

## Gerald Finzi: *Let Us Garlands Bring* (1942)

Finzi is a British composer of note from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Upon its completion, he dedicated this song cycle as a 70<sup>th</sup> birthday present to Ralph Vaughan Williams. The lyrics are all songs from Shakespeare plays, where the actor is meant to actually sing instead of speak the text. There are dozens of famous settings of these texts, and many new productions of Shakespeare plays also see the premieres of new and different tunes setting these words (in various musical styles).

### I. Come Away, Death

*Twelfth Night*, Act II, Scene 4. Feste, the fool, is paid by Duke Orsino to sing him a song.

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, where 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!

### II. Who is Silvia?

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act IV, Scene 2. The wealthy, foolish Thurio, Silvia's father's preferred suitor, hires Proteus to woo her with this song (though Proteus actually wants to win her affection himself).

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 admirèd 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.

### III. Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun

*Cymbeline*, Act IV, Scene 2. This funeral dirge is sung over the bodies of Cloten and "Fidele" (actually the princess Imogen in disguise). However she is merely asleep from a potion and awakens later to be eventually reunited with her love Posthumus.

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 thy 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 scepter, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,  
Nor the all-dreaded thunder stone;  
Fear not slander, censure rash;  
Thou hast 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 renownèd be thy grave!

### IV. O Mistress Mine

*Twelfth Night*, Act II, Scene 3. Feste, the fool, is asked to sing a love song by other characters.

O Mistress mine where are you 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.

## V. It was a Lover and his Lass

*As You Like It*, Act V, Scene 3. The jester Touchstone and his intended Audrey hear two pages sing this song in the woods. Touchstone is not overly impressed with the rendition though; upon hearing it, he proclaims it was quite out of tune.

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 springtime, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;  
Sweet lovers love the spring.*

Between the acres of the rye,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
Those pretty country folks would lie,  
*In springtime, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;  
Sweet lovers love the spring.*

This carol they began that hour,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
How that a life was but a flower  
*In springtime, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;  
Sweet lovers love the spring.*

And therefore take the present time,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
For love is crownèd with the prime  
*In springtime, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;  
Sweet lovers love the spring.*