

Songs in Divers Humours

for voice and lute



Musikalische Unterhaltung (Musical Entertainment) - Caspar Netscher 1665 (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)

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Introduction

This is my second collection of lute songs. The first, "Sonnets and Epigrams" was published by the Lute Society in June 2019.

I've called this collection "in divers humours" not only because the songs reflect varying moods, but because I've taken differing approaches to the lute accompaniment: sometimes lyrical with the lute expressing its own motifs in response to the voice, or elsewhere chordal, where the rhythmic figure in the lute part colours the mood of the song.

The first five songs are settings of Elizabethan lyrics, four sonnets and one song from a play. The sonnet hasn't been set to music as much as other verse forms (witness the large number of twentieth century settings of songs from Shakespeare's plays but few settings of his sonnets), but in my view the narrative structure of the sonnet lends itself well to the lute song.

There are settings of two modern poets with connections with the current lute world, Helen Overell and Glen Weir.

Finally, I've set two nonsense poems by Edward Lear, based on tunes I wrote when I was seventeen.

Vocal part

The pull-out vocal part has a keyboard transcription of the accompaniment to aid singers unfamiliar with lute tablature. It also includes the texts of the poems at the end for reference.

The songs suit a medium voice (they generally range c'-d" or c'-e") at written pitch, which assumes a lute in G. *The duck and the kangaroo* is a dialogue for contralto (duck, b-c") and bass (kangaroo, F-c').

The songs should be sung expressively to bring out the meaning of the text, even where I haven't marked the dynamics or expression. Tempo indications are approximate, but too slow is usually better than too fast.

Spelling and punctuation are modernised in the Elizabethan texts; the later texts follow the original.

Lute part

The lute part is written in tablature for a six-course in renaissance tuning, except song 2 (*Fair ye be, but cruel*) which needs a seventh course, though the bass D can be played an octave higher instead.

Fingering is sometimes marked: otherwise the right hand generally follows renaissance practice and alternates thumb and index finger. The left hand should aim to sustain notes where possible: the keyboard version gives an indication of how notes might be sustained. In the tablature, lines indicate where a note should be held or released if it isn't obvious.

There are some non-standard articulation marks: accents in *Cope, Steeple Aston* to mimic the quill, staccatos in *Calico pie* to suggest the scampering mice, and grace notes in *The duck and the kangaroo* to convey the bouncing kangaroo.

The book has been typeset with Francesco Tribioli's Fronimo 3.0 tablature software.

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1. Shall I then silent be?

Edmund Spenser
- Amoretti: Sonnet 43 a)

DAVID PROTHEROE

with passion *mp*

Shall I then si- lent be, or shall I speak? and if I speak, her wrath re-

9

new I shall; And if I si- lent be, my heart will break, or cho- ked be with o-ver- flow- ing

17 *mf*

gall. What ty- ran- ny is this, both my heart to thrall, and eke my tongue with proud re- straint to tie That neith- er

25 *pp*

I may speak nor think at all, but like a stu- pid stock in sil- ence die! Yet I my

31 *mp*

heart with	si- lence	sec- ret-	ly will teach to	speak and my just cause to
♩. ♯			♩	♩. ♯
a a a c	a b b c	c e e b	d a	c a c c b a
c	c	e	c	a c e d e

36

plead, And eke mine eyes, with	meeke hu- mil- i-	ty, love- learn- ed	let- ters to her
♩. ♯	♯ ♯ ♯ ♯	♯	♩. ♯
a c	a e e c	c b c a	a
c b c	c e	c b c	c c a e a

42 *mf*

eyes to read;	Which her deep wit, that	true hearts' thought can
♯	♯	♯ <i>colla voce</i>
c a d c	c c e	a a c c a c a e a c
c	c	c a a

47 *rit*

spell, will soon con-	ceive, and	learn to con- stue	well.
♩. ♯	♯	♯	♩. ♯
e a a d	a a e a	c a a c e a	a e c a a
c c c e	c	a b c e	c d c

rit

- a) On each day in spring 1594, Edmund Spenser wrote an amoret, or love sonnet, to his future wife Elizabeth Boyle, often referring to the church reading for that day.
- b) stupid stock: the reading for 6 March 1594, Luke 17, mentions the mulberry tree (Latin: morus arbor). Elizabeth would surely have construed Edmund's flippant mistranslation (morus = moronic, arbor = piece of wood).
- c) my heart with silence... speak: i.e. though silent, I will communicate my thoughts to her through my poetry.

