

A

# Midsummer Night's Dream

SONGS AND INCIDENTAL MUSIC ARRANGED  
AND COMPOSED BY

CECIL J. SHARP

FOR GRANVILLE BARKER'S PRODUCTION AT THE  
SAVOY THEATRE, JAN : 1914.

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PRODUCTION OF A MID-  
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AT THE SAVOY THEATRE  
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To  
C. D. S.





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## INTRODUCTION



THE artistic significance of the music, songs, dances, etc., in the Elizabethan poetic drama is usually under-estimated and it is often, though far too hastily assumed that costumes, scenery and music had but a small share in its production. Mr. G. H. Cowling in his *Music on the Shakespearian Stage* has however shown that the drama of Shakespeare's time, so far from being purely a literary production, made "a sensuous appeal, not only to the ear with poetry and music, but to the eye with dress, properties and painted scenes"; and that "whilst the imagery of verse cast a glamour over the imaginative effect of the drama on the intellect and the emotion, there were music and colour for the senses."

If, therefore, we accept this and regard the musical scenes and interludes in Shakespeare's plays, not merely as decorative additions of minor import, but as an integral part of the drama designed to heighten its effect and carry on the action, their adequate treatment becomes a matter demanding serious consideration. Unfortunately, the question is hedged with difficulties and the right handling of the songs and music in the Shakespeare play presents the musician with a problem of a very troublesome nature.

Where the original music used in Shakespeare's day has survived, the simplest and perhaps the safest course—though not, necessarily, the ideal one—is to retain it. But how are we to treat songs, like those in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, of which not a single note of contemporary music has been preserved? Three ways lie before us:—(1) We may adapt Elizabethan music that was originally set to other words; (2) Compose music in the Elizabethan idiom; or (3) commission a composer of our own day to write original music.

To the adoption of the first method there is one grave objection. The text and the music of the Elizabethan song are so closely interwoven—the one is so exact a counterpart of the other—that to substitute other words for the original ones, even when this can be done without the alteration of a single note of the music, will only produce a piece of palpable patchwork, artistically worthless.

The second alternative may be summarily dismissed. The Shakespeare play is the last place into which anyone would wish to introduce anything of the nature of a “fake.”

There is far more to be said for the third method, though even to this many will take objection. It will be urged that modern music is out of place, an anachronism, in an Elizabethan play. To this, however, I do not agree. Indeed, I am prepared to go further and question whether, artistically, it is advisable even to retain those Elizabethan settings of Shakespeare's songs which have happily survived. A great many of these are admittedly very beautiful and characteristic. The retention, however, binds us to the Elizabethan attitude towards Shakespeare, and, by stamping the dramas as mere Elizabethan products lessens the force of the appeal which they would otherwise make to modern ears. To us Elizabethan music must always sound strange, unfamiliar, archaic, and, to some extent, precious.

The archæologist will not, of course, accept this view of the matter. The question, however, lies outside his province; it concerns the artist not the antiquary. To the artist, the fact that the plays were written in the days of Elizabeth is a matter, comparatively, of small import, little more than a mere accident. Shakespeare himself was infinitely more than an Elizabethan. The message he delivered to his contemporaries has, as time has proved, reached far beyond them. Shakespeare the man was an Elizabethan; Shakespeare the artist and dramatist belongs to all time.\*

This is not to assert that there is nothing in the plays to betray their Elizabethan origin. On the contrary there is a great deal. But many of these are not the essential elements, those qualities which make the dramas a living force at the present day. We shall, of course, have to discriminate between the essential and the accidental. Some of the "accidents" may not admit of rejection or variation without incurring artistic loss, such as, for instance, the special form of stage used in Shakespeare's day; while others, e.g. the roofless auditorium, it would be mere pedantry to retain. Each case must be judged on its own merits and on artistic, not archæological considerations.

Similarly with regard to the music. The musician if he feels that Elizabethan music sounds archaic may reject it and substitute music of his own. He is entitled to claim full liberty to settle the matter in his own way, realizing, of course, that his own experiment will sooner or later be itself superseded.

This, indeed, is the fate that has now overtaken Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for all that it won the admiration and approval of his contemporaries whose ideals it so faithfully reflected.

\* With the view expressed in this and the preceding paragraph Mr. Granville Barker is not wholly in agreement.

