

EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER

Executive and Artistic Director Matthew White

THE KING'S SINGERS

ROYAL BLOOD: MUSIC FOR HENRY VIII



AT THE CHAN CENTRE

FEB 09
2019

This concert is generously supported by Janette McMillan & Douglas Graves, Birgit Westergaard & Norman Gladstone

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Edward Button
COUNTERTENOR

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Nick Ashby
BARITONE

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Pre-concert introduction at 7 PM
with host Matthew White:

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PROGRAMME

ROYAL BLOOD: MUSIC FOR HENRY VIII

THE KING

Henry VIII: Pastime with good companie

THE PRAYER

William Byrd: Ne irascaris, Domine – Civitas sancti tui

THE QUEEN

William Byrd: O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth, our Queen

THE CELEBRATION

Benjamin Britten: Choral Dances from Gloriana

THE DEDICATION

Thomas Weelkes: As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending

THE HERALD

Thomas Tomkins: When David heard

THE CORONATION

Henry Purcell: I was glad

THE LESSON

Richard Rodney Bennett: The seasons of his mercies

INTERVAL

THE LEGACY

Trad. (arr. Bob Chilcott): Greensleeves

Trad. (arr. Goff Richards): Dance to thy daddy

Trad. (arr. Gordon Langford): The oak and the ash

Trad. (arr. Gordon Langford): Bobby Shafto

THE SIGNATURE

A selection of songs, to be announced during the concert,
in The King's Singers' signature close-harmony style.