2. Fair ye be, but cruel

Edmund Spenser
- Amoretti: Sonnet 56

DAVID PROTHEROE

7th course in D

not fast, but with suppressed fury *mf* < >

Fair ye
Fair ye

6

be, be, sure, but sure, but cru- el and un- kind, as is a
be, be, sure, but proud and pi- ti- less, as is a

12

ti- storm ger that that with greed- i- ness strate; Hunts af- ter blood: when
Find- ing a tree a-

16

he by chance doth find a fee- - ble beast, doth fell- y him op- press.
lone - all com- fort- less, beats on it strong- ly it to ru- i- ate.

20 *mf*

Fair ye be, sure, but hard and ob-sti-nate,

25 *p*

as is a rock a- midst the rag- ing floods; 'Gainst which a ship, of

30 *mp*

suc- cour des- o- late, doth suf- fer wreck both of her- self and goods. That ship, that tree, and

35 *mf*

that same beast am I whom ye do wreck, do ru- in, do

39 (b)

ru- in, ye do ru- in and de- stroy

3. Echo's lament for Narcissus

Ben Jonson
 - *Cynthia's Revels: act I scene ii*

DAVID PROTHEROE

Plaintively

Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears; Yet slow- er, yet, O faint- ly, gen- tle

8

springs! List to the hea- vy part the mu- sic bears, Woe weeps out her di-

15

vi- sion, when she sings. Droop herbs and flo- wers; Fall grief in

20

sho- wers; Our beau- ties are not

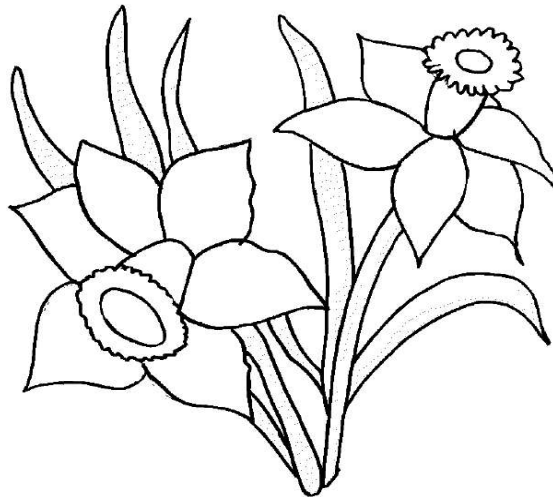
24

ours.	O, I could still, like melt- ing	snow u- pon some	crag- gy hill,	Drop, drop,	drop, drop,	
a	c	a	a	b	b	
<i>f</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	
e a b d a c e a	a c e	a d b	d c b d	d c a d	b a	b a

31

Since nat- ure's	pride is	now a	with- ered	daf- fo-	dil.	
	<i>c</i>	<i>a f</i>		<i>d</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>
a	a c	e a	a a	b a	a a	
a e	a c	e a	a a	b a	a a	

(d)



4. In praise of music and poetry

Richard Barnfield
- Poems in Divers Humours ^{a)}

DAVID PROTHEROE

Slow, amiably

If mu- sic and sweet po- et- ry a- gree, as they must needs, the

7

sis- ter and the bro- ther, then must the love be great twixt thee and me, be- cause thou lov'st the

12

one, and I the oth- er. Dow- land to thee is dear, whose heav'n- ly touch up- on the

18

lute doth ra- vish hu- man sense, Spen- ser to me, whose deep con- ceit is such, as pas- sing all con- ceit, needs no de-

24

fence.	Thou lov'st to hear the	sweet- test mel- o- dious	sound that Phoe- bus'	lute the queen of	mu- sic
┌		┌	┌	┌	┌
a		e b e	f f b b	b c	b
c a	b	b	f	e	b

30

makes; and	I in deep de-	light am chief- ly	drow- ned when-	as him- self to	sing- ing he be- takes.
┌	┌	┌	┌	┌	┌
c b	a c	a a	b b a	b a	b a
b c	b c	c a c	a c	a c	c a

37

One god is	god of both, as	po- ets feign;	one knight	loves	
┌	┌	┌	┌		
b a	e a b	c a c a	b e	a a	c f a
a	e a	e a c a	e	a a c e	a e b

43

both,	and	both in	thee re-	main.
	┌	┌	┌	┌
c	f	a	a	a
a	c	a c e c	a c	a

a) "In praise of music and poetry" was dedicated by Barnfield "to his friend, Master R.L.", possibly the poet Richard Linche.