We of the present generation are no longer under the influence of the wave of German Romanticism which swept over this country sixty or seventy years ago, and, therefore, his music comes to us as an echo of a past age, the expression of an ideal which is not ours. And this must always be so; for the evolution of the art of music has been continuous; each generation of composers has been occupied with the solution of particular technical and æsthetic problems. Consequently, the music of every epoch is distinguished by certain musical figures or idioms, which to the musical historian bear evidence of the date at which it was composed.

While then we admit the right of the modern musician to set the songs in Shakespeare's plays in his own way, we must not forget that this at best is a temporary solution of the problem. Finality can only be attained by making use of music which possesses the same characteristic of permanence and endurance as the drama itself, music which is impervious to the passage of time and will satisfy equally the artistic ideals of every age.

Now folk-music is the only music which fulfils these requirements. It is undated; it belongs to no period; it is a growth not a composition, the product of evolution, not the work of an individual. It is timeless in that it flows beneath the surface ripples set up by the passing fluctuations of taste peculiar to this or that epoch. Tolstoi maintained that no art was worthy of the name but that which was either created by the peasant or which could be understood and appreciated by him. Without endorsing this proposition it may at least be claimed that the music of the peasant is, in one sense, the only permanent music, because it appeals insistently and with equal force to every age.

By using folk-music in the Shakespeare play we shall then be mating like with like, the drama which is for all time with the music which is for all time. An attempt to show that this is practicable—or, at any rate, might

become so in more capable hands—has been made in the present production. Very nearly every tune used in the course of the music is either a folk-air or derived from one. It would, of course, have been easy, by decorating the tunes with modern harmonies, to destroy their folk-character and convert them into music indistinguishable from the art music of our own day and thus defeat our ends. This pitfall, however, can be avoided—as has been done in the present case—by the simple expedient of using diatonic harmonies only and eschewing modulations.

That this is an experiment and a bold, perhaps an audacious one, is freely admitted. Those who wonder why it has not been made before should remember that it is only within the last few years, *i.e.* since our folk-music has been collected, that it has become possible.

I am aware of course that this is a question which is not going to be decided on theoretical or logical grounds. If the method advocated is to carry conviction it must be because the folk-tune is artistically better suited for the purpose in question than any other kind of music. Now the employment of folk-music ensures, or at least renders feasible, a simple and direct treatment of the text which will preserve the rhythm and beauty of the language, and not obscure its meaning. Throughout its evolution the music of the folk-song has always been subservient to the words, the embellishment and interpretation of which has been its sole purpose. The only repetitions of the text that the folk-singer ordinarily allows himself is the “doubling” of the last few words of the stanza.

Now is not this precisely the musical treatment that we would wish to accord to Shakespeare’s songs? If they are to have their full effect they must be rendered concisely and tersely, without verbal repetition, and in such a manner that every syllable of the text may be distinctly heard; and with the utmost brevity, too, if the musical scene or interlude is to fall into its proper

relation with the drama, *i.e.* to aid and carry on the action of the play, not to arrest it.

Mendelssohn, of course, had another aim than this. He proceeded as though he were composing a secular cantata to be performed in a concert hall. To him the words were mere pegs upon which to hang his music, and, consequently, he never scrupled to mutilate the text and obscure its meaning. The two methods may be best exhibited by comparing the folk-song setting of "You Spotted Snakes" with Mendelssohn's treatment of the same words. In the first case the only repetition is of the last two lines of the choral refrain, and the words are set in such a way that there is no reason why every syllable of the text should not be heard as clearly as if it were spoken. In Mendelssohn's hands, the words become an inextricable tangle. The phrase "So, Good-night," or "So, so, Good-night," is reiterated no less than twenty-two times in each stanza; while at the end of the four-lined verse allotted to the First Fairy, the words "Hence Away!" are arbitrarily interpolated, words which do not belong to the song at all, but are directed to be *spoken* by the Second Fairy at the conclusion of the lyric. However beautiful the music may be in itself, such a treatment of the text is quite indefensible. Moreover, the lengthening of the scene, which this method necessarily involves, not only delays the action of the drama but gives to the scene an importance and prominence which it is impossible to believe it was ever intended to usurp.

In the arrangement of the dances a similar principle has been followed. The movements have all been adapted or developed from those of the English folk-dance. The figures and steps, for instance, of the dance in the First Act have been taken mainly from the Country Dance, and those of the two dances in the Fifth Act from the Sword Dance.



