

HIGH VOICE

LOW VOICE

# ELIZABETHAN LOVE SONGS

FIRST SET



*Arranged by*  
FREDERICK KEEL

BOOSEY & HAWKES



TO MY WIFE

# ELIZABETHAN LOVE-SONGS

FIRST SET

EDITED AND ARRANGED,

WITH PIANOFORTE ACCOMPANIMENTS

COMPOSED, OR ADAPTED FROM THE LUTE TABLATURE,

BY

FREDERICK KEEL

Boosey & Hawkes  
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## PREFACE.

THE pleasure gained by the study of the many literary gems contained in Mr. A. H. Bullen's Collections of Lyrics from Elizabethan Song-Books, first led me to look into those Song-Books, with a hope that the music might be found to be as fine as the words. The more I saw of it, the more convinced I became that it was worthy of being rescued from the oblivion into which it had fallen, and I venture to hope that a perusal of the songs in this volume, will lead the reader to whom they have hitherto been unknown, to be of the same opinion. The songs range from 1593 to 1627. The term Elizabethan, therefore, must not be taken too literally in point of date; it denotes rather a certain style of music which had its origin in Queen Elizabeth's reign, and continued through the reign of her successor. The music books of this period are remarkable as having been printed under a number of somewhat arbitrary patents. Thomas Tallis and William Byrd secured the first of these in 1575, and by it, they were able to control the sale not only of their own productions, but also those of other composers—English, French, and Italian; they also had the monopoly of ruling and selling music paper.

The terms of this patent are given at the end of their collection of motets published in 1575 under the title of "Cantiones, quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur," which was printed by Vautrollier, and dedicated to the Queen; it ran as follows:

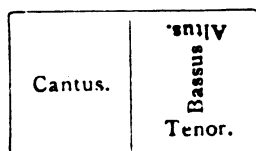
"Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Quene of Englande, Fraunce, and Irelande, defender of the faith, &c. To all printers, bokesellers and other officers, ministers and subjects, greeting. Knowe ye, that we for the especiall affection and good wil that we have and beare to the science of musicke and for the advancement thereof, by our letters patents dated the xxii of January in the xvii yere of our raigne, have graunted full priveledge and licence unto our wellbeloved servaunts Thomas Tallis and William Birde, two of the gentlemen of our Chappell, and to the overlyver of them and to the assignes of them and of the survivor of them for xxi yeares next ensuing, to imprint any and so many as they will of set songe or songes in partes, either in Englishe, Latine, Frenche, Italian, or other tongues that may serve for musicke either in Church or Chamber, or otherwise to be either plaid or soonge. And that they may rule and cause to be ruled by impression any paper to serve for printing or pricking of any songe or songes, and may sell and utter any printed bokes or papers of any songe or songes, or any bookes or quieres of such ruled paper imprinted. Also we straightly by the same forbid all printers booksellers subjects and strangers other than is aforesaid, to do any the premisses, or to bring or cause to be brought out of any forren Realmes into any our dominions any songe or songes made and printed in any forren countrie, to sell or put to sale uppon paine of our high displeasure, and the offender in any of the premisses for every time to forfeit to us our heires and successors fortie shillings, and to the said Thomas Tallis and William Birde or to their assignes and to the assignes of the survivor of them, all and everie the said bokes, papers, songe and songes. We have also by the same willed and commanded our printers maisters and wardens of the misterie of Stacioners, to assist the said Thomas Tallis and William Birde and their assignes for the dewe executing of the premisses."

In 1585 Tallis died, and the patent was, in consequence, at the disposal of Byrd, who leased it to Thomas Este. Este went on printing till 1607, his works issued in that year being "Youll's Canzonets" and Croce's "Musica Sacra." The music books printed by Este are noted for the elegant way in which they were issued; the whole page was sometimes surrounded by an ornamental border, the initial letter of each song was embellished with a fanciful design, whilst the music itself was remarkably clear. In 1598, Thomas Morley succeeded in obtaining a fresh patent, but although he is named as the printer in Carlton's "Madrigals" 1601, he seems to have made William Barley, Thomas Este, and Peter Short his assignes under the patent.

The last book which appears to have been printed under the patent granted to Morley, was Dowland's "Third Book of Songs." 1603. On Morley's death, Barley

obtained the patent, and worked on under it until 1614. After that date, other printers begin to appear, and there is every reason to suppose that patents for printing then came to an end.