It was wrongly attributed to Shakespeare in the anthology "The Passionate Pilgrim" (1599).

b) the tune here is a snatch from Dowland's "His Golden Locks".

5. Laudate Dominum!

Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke
- the Sidney Psalter a)

DAVID PROTHEROE

Joyfully

O laud the Lord, the God of hosts com- mend, Ex- alt His
With all your might lift His al- might- i- ness: Your great- est

9

power, ad- praise up- vance on His ho- great- li- ness: ness: Spend. Make trum- pets' noise in

16

shrill- est notes as- cend: Make lute and lyre His lov- ed fame ex- press: Him let the

23

b)

pipe, Him let the tab- ret bless, Him or- gan's breath, that winds or wat- ers lend.

32

Let ring- ing tim- brels so His hon- our sound,

39

Let sound- ing cym- bals so His glo- ry ring, That in their tunes such me- lo- dy be

47

found, as fits the pomp of most tri- um- phant King. Con- clude: by

58

all that air, or life en- fold, let high Je- ho- vah high- ly be ex- tolled.

a) translating the psalms into English verse forms suitable for singing (metrical translation) was popular in the 16th century Protestant tradition. Brother and sister Philip and Mary Sidney began to translate all one hundred and fifty, a project completed by Mary after Philip's death. The translations circulating in manuscript were widely admired: a copy was presented to Queen Elizabeth. This is the last psalm, Laudate Dominum, which is in the form of a sonnet.

b) tabret: a small tabor (drum)

c) conclude: this is not just the closing couplet of this psalm, but of the Sidneys' project to translate all the psalms metrically.

6. Cope, Steeple Aston

Helen Overell

DAVID PROTHEROE

mf

I-ma-gine this, the last stitch put in place, threadfas-tened,

accented

10

trimmed, pins re-moved, need-les coun- ted in, the gar- ment fi- nished,

rit *a tempo*

rit *a tempo*

18

the tall- est, called up- on to stand, trans- formed by the man- tle— silk

mp

26

backed with li- nen, sto- ries told, sewn on in gold, in e- ve- ry sort of hue— eve- ry- one crowds round to

mf

36

mar- vel; here, an an- gel robed in green, winged ha- loed, sea- ted on a horse, plays the lute—

p *mf* *rit* *a tempo*

rit *a tempo*

48 *p*

plucks the strings with a quill, left hand po-si-tioned for a three note chord;

rit

57 *a tempo* *mf*

the dap-pled steed with wa-vy mane, head til-ted, glan-ces to-wards the eight fold rose, each

(strike same *a tempo* pose as angel)

67 *f*

inch of stance—ex-u-be-rant de-light.

The Steeple Aston cope is a surviving example of medieval embroidery from the 1330s which includes an enchanting depiction of an angel on horseback playing the lute. Helen Overell's poem about it was published in Lute News in 2019.



The Steeple Ashton Cope (detail) ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

7. My ladye lay in cooling waters

Glen Weir ^{a)}

DAVID PROTHEROE

Dreamily

1. My la- dye lay in cool- ing wa- ters

5

Float- ing, stretch'd, with sil- ken skin; Per- fect breasts, her

8

dark haire flow- ing, Mer- cy! How my head did spin.

to coda ⊕ after verse 5 D.C. al coda

⊕ CODA

12 *molto rall.*

(6.) For- get you this day, by the poole.

⊕ CODA

+In subsequent verses, adjust the underlay in bars 7 and 9 so the most important word comes on the high note

a) This setting of his courtly poem as a lute song was commissioned by Glen Weir, a lute society member living in Adelaide.



Drawing by Glen Weir

1. My ladye lay in cooling waters,
 Floating, stretch'd, with silken skin;
 Perfect breasts, her dark haire flowing,
 Mercy! How my head did spin.

2. My ladye sat in cooling waters;
 Placed my hand upon her breast;
 With a sigh she gently kissed me,
 Would I ever touch the rest?

3. My ladye stood in cooling waters,
 Circled by my eager arms;
 In soft moonlight, her figure glowing,
 Such sweet delights flow'd from her charms.

4. My ladye lay in cooling waters
 Swooning, soft with angel face;
 Could it be that I am dreaming?
 Then awake without her grace.

