

Sonnets and Epigrams

for voice and lute



David Protheroe

THE LUTE SOCIETY MUSIC EDITIONS

Sonnets and Epigrams for voice and lute
by David Protheroe

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Typeset by the composer, printed and published by The Lute Society 2019

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Introduction

There is something magical about the sound of a plucked lute accompanying a voice. The hundreds of lute ayres published by Dowland and others are of course inimitable. I was prompted to compose "Of Orpheus" for a lute song course when Jacob Heringman invited us to bring lute songs of all periods including modern. I also transcribed a favourite Quilter piano song for lute. These suggested to me that the sound world of the lute song would be an apt way to express my own responses to Elizabethan poetry.

The poems

"Amoretti" is a cycle of 88 sonnets written by Edmund Spenser in 1595, addressed to his future wife Elizabeth Boyle. They were written on successive days in the period around Easter, and each sonnet refers loosely to the church liturgy for that day. For example, the word "snare" in "Her golden tresses" (28 February) occurs in both psalms 140 and 141, and the idea of washing in "Her name upon the strand" the baptism rituals surrounding Low Sunday (the first Sunday after Easter).

Shakespeare's sonnet 130 is a send-up of courtly lute songs which favourably compare a lover's attributes with nature's beauties.

"Orpheus with his lute" was the set text for a Lute Society composition competition, which led me to compose for the lute for the first time. The version in this book has been revised and includes a bass viol part.

"Variation" is a poem about how a subject can be variously expressed in poetry and music. I'm grateful to Lynda Sayce for finding the poem.

Collections of epigrams modelled on Martial's, making fun of contemporary figures thinly disguised by classical names, were popular around 1600. I've chosen two epigrams related to the lute.

"Sevens" is based on the traditional riddle "As I was going to St. Ives". I've set it in 7/8 time, and invented a second verse to make it a dialogue between two singers.

Joanna Tyldesley has been a member of the Lute Society since it started in 1956. She wrote the poetic fragment "Of Cupid" during the lute song course, and asked me to set it.

Vocal part

The songs are written at pitch suit a medium to high voice (range c'-f'), but a lower voice can sing them with an appropriately pitched lute.

The voice should be almost conversational, light enough to blend with the lute, but still expressive with dynamic variation and clear enunciation.

Metronome marks are indications only. You may well decide on a completely different tempo!

Lute part

Except for "Variation", which is for a trio of six-course lutes, the lute parts are written for a seven-course renaissance lute in G with the 7th course tuned to D, but can be played on lutes at other pitches. If playing a six-course lute, play the low D and F an octave up rather than omitting them.

Right hand fingering is marked only occasionally: one dot for the index finger, two dots for the middle finger, and a vertical dash for the thumb. Otherwise, follow 16th century practice by alternating the thumb middle finger with the index finger to differentiate strong and weak notes. Where arpeggios are marked (a sloping line) play them slowly and distinctly. Elsewhere, arpeggiate as you wish.

Left hand fingering (finger numbers and barres) are helpful suggestions: in general, notes are held as long as practicable.

I've included a few short "lute songs in disguise" for lute solo.

David Protheroe, Farnham, June 2019

Her golden tresses

Edmund Spenser
Amoretti: Sonnet 37

DAVID PROTHEROE

♩ = 66 Flowing

What guile is this, that those her gol- den tress- es She doth at- tire un- der a net of gold: And

8 with sly skill, so, so cun- ning- ly them dres- ses That which is gold, or hair, may scarce be told?

14 Is it that men's frail eyes which gaze too bold, She may en- tan- gle, she may en- tan- gle in that gol- den

22 snare: And, be- ing caught, may craft- i- ly en- fold their weak- er hearts, which are not well a- ware? Take heed, take

34

heed there-fore mine eyes, how ye do stare hence-forth too rash-ly on that guile-ful net, In which if ev-er ye,

45

ev-er ye en-trap-ped are, ev-er ye en-trap-ped are, ev-er ye en-trap-ped are, Out of her bands

53

ye by no means shall get. Fond-ness it were for an-y be-ing free To co-vet

62

slower

fet-ters though they gol-den be! Though they gol-den be!

Her name upon the strand

Edmund Spenser

Amoretti: Sonnet 75. To his future wife Elizabeth Boyle

DAVID PROTHEROE

$\text{♩} = 60$

(Ssh...) One day I wrote her name up- on the strand, But came the waves and wash- ed it a- way(Ssh...)

8

A- gain I wrote it with a se- cond hand, But came the tide and made my pains his prey. Vain man (said she) that

15

dost in vain as- say, A mor- tal thing so to im- mort- al- ise, For I my- self shall like to this de-

21

cay, And eke my name be wip- ed out like- wise, Not so, (quod I) let

28

bas-er things de-vise to die in dust. But you shall live by fame; My verse your

34

vir-tues rare shall et-ernise, And in the heav-ens write your glor-ious name. Where when-as death shall

41

all the world sub-due, Our love shall live, and lat-er life re-new.

1) Bar 32: If the lute is only fretted up to "n", play fret "o" on the table, just beyond "n".