It is a well-known fact that the study of music was cultivated in a very thorough manner at the time of Queen Elizabeth, and Thomas Morley, in his "plaine and easie introduction to practiccall musicke," published in 1597, shows that every young gentleman was expected to take his part in a madrigal, and to be able to read it at sight. The books containing the parts were often published in separate volumes, the Cantus in one book, Medius in another, and so on, but the folio volumes containing Ayres, Songes, &c., were so arranged that several persons could sing from one book: for example, a work in four parts was usually arranged in this way: on the left-hand page is the Cantus, which, if it is also to be sung as a song to the Lute, will have the Lute Tablature underneath it; on the other page, the three parts will be arranged so that the performers can stand at three sides of the table; at the bottom of the page is the tenor part, and at the top, facing the other way, is the Altus, while between them, and facing them both, is the Bassus.



In the earlier portion of this period, the only signature placed at the beginning of a piece of music to distinguish the key, was the flat upon the line or space which represented B; all other flats or sharps were marked, as they occurred, before (or under) each note. Later on, two flats, B and E, were shown to indicate the key of B $\flat$ . There being at that time no long compositions with orchestral accompaniment requiring great variety of modulation, the keys above mentioned (applicable to the solemnization of Guido's Gamut by means of the Durum and Molle hexachords) were found to answer every purpose of vocal composition.\*

The following extract from Morley's book already mentioned, shows what he thought of a scholar who brought him a lesson set in three flats. "You have set it in such a key as no man would have done, except it had been to have played it on the organes with a quier of singing men; for indeed, such shiftes the organistes are many times compelled to make for ease of the singers; but some have brought it from the organ, and have gone about to bring it in common use of singing, with bad success if they respect their credit: for take me any of their songes so set downe, and you shall not find a musician (how perfect soever he be) able to sol-fa it right, because he shall either sing a note in such a key as it is not naturally, or he shall be compelled to sing one note in two several keys in continual deduction, and as for them who have not practised that kind of songes, the very sight of those flat cliffes (which stand at the beginning of the verse or line, like a pair of staires, with great offence to the eye, but more to the amazing of the yong singer), makes them mistearm their notes and go out of tune: whereas by the contrary, if your song were prickt in another key, any young scholler might easilie and perfectlie sing it; and what can they possiblie do vith such a number of flats, which I coulde as well bring to passe by pricking the song a note higher? . . . Strangers never pester their verse with those flats, but if the song be naturally flat, they set one flat at the beginning of the verses of everie part, and if there happen any extraordinarie flat or sharp, they will set the signe before it, which may serve for the note and no more."

\* T. Oliphant "Short account of Madrigals."

Another extract from the same book will be of interest as showing the contemporary "rules to be observed in ditting, or composing music to words." "In no composition shall you prove admirable except you put on, and possesse yourself wholly with that vaine wherein you compose, so that you must in your musicke be wavering like the wind; sometimes grave and staide, otherwhile effeminat; you may maintaine points and revert them, use triplaes, and show the verie utmost of your varietie, and the more varietie you show, the better shall you please. If you would have your musicke signifie hardness, cruelty, or other such affects, you must cause the parts proceed in their motions by whole notes, sharp thirds, sharp sixes, and such like; you may also use cadences bound with the fourth or seventh, which being in long notes will exasperat the harmonic; but when you would expresse a lamentable passion, then must you use motions proceeding by half notes, flat thirds, and flat sixes, which of their nature are sweet, specially being taken in the true time and naturall aire with discretion and judgement. Also if the subject be light, you must cause your musicke go in motions, which carrie with them a celeritie or quicknesse of time, as minimes, crotchets and quavers; if it be lamentable, the note must go in slow and heavy motions, as semibreves, breves and such-like. Moreover, you must have a care that when your manner signifieth ascending, high, heaven, and such like, you make your musicke ascend, and by the contrarie, when your dittie speaketh of descending, lowness, depth, hell, and such like, you must make your musicke descend; for as it will be thought a great absurditie to talk of heaven and point downward to the earth, so will it be counted great incongruitie if a musician, upon the wordes 'hee ascended into heaven' should cause his musicke descend. . . . We must also take heed of separating any part of a word from another by a rest, as some dunces have not scrupled to do, which is one of the greatest absurdities which I have seen committed in the ditting of music—you may set a crotchet or minim rest above a comma or colon in the dittie, but a larger rest than that of a minim you may not make till the sentence be perfect . . . also when you would express sighs, you may use the crotchet or minim rest at the most. Lastly you must not make a close (especially a full close) till the sence of the words be perfect, so that keeping these rules, you shall have a perfect agreement, and as it were, an harmonicall concent betwixt the matter and the musicke, and likewise you shall be perfectly understood of the auditor what you sing, which is one of the highest degrees of praise which a musician in ditting can attain unto or wish for."