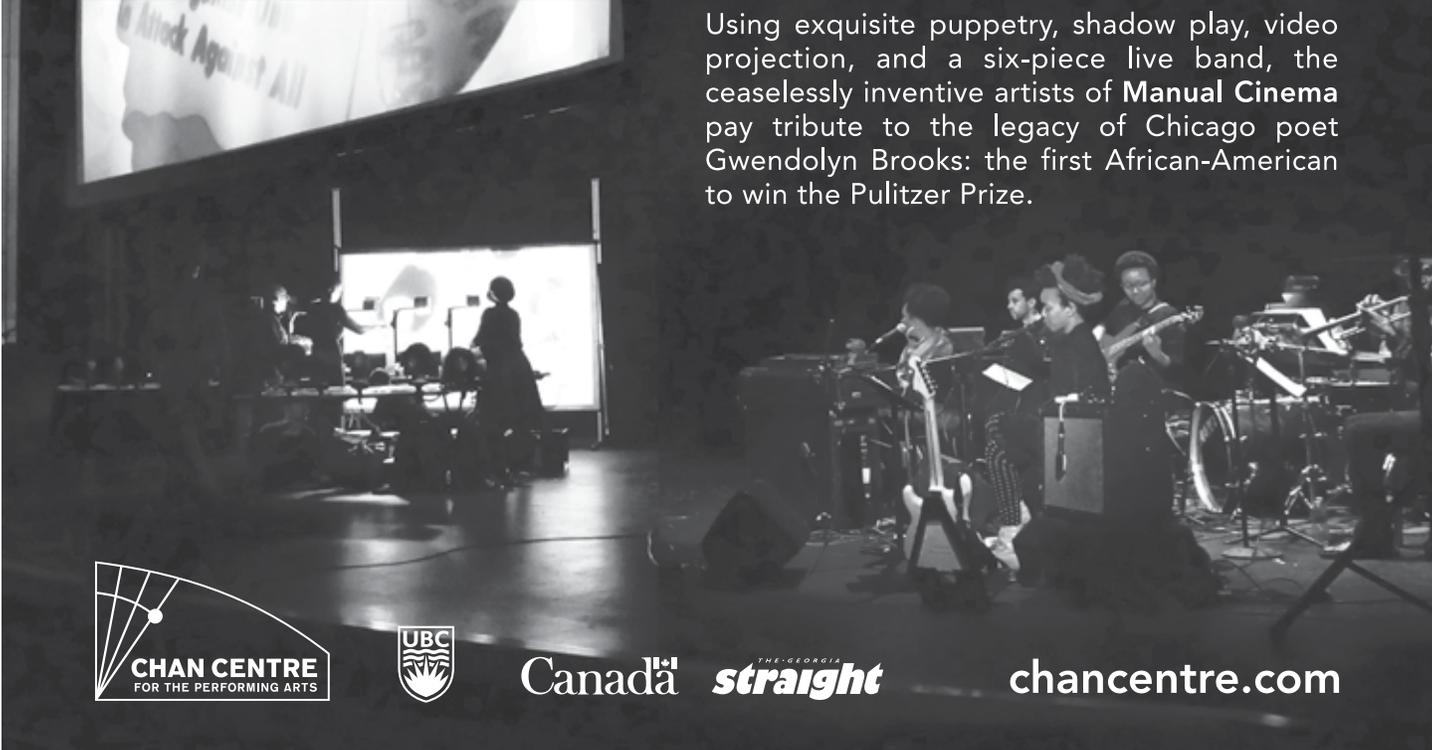


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at the Chan Centre

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THE KING'S SINGERS

The King's Singers were officially born on 1st May 1968, when six recently-graduated choral scholars from King's College, Cambridge, gave a concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the Southbank in London. This group had formed in Cambridge and had been singing together for some years in a range of line-ups under a different name, but this big London debut was the launchpad for the five-decade-long career of The King's Singers we know now. Their vocal make-up was (by chance) two countertenors, a tenor, two baritones and a bass, and the group has never wavered from this formation since. 2018 marks the 50th birthday of the group, and to celebrate, The King's Singers are presenting their anniversary season:



GOLD. Everything in this GOLD season, from triple-album to book and concert tour, celebrates the amazing musical heritage of The King's Singers, and also looks at the bright future of vocal music in all its forms.

As former members of King's College Choir (Cambridge), traditional choral repertoire pulsed through the veins of these founding King's Singers, and it has never left the group's performances. But what really distinguished The King's Singers in the early years was their musical versatility. They were a weekly fixture on prime-time television, celebrating popular music never usually touched by choral ensembles, and their unique British charm, combined with their musical craft, captured audiences' hearts the world over. The group has consistently been welcomed on the world's great stages throughout its history - from London's Royal Albert Hall to the Opera House in Sydney, New York's Carnegie Hall, Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts, and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw - as well as being ambassadors for musical excellence across the globe. To this day, they still prize the precision of their craft and musical diversity is among their most cherished trademarks.

The King's Singers' have accumulated many glowing reviews from the world's great musical publications, two Grammy® Awards, an Emmy® Award, and place in the Gramophone magazine's inaugural Hall of Fame: not to mention some of the other fantastic - and wacky - awards bestowed upon them over the course of their 50-year history. One of the keys to the group's success has been the slow turnover of its members. Including the current six singers, there have only been 26 King's Singers since 1968, which has allowed the techniques that guide every aspect of the group's music-making to be inherited and refined without getting lost through a rapid change of line-up.

The group's ongoing commitment to enriching the world of music has led to numerous wonderful collaborations with all of kinds of extraordinary musicians. In their early years, the group's sound was informed by the work of arrangers like Gordon Langford, Daryl Runswick and Goff Richards, many of whom had worked extensively with brass bands. Writing for voices with this specific experience helped to develop the blended 'close-harmony' sound that has become a hallmark for so many King's Singers performances and recordings since. In more recent times, individual King's Singers such as Philip Lawson and Bob Chilcott have written music prolifically from within the group. This music sits alongside a panoply of commissioned works by many of the supreme composers of our times - including Sir John Tavener, György Ligeti, Toru Takemitsu, John Rutter, Luciano Berio, Nico Muhly and Eric Whitacre.

The group's mission has always been to expand its repertoire not just for itself, but for ensembles and choirs of all kinds around the world, with much of their commissioned repertoire and arrangements in print through the publisher Hal Leonard. In fact, over two million items from their King's Singers collection have been shared with their customers worldwide.

This ongoing commitment to spreading great music incorporates a lot of teaching, both on tour and at home. The group has always led workshops across the world as they travel, and week-long residential courses now also take an important place in the annual calendar, when the six King's Singers work with groups and individuals on the techniques of ensemble singing that have governed how they make music to this day.

The world may have changed a lot in the fifty years since the original King's Singers came together, but today's group is still charged by the same lifeblood - one that wants to radiate the joy that singing brings us every day, and that is as determined as ever to give joy to audiences with virtuosity and vision for an exciting musical future.

