;
And I have leave to go of her goodness,
And she also, to use newfangledness.
But since that I so kindly am served
I would fain know what she hath deserved.

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, playing musical instruments outdoors. The woman on the left is smiling and playing a double bass. The man on the right is looking towards the camera and playing an acoustic guitar. They are standing in front of a wooden fence and trees. The entire image has a dark, teal-colored overlay.

Elysium

"In Greek mythology, the Elysian Fields -or Elysium as it is also known - is the final resting places of the souls of the heroic and the virtuous."

i
To travel on the wings of time to some fair place,
And find when comes to pass such beauty and such grace.
The colours of our dreams embrace,
Their once veiled souls now face to face.

The heroes of our world now faded from our view,
In heaven we now see eternities so few.
To judge not is to live anew,
They find their place as we find too.
And now the pain sets in the loss is so acute,
The bravest of us all stand silent and then mute.
To now discern with thoughts astute
Each more resolved to dream through time.
We must be bold to dream, be bold to dream, be bold to
dream through time.

iii

The cool breeze from the harbour-side,
How I long for the sea.
For its years since I lay in your warm, strong arms,
And an age since I smelled your sweet breath.
Now I'm home-bound to take up my rest.

There is love that will last a while,
There is love that will die.
But the love that we share lives beyond the waves,
And is steeped deep in our native land...
And is steeped deep in our native land...

The cool breeze from the harbour-side,
How I long for the sea!
For its years since I lay in your warm, strong arms,
And an age since I smelled your sweet breath.
Now I'm home-bound to take up my rest.

iv

Peace and hope, to have found a place of peace and hope;
Any fear is left be-hind, all our fears are left behind.
Open now, all the gates to that great shard of light;
The bright star that never fails, the warm glow that never dies.
Your dreams will always,
Lead the way for-ward.
Peace and hope and;

Finale

Shine out, that great shard of light that never fails.

Text by Philip Pogson (2015)