2) Bar 34: eternise: make eternal

The rolling wheel

Edmund Spenser
Amoretti: Sonnet 18

DAVID PROTHEROE

♩ = 72

The rol- ling wheel that run- neth oft- en round, The hard- est steel, in

11

tract of time doth tear: And driz- zling drops, that of- ten do re- dound, The firm- est

21

flint doth in con- tin- u- ance wear: Yet can- not I, with man- y a droop- ing tear

31

And long en- trea- ty, soft- en her hard heart, That she will once vouchsafe my plaint to hear, Or look with

40

pit- y on my pain- ful smart. But when I plead, she bids me take my part; And when I weep, she

49

says, "Tears are but wat- er"; And when I sigh, she says, "I know the art"; And when I wail, and when I wail,

58

she turns, she turns, she turns her- self to laugh- ter.

69

So do I weep, and wail, and plead in vain, While she as steel and flint, doth still re- main, doth

78

still re- main,

False compare

Shakespeare
Sonnet 130

DAVID PROTHEROE

♩ = 112 Fairly fast

My mis- tress' eyes are..., are noth- ing like the sun; Cor- al is far more red

The first system of the musical score for 'False compare' consists of six measures. The first measure is a whole rest. The second measure is in 4/4 time and contains the lyrics 'My mis- tress' eyes are...'. The third measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'are noth- ing like the sun;'. The fourth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'Cor- al is'. The fifth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'far more red'. The sixth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'far more red'. The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature of 3/4. The bass line features a 3/8 time signature in the first measure, a common time signature in the second, and a 3/8 time signature in the third. The lyrics are written below the treble staff, and the bass line is written below the treble staff.

than her lips' red; If snow be white, why then her breasts, - - her breasts - - -

The second system of the musical score consists of six measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time and contains the lyrics 'than her lips' red;'. The second measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'If snow be white,'. The third measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'why then her breasts, - -'. The fourth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'her breasts - - -'. The fifth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'her breasts - - -'. The sixth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'her breasts - - -'. The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature of 3/4. The bass line features a 3/8 time signature in the first measure, a common time signature in the second, and a 3/8 time signature in the third. The lyrics are written below the treble staff, and the bass line is written below the treble staff.

are dun; If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

The third system of the musical score consists of six measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time and contains the lyrics 'are dun;'. The second measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.'. The third measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'are dun;'. The fourth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.'. The fifth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'are dun;'. The sixth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.'. The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature of 3/4. The bass line features a 3/8 time signature in the first measure, a common time signature in the second, and a 3/8 time signature in the third. The lyrics are written below the treble staff, and the bass line is written below the treble staff.

I have seen ros- es da- mask'd, red - and white, But no such ros- es see I in her cheeks;

The fourth system of the musical score consists of six measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time and contains the lyrics 'I have seen ros- es da- mask'd, red - and white, But no such ros- es see I in her cheeks;'. The second measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'I have seen ros- es da- mask'd, red - and white, But no such ros- es see I in her cheeks;'. The third measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'I have seen ros- es da- mask'd, red - and white, But no such ros- es see I in her cheeks;'. The fourth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'I have seen ros- es da- mask'd, red - and white, But no such ros- es see I in her cheeks;'. The fifth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'I have seen ros- es da- mask'd, red - and white, But no such ros- es see I in her cheeks;'. The sixth measure is in 3/4 time and contains 'I have seen ros- es da- mask'd, red - and white, But no such ros- es see I in her cheeks;'. The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature of 3/4. The bass line features a 3/8 time signature in the first measure, a common time signature in the second, and a 3/8 time signature in the third. The lyrics are written below the treble staff, and the bass line is written below the treble staff. The tempo marking 'slower' is placed above the final measure.

35 slower still

And in some per-fumes is there more de-light Than in the breath that from my mis-tress reeks.

43 rit. broadly

a tempo

I love to hear her speak yet well - I know That mus-ic

51

- hath a far more plea-sing sound: - I grant I nev-er saw a god-dess

58 tempo primo

go; My mis-tress when she walks, - treadson the ground: And yet, by heav'n, I think my love as

66 rall....

rare As an - y she, as an - y she be-lied with false com-pare.

Orpheus with his lute

For voice, lute and bass viol

Shakespeare *Henry VIII* Act 3 Scene 1

DAVID PROTHEROE

♩ = 72

Orph- eus with his lute

with his lute made trees, And the moun- tain tops that freeze, Bow them-

selves when he did sing.

To his mu- sic plants and flowers Ev- er sprung as sun and

showers there had made a last- ing spring.

