

Love Songs for Chorus by American Composers

American Repertory Singers
Leo Nestor, conductor

Come to Me

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Leo Nestor, conductor Sara Stern, flute

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his collection of songs of love and lovers, of tender companions and friends, is an encounter of four centuries of poetry with music of the 20th Century. Such a gathering as this can only bear witness to love's enduring nature. As for love itself, Shakespeare counseled that it is holy, it is merely madness, it is like a child, it pricks like a thorn, and it is a tender thing. So, "if music be the food of love,

Total CD Time: 66:53

play on, give me excess of it."

1 James Hopkins (b. 1939)

Come to Me in the Silence of the Night (composed 1996)

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830–1894)

E. C. Schirmer Music Company

Christina Georgina Rossetti, one of the most important women poets in nineteenth-century England, often found herself caught between worldly passion and celestial faith, a chronic wrenching struggle that was evident both in her life—forcing her to forsake two marriage proposals—and in her poetry. This conflict emerges in her works through the use of existential themes that turn from unrequited love to the renunciation of earthly love with subtle evocations of death. Virginia Woolf once said of Rossetti: "Your instinct was so pure, so intense that it produced poems that sing like music in one's ears-like a melody by Mozart or an air by Glück." Hopkins setting of *Come to me in the Silence of the Night* exquisitely develops Rossetti's lyricism, use of analogy, non-vi-

sual conceits, and short irregularly rhymed lines. The piece was composed in 1996 as a gift to the Pacific Chorale for their performance at the 1997 ACDA Convention in San Diego, California. It is dedicated to Mary Lyons, a musician, generous patron of the arts and a dear friend of the composer. The success of *Come to Me* encouraged the setting of three other poems by Rossetti (*May, Song, A Birthday*) with harp accompaniment. This choral cycle known as *The Rossetti Songs*, was completed in the summer and fall of 1997 as the second commission for the newly created position of Composer-in-Residence for the Pacific Chorale. An optional harp part was later added to *Come to Me*, which in the choral cycle is designated by its original title, *Echo*. After the completion of the cycle, the instrumental part was adapted for small orchestra (flute, oboe, clarinet, harp and strings.) James Hopkins is professor of Composition at the University of Southern California.

Come to me in the silence of the night; Come in the speaking silence of a dream; Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright as sunlight on a stream; Come back in tears, O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet, Whose wakening should have been in Paradise, Where souls brimful of love abide and meet; Where thirsty longing eyes Watch the slow door opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live. My very life again though cold in death: Come back to me in dreams, that I may give Pulse for pulse, breath for breath; Speak low, lean low, As long ago, my love, how long ago! Daniel Pinkham (b. 1923)

Love Can Be Still (composed 1975)

Text: Norma Farber (1909–1984)

Ione Press

Norma Farber (1909-1984) was a poet, singer, actress, playwright, mother and a prolific author of children's books. She published twenty-one books for children, included among these an historical novel (*Mercy Short*) for middle readers. Next to the Bible, Pinkham has set more of Farber's poems than any other author, living or dead.

Love Can Be Still, a cycle of four poems by Farber, was composed by Pinkham in 1975 on a commission from the Kansas State University Concert Choir, Rod Walker, director. This cycle of songs for five voices contains a wonderful dichotomy. Pinkham's style and harmonic language are clearly that of an American composer, yet the techniques of Monteverdi's late madrigals are heard with great subtlety and logic: homophonic duets, trios or an expressive solo emerge from a five-part texture; dramatic, haunting tone colors sustained as in a dramatic "recitative" only to be interrupted by motivic duets; short incisive motifs that climax with all five voices stating the motif in a chordal fashion. Pinkham is a prolific and versatile composer whose music has been aptly described as "complex, unexpected, innovative, yet accessible."

Take me walking in your mind

Take me walking through a clearing Where I have not walked before. Take me walking in your mind through unlikelihood of land.

And there count me your companion and there take no tour alone Take my wander-will by hand, walk me through your meadowmind.

Where we walk and wend in wonder, never footfall feels the ground.

Take my distance into ways which you farthermost suppose.

Take me walking in that country uncreated under sun.
Out of sight and out of sound take me walking in your mind.

3 After the storm a star

After the storm a star came closer, craned and conned the damage below, leaned through dusk, an earthward gazer handing down a grace of glow; neighborly, laid luminous fingers over a languished littered shore: after the storm stars once strangers shared the reckoning and repair.

4 Da Capo

Since death is life again upon my tongue, I sing and sing again what I have sung.

I sing, and sing again, for dearest rote, since death is life again, by word, by rote.