No attempt has been made to produce a realistic effect. The absence of the requisite accommodation for a large orchestra, and the lack also of any available body of expert dancers in this country, would alone have rendered this impossible, even if it had been considered appropriate. The dances are, therefore, frankly conventional and set throughout to folk-tunes of regular eight-bar rhythm.

Although the folk-dance bears the same relationship to the ballet as folk-music to art-music, there is this important difference to be noted. For, while supreme within its own sphere, folk-music consists of unharmonized melody only, always used in the service of some other art—poetry, dance, or drama—and covers therefore but an infinitesimally small part of the ground exploited by the art-musician. The folk-dance, on the other hand, is far less restricted in its range. Indeed it is questionable whether the art of dancing will ever be carried very far beyond the point to which the peasant dancer has taken it. At any rate, it cannot be said that any of the attempts to extend it have so far been successful. These have usually resulted in the invention of movements that are either acrobatic and, as such, appeal to the sense of wonder rather than to that of beauty, or of movements that are meaningless, or pretty in a tiresome, superficial sort of way. That the futility of such developments is now becoming generally recognized is shown, on the one hand, by the waning popularity in this country of the pantomimic ballet of the Italian School, and, on the other, by the enthusiasm recently aroused by the Russian Ballet, the steps and figures of which are very intimately related to those of the folk-dance. All, indeed, that the Russians have done is to adapt the figures and movements of their native dances to freer and more irregular rhythms, to blend them in fresh combinations, to adapt them to a larger number of performers and above all to develop a technique which, in the nature of things, the folk-dancer was never able to achieve.

If an English Ballet is ever to be established comparable with that of the Russians, it will assuredly have to be based in like manner upon our own folk-dances. Perhaps the tentative and modest effort that has been made to develop our native dances for the purposes of this production may incite others to make further and more adequate attempts in the same direction.

# Dance, Song and Chorus (Act II, Sc. ii.)

## SELLENGER'S ROUND.

Arranged by Cecil J. Sharp.

*Allegro moderato.*

♩ = 120.

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 6/8. The music begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody in the treble clef is characterized by eighth-note patterns, while the bass clef provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

The second system continues the piece with similar rhythmic patterns. It features a treble clef and a bass clef in 6/8 time. The treble clef staff contains the main melody, and the bass clef staff provides harmonic support with eighth-note accompaniment.

The third system continues the piece with similar rhythmic patterns. It features a treble clef and a bass clef in 6/8 time. The treble clef staff contains the main melody, and the bass clef staff provides harmonic support with eighth-note accompaniment.

The fourth system concludes the main body of the piece. It features a treble clef and a bass clef in 6/8 time. The treble clef staff contains the main melody, and the bass clef staff provides harmonic support with eighth-note accompaniment. The system ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The text "D.C. ad lib." is written above the final measure.

The fifth system is marked "Last time." and "Andante." with a tempo of ♩ = 60. It features a treble clef and a bass clef in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff contains the main melody, and the bass clef staff provides harmonic support with eighth-note accompaniment. The system ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The text "f marcato." and "dim." are written below the final measure.

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§ BARITONE SOLO.  
*L'istesso tempo.*

1. You spot - ted snakes with dou - ble tongue, Thor - ny hedge - hogs,  
 2. Wea - ving spi - ders, Come not here, Hence, you long legg'd

be not seen; Newts and blind - worms, do no wrong,  
 spin - ners, hence! Bee - tles black, ap - proach not near;

*Allegretto grazioso.* ♩ = 63.  
 CHORUS. SOPRANOS & ALTOS.

Phil - o - mel, with mel - o - dy,  
 TENORS & BASSES.

Come not near our fai - ry of queen.  
 Worm nor snail, do no of - fence.

Sing in our sweet lul - la - by: Lul - la, lul - la, lul - la - by,

lul - la, lui - la - by.....

Ne - ver harm, Nor spell, nor charm,

*mf*

So, good night, with lul - la - by, lul - la, lul - la -

Come our love - ly la - dy nigh; So, good night, with lul - la - by, lul - la, lul - la -

*dim.*

by..... So, good-night, with lul - la - by, lul - la, lul - la - by.....