31

Eve- ry thing that heard him play, Ev'n the bil- lows of the sea, Hung their heads and then lay

36

by. In sweet mu-

41

sic is such art,

46

Kil- ling care and grief of heart Fall a- sleep, or hear- ing,

53

die.

see next page for Bass viol part

Orpheus with his lute

♩ = 72 play these four bars 5 times ----->

Bass viol

play these four bars 4 times ----->

Variation

For voice and three lutes

Joshua Sylvester
Voice and Lute 2

DAVID PROTHEROE

♩ = 100

5

Voice

Tenor lute 2 (G)

Va- ry, re-
a

3 c a a d c a d a c a c d e c a e a e c a d c a c a d c a

10 15

va- ry, tune and tune a- gain A- non to this string, and a- non to that:

c a e c e c d c c a d c a e a a c e a b c a c a b c d c a c d a c d e c

20 25

Bass, tre- ble, te- nor, swift,... slow sharp and

B a d c c x a a a a c a d c e c a d c a d a c c a a e a a e c

30 35

flat, Thy one same sub- ject in a sun- dry strain, To rep- re-

b d a a b d a c d b a c b d a d c a b d d a c d b a c d b c e a c d f d

40 45

sent, by thy so di- verse dit- ties, the dy- ing world's so di- verse al- ter- a- tions: Yet will the

e c a c e a a b e c a a b a a b d a b b b b a a a d a d c

50 55

world have still more var- i- a- tions, And past thy verse, thy var- i- ous, var- i- ous sub- ject

c c c c e c c a a c d c e c a a a d a a a c e d d c a

60

yet is.

a a c e a a a d a e a e c e a

Epigram: Silus

Henry Porter
from *The Mousetrap* (1606)

DAVID PROTHEROE

♩ = 72

Slightly awkwardly

Si- lus, Si- lus has sold his crim- son sat- in

5

suit, And needs would learn to play up- on the lute; 'Tis well done, Si- lus,

9

for such suits soon waste, Where- as thy skill in lutes will ev- er last.

Lute song in disguise: A flourishing age

apologies to Sermisy

Epigram: of Orpheus

Edward Guilpin
from *Skialethia* (1598)

DAVID PROTHEROE

♩ = 108 *1st time cheerful, 2nd time exasperated*

Or- pheus hath wed a young lust- y wife, And all day long up-

8

on his lute doth play; Doth not this fel- low lead a mer- ry life,

14

Who plays con- tin- u- al- ly both night and day? with abandon

Lute song in disguise: If she can excuse my complaints

If she can excuse my complaints

apologies to Dowland

Sevens, or 2,802?

Traditional
A Dialogue

DAVID PROTHEROE

♩ = 240

δ f δ a	c δ c δ	a c a c	δ a c δ c δ a	c a δ f c δ a	c a δ f c δ a
$\frac{7}{8}$ a a c b	a c a c	a e a	c c	a	a

7 *with attitude*

1.(1st voice) As I was go- ing to St. Ives,		Ives,		I met a man with sev- en wives,	
2.(2nd voice) As you were go- ing to St. Ives,		Ives,		You met a man with sev- en wives,	
c a δ a δ a	c a δ a c δ a	f a δ c	δ c	c a δ f c δ a	
a	a	a	a	a	

Each wife had sev- en sacks, I see your sim- ple trick,		each sack had sev- en cats, No, I am not that thick,		each cat had sev- en kits, you just for- got to say... Kits, cats, sacks, (tacet..)	
a b δ b a b	δ a b δ b δ	δ a b b a b		f e δ c δ	
a c	a	c		a δ a a	

wives: ...)	How man- y were go- ing to St. Ives?	How man- y were go- ing to St. Ives?		How man- y were go- ing to St. Ives?	
...)	...that they were all going the oth- er way!	...that they were all going the oth- er way!		...that they were all going the oth- er way!	
δ a b c δ a b c	δ a b δ δ δ b	δ f δ a	c δ c δ	a c a c	δ a c δ c δ a
a c	a c	a c	a c	a e a	c c

1st voice

2nd voice

3.As I was go- ing to St. Ives

I met a man with sev- en

3.As you were go- ing to St. Ives

c a f c d a *c a f c d a* *c a a d a* *c a a c d a* *f a d c*

a *a* *a* *a* *a a*

26

wives,

Each wife had sev- en sacks,

each sack had sev- en cats,

each cat had sev- en kits

You met a man with sev- en

wives, each had sev- en sacks,

each sack had sev- en cats,

each cat had sev- en kits

c a d c a d c *a b d b a b* *d a b d b d* *d a b b a b*

a *a b c* *a a* *c*

30

Kits, cats, sacks, wives: How man- y were go- ing to St. Ives?

One!

Kits, cats, sacks, wives: How man- y were go- ing to St. Ives?

One!

f e d c d *d b d a b c* *a b d c a c* *f d a* *d f d a* *d f d a* *f*

a a a *a b c d a b c* *a b d c a c* *a b* *d a b* *d a b* *a a*

Of Cupid

Joanna Tyldesley (2016)

DAVID PROTHEROE

$\text{♩} = 48$ Expressively

A - mor Ven- us' son Young gold curl - ed

5 *portamento*

beau- ty, Where have you gone? Where have you gone? love - ly bad boy,

9 *portamento* *roughly*

love - ly bad boy, bad boy, bad boy, I'm miss- ing you!

Lute song in disguise: Lagrimas (tango)

10

apologies to Dowland

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the various singers and instrumentalists who have tried earlier drafts of the songs, and in particular Pat Glynn, Jacob Heringman, Chris Goodwin and my wife Jacqueline Protheroe, for their support and encouragement.