Since death is life again because I need, I sing, and sing again the reaching seed.

I sing, and sing again the stretching leaf, since death is life again through my belief. Since death is life again, trees in a wood, I sing, and sing again, for green, for good.

I sing, and sing again, no throat so strong, since death is life again within the song.

5 Love, bone-quiet, said

Love, bone-quiet, said barely: See, wind on the leaf is lying down, air broods over space in a brown study, pensive streams are inactive, even fish in the pond reflective. Love can be still, and still be love.

Love, bone-quiet, said: Listen, this tree bemuses morning with silences. Mute, the telltale tongues of grass. Subsided: twister, tide, wrath, alarms, loud wants that whack and seethe. Love can be still, and still be love. Love, bone-quiet, said: Come, agree with the world this noon convinced of poise, with murmurous proof in an absent voice, with pivots of breath: a pause, a power so near hub's center they hardly stir. Love can be still, and still be love.

6 David Conte (b. 1955)

Charm Me Asleep (composed 1993)

Text: Robert Herrick (1591–1674)

E. C. Schirmer Music company

Charm Me Asleep is based on a poem (To Music - To Becalm His Fever) by one of England's leading "cavalier poets," Robert Herrick (1591-1674). A disciple of the Elizabethan dramatist Ben Jonson (1573-1637), Herrick's lyrics show significant classical influence. It is, however, through his simplicity, his sensuousness, his attention to design and detail, and his utilization of words and rhythms that he so ably and affectionately serves his muse. Charm Me Asleep is the entreating of one who is tormented by fever and illness, of rambling pleas for the Muse (Music) to calm him, to lull him to sleep, to guide him in his flight to heaven. Conte crafts the delirium of the feverish torments through rapid transitions of tonality and asymmetrical meter. Appropriately, the calm of being both charmed and taking flight are told with tonal clarity and metrical simplicity. During Herrick's lifetime, songs such as this were accompanied on the lute. Even in the chromatic complexities of this piece, one senses the soft strumming, the soothing strokes of the Muse in the midst of the delirium. The work was commissioned by Chanticleer in celebration of its fifteenth anniversary and premiered 3rd August 1993 at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Charm Me Asleep, and melt me so With thy delicious numbers, That being ravished, hence I go Away in easy slumbers.
Ease my sick head, And make my bed, Thou power that canst sever From me this ill; And quickly still, Though thou not kill My fever.

Thou sweetly canst convert the same From a consuming fire, Into a gentle-licking flame, And make it thus expire.
Then make me weep My pains asleep, And give me such reposes, That I, poor I, May think, thereby, I live and die 'Mongst roses.

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those maiden showers,
Which, by the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers.
Melt, melt my pains,
With thy soft strains;
That having ease me given,
With full delight
I leave this light,
And take my flight
For Heaven.

Leo Nestor (b. 1948

Four Songs from the Highlands (composed 1997)

E. C. Schirmer Music company

In 1786, as a result of farming misfortunes and the attempts of his father-in-law to overthrow his marriage, Robert Burns decided to leave Scotland. In order to raise passage money he published a volume of original verse. At a time when Scottish dialect was considered unfit as a medium for dignified writing, his poetry met with such unexpected success that he remained in Scotland. His true contribution to the national spirit however, was in his songs, many of which sprang from actual experiences and were composed to old melodies. Ca' the Yowes (Call the Ewes) first appeared in the publication Scots Musical Museum (1790). The manuscript, which contains the opening bars of the tune, is preserved in the British Museum. Burns noted that this beautiful song "is in the true old Scotch taste." O, My Luve Is Like a Red, Red Rose, originally set by Burns to the tune Major Graham, only became popular in 1821 when it was matched with the tune Low down in the Broom. Nestor's tune is original. The anthem of Scottish folk music Wild Mountain Thyme, is popularly known as Will You Go Lassie, Go. This love song is derived from two songs of quest: one for healing herbs—thyme, and another for water from a magical fountain. Brought to America by the Scots, the song is

most popular in the Southern States, particularly Tennessee and North Carolina.

Fareweel tae Tarwathie (Farewell to Tarwathie), first played by Scottish whalers, is known in the new world as the cowboy classic *The Railroad Corral*. Tarwathie was a farm in the lap of Mormond Hill, near the village of Strichen in Aberdeenshire. When times were hard for the highland drovers they would exchange their crooks for berths on whaling ships. Eventually thousands left the highlands taking both their herding and whaling experience with them. Many settled in Canada and many more were lured out West to become ranchers or cowboys. The Scottish and Gaelic country tunes which they played on tin whistles and fiddles gradually took on the flavor and lyrics of the new world.