*p* *dim.* *senza rit. pp* *cres.*

*Dal Segno.*

*Andante.* *Dal Segno.*

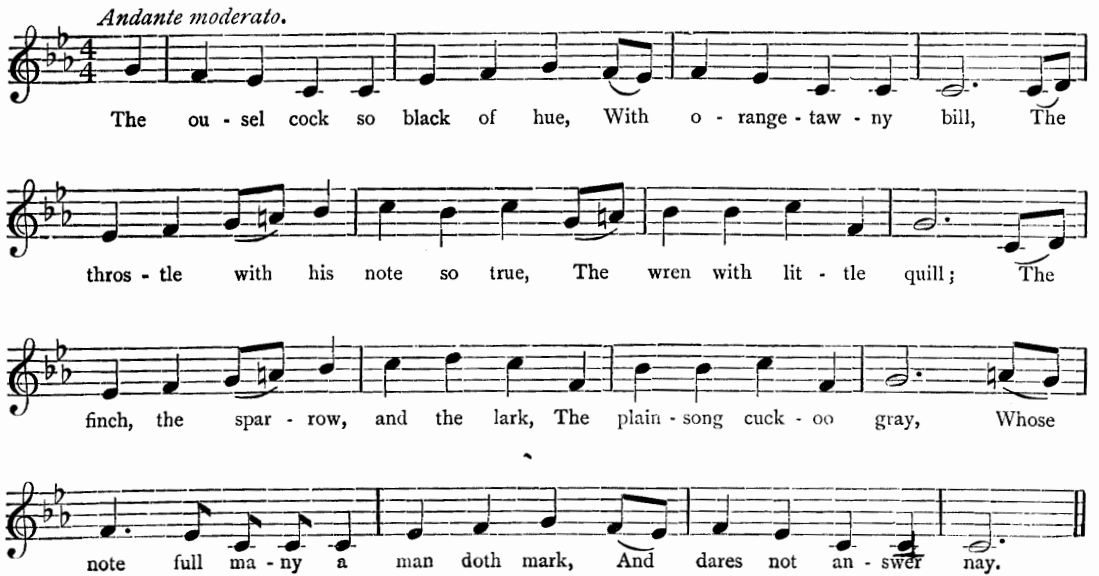
*f marcato.* *mf legato.*

*dim. p* *pp*

## Bottom's Song (*Act III, Sc. i.*)

Collected and arranged by Cecil J. Sharp.

*Andante moderato.*



The ou - sel cock so black of hue, With o - range - taw - ny bill, The  
thros - tle with his note so true, The wren with lit - tle quill; The  
finch, the spar - row, and the lark, The plain - song cuck - oo gray, Whose  
note full ma - ny a man doth mark, And dares not an - swer nay.

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# Still Music (Act IV, Sc. i.)

## THE SPRIG OF THYME.

Collected and arranged by Cecil J. Sharp.

*Andante.* ♩ = 60

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, marked *Andante* with a tempo of 60 beats per minute. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a crescendo hairpin. The second system features dynamics of *cres.*, *dim.*, and *mf*. The third system includes a *mf* dynamic. The fourth system contains an 8-measure rest in the right hand. The fifth system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a decrescendo hairpin. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

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First system of a musical score. The upper staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and the lower staff contains a bass line with chords and eighth notes. Dynamics include *cres.*, *mf*, and *f*.

Second system of a musical score. The upper staff features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3' above it. The lower staff has a bass line with chords. Dynamics include *dim.* and *p*.

Third system of a musical score. The upper staff has a melodic line with a repeat sign at the end. The lower staff has a bass line with chords. Dynamics include *cres.*, *dim.*, and *pp*.

## Bergomask Dance (Act V, Sc. i.)

GREEN SLEEVES.

Collected and arranged by Cecil F. Sharp.

*Allegretto.*

$\text{♩} = 88.$

Musical score for Green Sleeves, arranged by Cecil F. Sharp. The piece is in 6/8 time and features a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The tempo is marked *Allegretto* with a quarter note equal to 88 beats. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score consists of four staves of music, ending with a double bar line and the instruction *D.C. ad lib.*

## Wedding March (Act V, Sc. i.)

LORD WILLOUGHBY.

Arranged by Cecil F. Sharp.

*Allegretto grandioso.*

$\text{♩} = 66.$

Musical score for Lord Willoughby's Wedding March, arranged by Cecil F. Sharp. The piece is in 4/4 time and features a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked *Allegretto grandioso* with a quarter note equal to 66 beats. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score consists of three systems of two staves each. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). The piece concludes with a double bar line.