5. My ladye walked from cooling waters
 Followed I, to show my heart;
 She turned to me, her dark eyes flashing,
 'Tis the end? Or but the start?

6. My ladye dress'd near cooling waters
 Donning silks and flowing tulle;
 Said I to her, I cannot ever
 Forget you this day, by the poole.

8. Calico pie

Edward Lear

- Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany, and Alphabets

DAVID PROTHEROE

mf (h)

1. Ca-li-co Pie, the lit-tle birds fly Down to the ca-li-co tree, Their

mf

7

wings were blue, And they sang "Til-ly-loo!" Till a-way they flew, And they ne-ver came back to me! They

12 (h) *mp*

ne-ver came back, they ne-ver came back, They ne-ver came back to me! 2. Ca-li-co Jam, the

mp

19

lit-tle fish swam, Ov-er the syl-la-bub sea, He took off his hat, To the sole and the sprat And the Wil-le-by-wat, But he

25 (h)

ne-ver came back to me! He ne-ver came back, he ne-ver came back, He ne-ver came back to me!

pp (staccato)

32 *pp* (h)

3. Ca-li-co Ban, the lit-tle mice ran to be read-y in time for tea, Flip-pe-ty flap, they drank it all up, and

pp (h)

39

danced in the cup, But they ne-ver came back to me! They ne-ver came back, they ne-ver came back, They ne-ver came back to

45 *f* (h)

me! 4. Ca-li-co Drum, the grass-hop-pers come, the but-ter-fly, bee-tle and bee,

f (thumb strum) (h)

52

Ov-er the ground, a-round and a-round, With a hop and a bound, But they ne-ver came back to me! They

57 *plaintively* (h)

ne-ver came back, they ne-ver came back, They ne-ver came back to me!

plaintively (h)

9. The duck and the kangaroo (a dialogue)

Edward Lear

- Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany, and Alphabets

DAVID PROTHEROE

The duck

1. Said the duck to the kang-a-roo, 'Good gra-cious! how you hop!

with bounce

d e* e
a b b
e e e e e

*grace notes on the beat, a semitone below main note

5

O-ver the fields and the wa-ter too, as if you would ne-ver stop! My life is a bore in this nas-ty pond, and I

e e e e e e b b e e e e

8

long to go out in the world be-yond! I wish I could hop like you!' said the duck to the kan-ga-roo.

e e e e e e b b e e

11

2. 'Please give me a ride on your back!' said the

c c c c d d d d a a c a c
a a a a a a a a

14

duck to the kan-ga-roo. I would sit quite still, and say no-thing but "Quack!" the whole of the long day through! And we'd

Chord symbols: a, a a c a, c, a, a, a, a, a a

17

go to the Dee, and the Jel-ly Bo Lee, O-ver the land and o-ver the sea;- Please take me a ride! O do! said the

Chord symbols: a, a, a a, a a, a e, a e, a e, c

20

The kangaroo

duck to the kan-ga-roo. 3. Said the kan-ga-roo to the duck, "This re-

Chord symbols: a, a b a a b, b a a b, b a

24

quires some lit-tle ref-lec--tion Per-haps on the whole it might bring me luck and there seems but one ob-jec-tion, which

Chord symbols: e f, b a, b c a

27

is, if you'll let me speak so bold, Your	feet are un-pleas-ant-ly wet and cold, And would	prob-a-bly give me the roo- ma-
┌		
♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩

30

		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The duck</i></p>	
tiz' said the kan-ga-roo.		4. Said the	duck, 'As I sate on the rocks, I have
┌	┌		
♩	♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩	♩

34

thought o-ver that com-plete-ly, and I	bought four pairs of wor-sted socks which	fit my web-feet neat-ly. And to
♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩

37

keep out the cold I've bought a cloak, And	e-ver-y day a cig-ar I'll smoke,	All to fol-low my own dear true
		┌
		┌
♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩
♩	♩	♩

40 *slower* *The kangaroo*

love of a kan-ga-roo. 5. Said the kang-a-roo 'I'm rea-dy

slower

44

all in the moon-light pale; But to ba-lance me well, dear duck sit stea-dy and

*Play these arpeggios slowly

The duck *a tempo*

So a-way they went with a hop and a bound, And hopped the whole world three times round; and quite at the end of my tail!

51

who so hap-py, —O who, as the duck and the kan-ga-roo?

R