Nestor trades the tin whistle for a tender, faintly melancholy, flute obbligato in three of the four settings; shimmering tone clusters roll in like fog o'er the heather; lissome airs and motifs are passed among voices and sustained by lush *divisi* writing; subtle meter changes and tonal modulations give poetic emphasis. The *Four Part Songs from the Highlands* was commissioned for the Chamber Singers of California State University, Hayward, Dr. David Stein, conductor, in celebration of the University's fortieth anniversary.

7 Ca'the Yowes

Text: Robert Burns (1759-1796)

Ca' the yowes, tae the knowes, Ca' them whar the heather grows, Ca' them whar the burnie rows, My bonnie dearie.

Hark the mavis' e'enin' sang, Sounding Cluden's woods amang; Then a-fauldin' let us gang, My bonnie dearie.

Fair and lovely s thou art, Thou hast shown my very heart; I can die but canna part, My bonnie dearie.

Waters wimple to the sea, While day blinks in the lift sae hie, Till claycauld death shall shall blin' my e'e, Ye shall be my dearie.

Ca' the yowes, tae the knowes, Ca' them whar the heather grows, Ca' them whar the burnie rows, My bonnie dearie.

8 O, My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose

Text: Robert Burns (1759-1796)

O, my love is like a red, red rose, That's newly sprung in June, O my love is like a melody That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair thou art, my bonnie lass, So deep in love am I, That I will love thee still, my dear, Till all the seas run dry. Til a' the seas gang dry, And the rocks melt with the sun, And I will love thee still, my dear, While the sands of life shall run.

Sa fare thee weel, my only luve, And fare thee weel, fareweel awhile! And I will come again, my luve, Though it be ten thousand miles.

Will Ye Go, Lassie, Go?

Text: Traditional Scottish Ballad

Oh, the summer time is comin', and the trees are sweetly bloomin', and the wild mountain thyme grows around the purple heather.

Will ye go, lassie, go? And we'll all go together, to pluck wild mountain thyme all around the bloomin' heather.

I will build my love a bow'r near yon crystal fountain, and in it I will pile all the flowers of the mountain.

Will ye go, lassie, go? And we'll all go together, to pluck wild mountain thyme all around the bloomin' heather. If my true love he were gone, I would surely find another, where the wild mountain thyme grows around the bloomin' heather.

Will ye go, lassie, go? And we'll all go together, to pluck wild mountain thyme.

Oh, the summer time is comin', and the trees are sweetly bloomin', and the wild mountain thyme grows around the purple heather.

Will ye go, lassie go?

10 Fareweel tae Tarwathie

Text: Traditional Scottish Ballad

I am bound now for Greenland and ready to sail, In hopes to find riches a-hunting the whale.

Fareweel tae my comrades, for a while we must part, And likewise the dear lass who first won my heart.

The cold coast of Greenland my love will not cheer, And the longer my absence, more loving she'll feel.

Our ship is weel rigged and she's ready to sail, Our crew they are anxious to follow the whale.

Where the icebergs do float and the stormy winds blaw, And the land and the ocean are covered with snow. The cold coast o' Greenland is baren and bare; No seed-time nor harvest is ever known there.

And the birds here sing sweetly on mountain and dale
But there is na a birdie to sing to the whale.

There is no habitation for a man to live there, And the king of that country is the wild Greenland bear,

And there'll be no temptation to tarry long there, With our ship bumper full we will follow the whale. 11 Halsey Stevens (1908–1989

Go, Lovely Rose (composed 1942)

Text: Edmund Waller (1605/6-1687)

Editio Helios (Mark Fosster Music Company)

A prominent and famous speaker in the House of Commons, Edmund Waller was arrested as an accomplice in the royalist conspiracy of 1643 and banished to France. While in exile, Waller's first collection of poems was published. Eight years later, he was pardoned and returned to England where he re-entered Parliament and served until his death. His poetry, like his politics, shunned the artifices of the times. Choosing conventional subjects, familiar images that allowed for graceful classical allusions, Waller was revered as the master of the couplet, which is characterized by its smoothness and simplicity of diction; each line is marked by regular beats and by an observance of caesura. While the "heroic couplet," a stanza of two rhyming lines in iambic pentameter, was the object of his perfection, love was his theme and variation of verse. *Go, Lovely Rose*, written for 'Sacharissa' (Lady Dorothy Sidney), Waller's unrequited love, is the consummate example.