The instrument used to accompany these songs was the Lute, with sometimes the addition of another instrument such as the Bass Viol. Some of them have voice parts in addition; in such cases, however, the composer generally sets forth on the title page that they can be sung in parts, or by one voice to the Lute. Much of the information we possess concerning this instrument, is obtained from Thomas Mace, a very enthusiastic lutenist, born in 1619. In a work published by him in 1676, called "Musicke's Monument," we find directions for choosing, repairing, tuning, keeping, and performing on, the instrument. The earlier Lutes had six double strings, which were of catgut, and were plucked with the fingers, but in Mace's time the number seems to have increased to 12. Six of these were fretted (the usual number of frets on the finger board being nine); the others were used as bass notes and played with the thumb. There were several ways of tuning, as there were several sizes of Lutes, but the usual English tuning, and the one used for most of the songs in this book was as follows:—



The ordinary musical notation was not used, a special system known as *Tablature* being in vogue. Six lines were employed (corresponding with the six strings), and on

each line letters were placed to indicate the notes—each open string being represented by the letter (*a*), the note produced by stopping the first fret (a semitone higher than the open note) by (*b*)—and so on. The proper keeping of a Lute would seem to have been no small matter, and Mace goes to considerable pains to refute the arguments of those who were unable to appreciate the virtues of the instrument. Amongst the arguments used by its detractors were:—

- 1st. That it is the hardest instrument in the world.
- 2nd. That it will take up the time of an apprenticeship to play well upon it.
- 3rd. That it makes young people grow awry.
- 4th. That it is a very chargeable instrument to keep, so that one had as good keep a horse as a Lute, for cost.
- 5th. That it is a woman's instrument.
- 6th and last (which is the most childish of all the rest). That it is out of fashion.

After saying that "it is confessed by all in general that the Lute is the rarest and most excellent portable instrument in the world," he says concerning the 4th aspersion, that "I never took more than five shillings the quarter from my scholars to maintain each Lute with strings, only for the first stringing I ever took ten shillings," . . . "and that you may know how to shelter your Lute in the worst of ill weathers (which is moist), you shall do well ever when you lay it by in the day-time, to put it in a bed that is constantly used, between the rug and blanket (but never between the sheets, because they might be moist with sweat). A bed will secure from all these inconveniences, and keep your glew so hard as glass, and all safe and sure, only to be excepted that no person be so inconsiderate, as to tumble down upon the bed whilst the Lute is there; for I have known several good Lutes spoilt with such a trick." Matheson in 1713 waggishly remarks that "should you meet a Lute-player eighty years old, you may rest assured he has been tuning sixty years of this; and the worst is, that amongst a hundred players, particularly amongst amateurs, you will find scarcely two who can tune correctly."

In transcribing the Lute tablature of the songs in this volume, it was found that in hardly any case could the accompaniment as it stood be considered suitable for the pianoforte. It was therefore necessary to arrange something more suited to our modern instrument, and this I have endeavoured to do without sacrificir g altogether the characteristics which constitute the charm of the music of the Elizabethan age. In addition to the printed Song-Books which are to be found in the library of the British Museum, I have also consulted the MS. known as Giles Earle's Song-Book, which contains the melody and bass of a number of songs by contemporary writers, most of whom are unknown. The thirty songs in this book represent a mere tithe of the wealth which is open to all who think it worth while to dip into the treasure contained in the Song-Books of the Elizabethan age. It is not contended that all the songs are of equal merit; indeed they are curiously unequal. But, having ranged over a wide field, I have chosen such songs as I thought would make a direct appeal not only to those who are interested in, and appreciate, the peculiar charm of old music, but also to those who can always find pleasure in melodiousness and simplicity, whatever may have been the age which produced it.

My thanks are due to Mr. C. A. Lidgely for kindly revising the proof-sheets, and in addition to the authorities already quoted, I am indebted for much information to Rimbault's "Bibliotheca Madrigaliana," and various articles in the new edition of Grove's Dictionary.