# Song and Dance (Act V, Sc. i.)

“ROSES, THEIR SHARP SPINES BEING GONE.”

Composed by Cecil J. Sharp.

*Allegretto con moto*

♩ = 66.

*mf* *p*

(WOMEN.) 1. Ro - ses, their sharp spines be - ing gone, not  
(MEN.) 2. Prim - rose, first - born child of Ver,

roy - al in their smells a - lone, But ... in their hue.  
Mer - ry spring - time's har - bin - ger With her bells..... dim.

*mf* *dim.* *p*

Mai - den pinks, of o - dour faint, Dai - sies smell - less, yet most quaint,  
Ox - lips in their cra - dles grow - ing, Mar - i - golds on death - beds blow - ing,

*mf*

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And sweet thyme true.  
Larks'-heels trim.

*dim.* *p* *cres.* *mf* *f*

(QUARTET.) 3. All dear Na - ture's chil - dren sweet,.....

*Dal Segno.*

*dim.* *mf* *p*

Lie 'fore bride and bride - groom's feet,..... Bles - sing their sense !  
bride - groom's..... feet,.....

Not an an - gel of the air, Bird me - lo - dious or bird fair, .....

*mf* *dim.*

The first system of the musical score consists of two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal staves are in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "Not an an - gel of the air, Bird me - lo - dious or bird fair, .....". The piano part begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and ends with a decrescendo (*dim.*) dynamic.

..... Be ab - sent hence !

*p* *cres.* *mf*

The second system of the musical score continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal staves show the lyrics: "..... Be ab - sent hence !". The piano accompaniment features a dynamic progression from piano (*p*) through a crescendo (*cres.*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*).

(TUTTI.) 4. The crow, the slan - d'rous cuc - koo, nor The

*dim.* *p* *mf*

The third system of the musical score begins with the instruction "(TUTTI.) 4. The crow, the slan - d'rous cuc - koo, nor The". The vocal staves and piano accompaniment are shown. The piano part starts with a decrescendo (*dim.*) and piano (*p*) dynamic, then moves to mezzo-forte (*mf*).

bo - ding ra - ven, nor chough hoar, Nor chat - t'ring pie,

*cres.* *f* *dim.* *mf*

May on our bride - house perch or ... sing, Or with them a - ny dis - cord bring,.....

*f*

..... But from it ... fly!

*mf* *cres.* *f*

*dim* *p* *più rall.* *pp*

# Final Dance and Exit (Act V, Sc. i.)

Arranged by Cecil J. Sharp.

*Allegro moderato.*  $\text{♩} = 120$ .

*Play 5 times.*

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NONESUCH.

§

§ Play 4 times.

The first system of music for 'NONESUCH.' consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melody of eighth and quarter notes with various slurs. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a harmonic accompaniment of chords and single notes. A section marked with a paragraph sign (§) is indicated to be played four times.

The second system continues the musical notation for 'NONESUCH.' with two staves, maintaining the melodic and harmonic structure established in the first system.

The third system continues the musical notation for 'NONESUCH.' with two staves, showing further development of the melody and accompaniment.

The fourth system concludes the piece 'NONESUCH.' with two staves. It features a *Dal Segno.* marking above the final measure of the upper staff and a repeat sign with first and second endings. The time signature changes to 6/8.

SELLENGER'S ROUND.

Play 4 times.

The first system of music for 'SELLENGER'S ROUND.' consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a harmonic accompaniment. A section is marked to be played four times.

The second system continues the musical notation for 'SELLENGER'S ROUND.' with two staves, showing further development of the melody and accompaniment.



First system of musical notation, consisting of a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part contains a series of chords and eighth notes, while the bass clef part contains a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

Second system of musical notation. A bracket above the treble clef part indicates a section to be repeated "3 times." The notation continues with chords and eighth notes in both staves.

Third system of musical notation. It begins with the marking "4th time." above the treble clef. The tempo changes to "Piu Lento." and the dynamics to "p Legato." A "marcato." marking is placed over a section of the treble clef. The system concludes with a double bar line and a key signature change to one sharp (F#).

Fourth system of musical notation, continuing the piece with chords and eighth notes in both staves.

Fifth system of musical notation. It features a "dim." (diminuendo) marking over the treble clef and a "pp" (pianissimo) marking at the end of the system. The notation concludes with a double bar line.