Stevens, a distinguished composer, critic, and scholar (world authority and author of the first full-length work on the life and music of Bela Bartók in English, 1953) parallels Waller as a craftsman of the miniature. Much of Stevens's music depends on his mode of development. *Go, Lovely Rose* relies on a three-note motif, which is varied, developed, extended and transformed amid asymmetrical and changing meters. Like Waller, Stevens composed this piece for his love, his wife, Harriet. He called it his "Prelude in C# Minor" because of its popularity.

Go, lovely Rose,
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now, now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

Halsey Stevens

Campion Suite (composed 1967)

Text: Thomas Campion (1567-1620)

Editio Helios (Mark Foster Music Company)

The English physician Thomas Campion established himself as a composer and poet in the 1590s. His celebrated lyric poems are distinguished for their fine musical quality and charm, more than 119 of his lute-songs and poems were published in his four *Bookes of Ayres* (1601-1617). This "true son of Apollo" said of his work, "I have chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together." The *Campion Suite* features five poems from the four *Bookes of Aryes*. The melodic make-up of the suite is defined by large intervals; rather than ornamenting in the traditional sense, Stevens expands the melody through harmonic variances. The songs are largely homophonic in texture; the melodies, although fairly simple, are defined by their pliant melodic contours and the composer's command of tone color and harmonic shading.

12 There is a Garden in Her Face

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heav'nly paradise is that place.
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow which none may buy
Till cherry-ripe themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of Orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rosebuds filled with snow;
Yet them no peer nor prince can buy,
Till cherry-ripe themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threat'ning with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt with eye or hand
Those sacred cherries to come nigh,
Till cherry-ripe themselves do cry.

13 Thrice Toss these Oaken Ashes

Thrice toss these oaken ashes in the air,
Thrice sit thou mute in this enchanted chair,
Then thrice three times tie up this true love's know,
And murmur soft, She will, or she will not.

Go burn these pois' nous weeds in yon blue fire, These screech-owl's feathers and this prickling brier, This cypress gathered at a dead man's grave, That all thy fears and cares an end may have,

Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round; Melt her hard heart with your melodious sound. In vain are all the charms I can devise She hath an art to break them with her eyes.

14 When to her Lute Corinna Sings

When to her lute Corinna sings, Her voice revives the leaden strings, And doth in highest notes appear As any challenged echo clear; But when she doth of mourning speak, Ev'n with her sighs the strings do break. And as her lute doth live or die, Led by her passion, so must I, For when of pleasure she doth sing, My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring; But if she doth of sorrow speak, Ev'n from my heart the strings do break.

15 To Music Bent

To music bent is my retired mind,
And fain would I some song of pleasure sing,
But in vain joys no comfort now I find;
From heav'nly thoughts all true delight doth spring,
Thy power, O God, thy mercies to record,
Will sweeten ev'ry note and ev'ry word.

All earthly pomp or beauty to express, Is but to carve in snow, on waves to write, Celestial things, though men conceive them less, Yet fullest are they in themselves of light; Such beams they yieldas know no means to die; Such heat they cast as lifts the spirit high.

16 Night as Well as Brightest Day

Night as well as brightest day hath her delight, Let us then with mirth and music deck the night;

Never did glad day such store
Of joy to night bequeath;
Her stars then adore,
Both in heav'n, and here beneath.

Love and beauty, mirth and music yield true joys,

Though the cynics in their folly count them toys; Raise your spirits ne'er so high,

They will be apt to fall; None brave thoughts envy Who had e'er brave thought at all.

Joy is the sweet friend of life, the nurse of blood.

Patron of all health, and fountain of all good.

Never may joy hence depart,
But all your thoughts attend;
Nought can hurt the heart,
That retains so sweet a friend.

Jane Marshall (b. 1924/5?)

Two Madrigals: Then and Now (Composed 1995)

E. C. Schirmer Music Company

Marshall's setting of *A Lover and His Lass* is a frolic in Shakespeare's merriments of spring, "the only pretty ring time," and the delights of young love. With lilting syncopations and "contemporary" harmonies it is an adventure in the witty, the surprising, and the affectionate. Appropriately, it was composed as a gift for the sixteenth wedding anniversary of the composer's son (Peter) and his wife (Allison Vulgamore). The both of whom are also musicians. *An Older Lover and His Lass*, the second of the set, is actually the older of the two—perhaps appropriately so—and was written for the composer's husband in 1995, the year in which they both celebrated their 70th birth-days. The return of melodic and rhythmic materials from the first setting, although languid by comparison, reminds the "old lovers" of their youth ("hey and a ho and hey nonino!"). The lyrical quality and "traditional" harmonies portray a contentment that only old lovers possess, like that of settling into a comfortable, familiar old chair.

