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THE MADRIGAL was an invention of 14th-century Italy. Laid aside during the whole of the 15th century, it was taken up again in a new form about 1530 and it remained in favour for another hundred years. No-one knows when English musicians first began to sing Italian madrigals, but by 1588 their vogue had become sufficiently great for Nicholas Yonge, a choirman of St. Paul's Cathedral, to issue his famous *Musica Transalpina*. This was a selection of madrigals for four, five and six voices, composed by the leading Italian musicians of the time, together with two stanzas from Ariosto set by William Byrd (1543-1623). Ariosto's poems, like all the others in the collection, were translated into English for Yonge's publication—" brought to speak English.", as the title-page puts it.

for Yonge's publication—" brought to speak English ", as the title-page puts it. Despite Byrd's essays in the new Italian style, the ordinary musical language used by most English composers of his generation was not in the least Italian, as we can tell from such books as Byrd's own Psalmes, Sonets & Songs (1588), issued a few months before Yonge's collection, his Songs of Sundrie Natures (1589), or Mundy's Songs and Psalmes (1594). The poems found in these collections are ungainly and harsh to the ear, the metres jog-trot, the counterpoint rugged, and the harmony restless. Slowly at first and then more compellingly, the elegance and balance of the Italian style took hold of the English imagination in poetry as in music, and moralizing rhymes gave way to sugared sonnets. The publication of Watson's Italian Madrigalls Englished (1590) gave momentum to the new trend in music, but the composers of this collection were Italians to a man. The true English madrigal was created almost single-handed by Thomas Morley (c. 1558-1602?), chiefly through a sequence of music-books published between 1593 and 1597 containing madrigals, canzonets, balletts, and fantasies of his own composition. The sequence was rounded off with a collection of 4-part canzonets by Italian composers, and a masterly treatise including rules for composing in the newer Italian style-Morley's famous A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musicke (1597). The music in these books ranged from two-part to seven-part writing (the limits maintained by nearly all the English madrigalists), and the books were an instant success. In the short space of four years Morley had successfully grafted on to an English stock almost every shoot of the Italian madrigal: the madrigal proper, the canzonet, the ballett, the pastoral, the wordless fantasia. Classical in their simplicity, smooth-running in their words, fresh in harmony and counterpoint, Morley's madrigalian writings were models for a whole generation of his friends, colleagues and pupils. The astonishing flowering of the English madrigal during the next thirty years was very largely due to the skill, taste, enterprise and discernment of this one remarkable musician.

The life's work of another remarkable musician, the late Dr. Edmund H. Fellowes, has made the riches of this school of English composers known to countless thousands of music-lovers throughout the world. But few madrigals are simple to perform at first sight, and the present book is an attempt to provide what might perhaps be called a plain and easy introduction to practical madrigal-singing, for soprano, alto and bass. The madrigals and other works it contains have been newly transcribed and edited from the original sources, and they have been arranged in increasing order of difficulty. For each piece I have added a few notes on rehearsal and performance. The collection illustrates the four seasons of the English madrigal's growth and decay: the stern Elizabethan winter of Byrd and Mundy; the scented spring of Morley, Wilbye and Bateson; the long Jacobean summer of East, Weelkes, Youll and Ward; the rich autumn of

Tomkins and Hilton. All but two of the pieces in the collection were originally written as trios for three voices. Since the combination of S.A.B. was not much favoured during the years from 1588 to 1627 (the outer limits of the English madrigal and of this little book), I have had to make various transpositions and slight adaptations of the musical texture, to keep within the normal ranges of present-day voices. I have done my best to keep these changes as few as possible, and I have also tried to make them conform to Elizabethan and Jacobean custom.

Numbers 1, 3 and 7 are not madrigals. I have chosen to begin the collection with Byrd's three-in-one canon "Non nobis, Domine", to point the fact that all madrigals are based on the rules of imitative counterpoint; and I have included two songs by Campian and Ford as a reminder of another imported style, the air, which was based largely on French models. In these two songs the alto part given here has been drawn out of the original alto and tenor parts of four-part compositions. Number 17, a beautiful wordless "Aria" from Morley's 1597 treatise, has been fitted with words adapted from a madrigal by Bateson.

Madrigals are epigrammatic poems, set as vocal chamber-music; that is to say, they are sung to perfection when there is no more than one voice to a part. Their revival in our own time has shown what enjoyment they can also bring to groups of singers, and all the pieces in this book can sound well when performed by small choirs. The individual voices, like the three vocal parts, should be well balanced among themselves. Whispering the words to the musical rhythms will help with problems of phrasing, stressing, enunciation and meaning. Stressed notes will usually be those that are a little longer or higher than their neighbours. Bar-lines have been put in for convenience, not necessarily to show stress. The original Elizabethan and Jacobean part-books are unbarred, and they contain no dynamics or tempo marks. Each singer was evidently expected to make up his own mind about interpretation, rather than to accept other people's ready-made opinions. High-pitched notes and phrases must not be allowed to cry down the other parts; low notes and phrases should not be too submerged. The words must always be clear, and the tone-colour and dynamics of the music should match the verbal sense as closely as glove fits hand.

In Armada year, when the true English madrigal was still unborn, Byrd wrote "there is not any music of instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the voices of men, where the voices are good, and the same well sorted and ordered.

> Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing."

Byrd's most distinguished pupil, Thomas Morley, made the English madrigal, so he is entitled to have the last word about it. In his treatise of 1597 Morley wrote "The best kind of [light music] is termed Madrigal . . . a kind of music made upon songs and sonnets, such as Petrarch and many poets of our time have excelled in . . . As for the music, it is—next unto the Motet—the most artificial, and to men of understanding most delightful . . . You must possess yourself with an amorous humour . . . so that you must in your music be wavering like the wind, sometimes wanton, sometimes drooping, sometimes grave and staid, otherwhile effeminate . . . and the more variety you show the better shall you please ". These were hints to would-be composers, but they still remain the best of guides for performers of these enchanting works.

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Beat this in 4, but feel it in 2; since it is a round (in which everyone has the same tune) it may be sung as many times as you like. The range of the alto lies rather low, so make certain that it is heard.

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I





This should flow, almost as if it were a folksong; and let it be simple and unaffected. Try to carry over 'and merry still Do their week-day's work' without breaking it by a breath.







Let this sound cynical if you can; make certain the quavers (in, e.g., bar 3) are exactly together. Altos need to practise the progressions  $F \to D$ ,  $D \to F$ ,  $D \to F$ ,  $F D \to B$ , and so on—but unaccompanied, not with a piano.















## [16] Come sirrah Jack ho

30











42

21 Late in my rash accounting

THOMAS WEELKES (1608)

for - tune was Late in my rash ac - count - ing, My Hearts greed - y in de - sir - ing, Are speed - y in a
You la - dies fair and fic - kle, Whose climb - ing thoughts do mf 1. Late in my rash ac - count - ing, My for - tune was a 2. Hearts greed-y in de - sir - ing, Are speed - y in 3. You la - dies fair and fic - kle, Whose climb-ing thoughts do mf 1. Late in my rash ac - count - ing, My for - tune was a Hearts greed - y in de - sir - ing, Are speed - y in a
You la - dies fair and fic - kle, Whose climb-ing thoughts do a --mount ing, Fa la la la la la, la la la la la, -spir ing, fa fa tic kle, -mount ing, Fa la la la la la, fa - spir ing, la la la la la, fa kle, tic mount ing, Fa la la la la la la la, fa la la la la spir ing, tic kle, cre la la la la la, fa cresc. fa la la la la la la la Ia, la, fa la la la la la, fa