17 A Lover and His Lass

Text: William Shakespeare from As You Like It, Act 5, Scene 3

It was a lover and his lass,
with a hey and a ho and a hey- nonny-no!
That o'er the green cornfield did pass,
hey-nonny-no, hey-nonny-no!
In the springtime, only ring time, birds do sing,
hey-ding-a-ding-ding, hey-ding-a-ding-ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye these pretty country folks would lie: This carol they began that hour, how that life was but a flower. And therefore take the present
with a hey and a ho and a hey-nonny-no!
For love is crowned with the prime,
hey-nonny-no, hey-nonny-no!
In the springtime, only ring time, birds
do sing,
hey-ding-a-ding-ding, hey-ding-ading-ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

18 An Older Lover and His Lass

Text: Jane Marshall after Shakespeare

An older lover and his lass,
with a hey and a ho and a hey-nonny-no!
Did o'er the browning cornfield pass
In the fall fall time, the last, the best of all time,
And songbirds trilled, "fulfilled, fufilled!"
Old lovers love the Fall.

Between the acres, stalk by stalk These weathered country folks would walk; The carol they recalled, that hour, How that love was but a flower:

They therefore laud the seasoning time with a hey and ho and a hey-nonny-no! For love is gent'lest past its prime In the fall time, the last, the best of all time, When songbirds trilled, "fulfilled, fulfilled!"

Old lovers love the Fall.

Samuel Barber (1910–1981

Reincarnations, Opus 6 (composed 1937-40)

Text: James Stephens (1882-1950)

G. Schirmer, Inc.

James Stephens (1882-1950) was one of the leading figures of the Irish literary renaissance, a movement aimed at reviving ancient Irish folklore, legend and traditions in literary works. Two of the songs in the *Reincarnations* cycle are, in the words of Stephens, "after the Irish of Raftery," i.e., they are translated and reworked from the Gaelic songs of the blind Irish poet/harpist Anthony Raftery (1784-1835); Samuel Barber, distinguished himself as a "melodist" and was often at his best when writing for voice. Stephens' poems provide Barber with soaring lines and rhythmic swing, with imagery enough to suggest harmonic color and tang. *Reincarnations* is Barber at the height of his lyrical prowess: intense, brooding, and compelling.

Mary Hynes of County Clare is said to have died in 1769 in the *Thoor Ballylee* tower. This passionate love poem is arguably the best-known verse not only of Raftery but also of the Irish language. An exercise in vocal agility, *Mary Hynes* is set with the contrapuntal flair of a renaissance madrigal amid "Stravinskian" rhythms and dissonances.

Anthony O'Daly is a lament to the martyred leader of the Irish resistance movement known as the "White Boys." Raftery was present in 1820 when O'Daly, falsely accused of firing at another man, was hanged. Barber sets the name "Anthony" to an unforgiving drone sounding either above or below the melody in all but four measures; the melody spirals from beginning to end on the sequencing of a three-note motif repeated in canon. The Coolin is based on an old Irish tale of unknown origin. The word coolin refers to a lock of hair or a "curleen" that grew on a young girl's neck, thus a term of endearment. This song of pastoral enticements is appropriately cast as a Siciliana. Alternating meters of 12/8 and 9/8, dovetailing poetic lines dance until the day's end amid tenderness and amity.

Ballylea!

Mary Hines

Of my heart!

She is the sky She is a rune! She is above Of the sun! She is the dart The women Of love! She is the love

Of the race of Eve. As the sun

Is above the moon!

Lovely and airy, The view from the hill That looks down on

Is good, until By great good luck You see The Blossom of Branches Walking towards you, Airily, airily.

But no good sight

Anthony O'Daly

Since your limbs were laid out The stars do not shine! The fish leap not out In the waves! On our meadows the dew Does not fall in the morn, For O Daly is dead!

Not a flower can be born! Not a word can be said!

Not a tree have a leaf! On our meadows the dew Does not fall in the morn, For O Daly is dead.

Anthony! After you There is nothing to do! There is nothing but grief!

The Coolin (The Fair Haired One)

Come with me, under my coat, And we will drink our fill Of the milk of the white goat, Or wine if it be thy will.

And we will talk, until Talk is a trouble, too. Out on the side of the hill. And nothing is left to do,

But an eye to look into an eye; And a hand in a hand to slip, And a sigh to answer a sigh, And a lip to find out a lip!

What if the night be black! And the air on the mountain chill! Where the goat lies down in her track, And all but the fern is still!

Stay with me, under my coat! And we will drink our fill Of the milk of the white goat, Out on the side of the hill!

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