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PROGRAMME NOTES

Early in his reign as King of England, King Henry VIII oversaw the completion of a beautiful chapel at King's College in Cambridge; it was a chapel that his grandfather Henry VI had commissioned in 1441, and a building which physically dwarfed everything surrounding it in the busy town of Cambridge. It was the ultimate statement of faith, and its soaring fan-vaulting, elaborate stained glass windows, and flying buttresses all pointed heavenwards. It was part of the University of Cambridge, an institution which had already existed for hundreds of years by the time Henry VIII ascended to the throne, and the great chapel would be an everlasting monument to the piety of the Tudor kings who created it. Today it continues to provide a place of breathtaking beauty and stillness in the heart of the University, and the chapel's choral tradition, founded by King Henry VI in the fifteenth century still continues to provide beautiful music for the liturgy to this day.

One small footnote in the musical history of King's College Chapel is the founding there of The King's Singers. Six students who sung in the choir in the 1960s decided to continue singing together after leaving university, and created a new institution which is now in its fifty-first year of touring the world, spreading the joy of a cappella music. The blood of The King's Singers is itself 'royal blood', as the group had its genesis in the surroundings of this great royal chapel. The group's

sound still bears the hallmarks of the chapel's acoustics, where the founding members learned their trade as choral singers; a trade which has been passed down through generations of King's Singers.

The 'royal blood' of today's programme, however, is that of King Henry VIII and his family. Whilst he helped to build a chapel of unmatched peace and dignity in Cambridge, in other areas of national life Henry was anything but peaceful and dignified — he presided of some of the most troubled times in the history of England. His daughter, Elizabeth, would become another of England's most iconic monarchs — and under Elizabeth, music and poetry enjoyed a kind of flourishing rarely seen before or since — but even under Elizabeth, all was not straightforward. In particular, the tension between the old Catholicism and the new Protestantism (initiated by Henry's break with the Catholic Church and the establishment of the Church of England) created extraordinary circumstances in which to create religious art, and a climate of fear amongst those who wished to continue practicing 'the old faith'. Today's programme explores some of the words and music to come out of England in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, through the lens of the Tudor dynasty and the legacy of its most famous King.

'Pastime with good company' is a song from 1515 often attributed to King Henry VIII himself. It is now thought to be unlikely that he wrote it himself, but it is possible. It was certainly being sung and played in court during his reign, and would likely have been performed with drums and instruments as a dance. The words mention many of Henry's known loves — 'goodly sport', 'dalliance', to pleasure to be found in a 'hunt, sing and dance' — and no matter who wrote the song, it gives a real flavour of the sights and sounds of the Tudor court.

Henry's decision to break from the Catholic church and establish the Church of England with the monarch as its head had enormous ramifications, some of which are still visible in the UK today, in the form of (for example) vandalised monasteries and churches whose protestant liturgy and ancient catholic architecture still seem at odds with one another. Yet in the pious and faith-dominated existence of the sixteenth century, the switching from one national religion to another had a far more personal and emotional impact on the King's subjects than we can easily imagine today. It was a change whose scars could be seen just as clearly decades later, in the reign of Elizabeth I. William Byrd

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was a composer who led a kind of dual existence: he was one of the Queen's favoured musicians, and in a feat of pragmatism wrote much beautiful music in English for the Protestant Chapel Royal, including the honorific motet 'O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth, our Queen'. Yet Byrd was also a devoted and committed Catholic, whose belief in the doctrine of the Catholic church never left him, despite his working in Protestant circles. As Elizabeth clamped down on illicit, secret recusant Catholic worship, Byrd was forced out of London, to live under the protection of a Catholic landlord. In a large country manor house, Byrd wrote some of his most emotionally charged music, specifically for the Catholic mass services that would take place there in secret. One such work is 'Ne irascaris, Domine', where the second part, 'Civitas sancti tui', seems to be a hidden message of solidarity for other recusants. The beautiful moment when he sets 'Sion desolata est' / 'Sion is laid waste' is used as a metaphor for England which, in the eyes of Byrd, has been taken over by unholy powers and abandoned by God.

Despite the severe punishment of Catholics in the latter part of her reign, Elizabeth I enjoyed popularity with much of the English public, as demonstrated in the text of the 'Choral Dances from Gloriana', set to music by Benjamin Britten in 1953. This set of four pieces comes as an interlude in Britten's opera 'Gloriana', and focuses on a visit Elizabeth made to the English county of Norfolk on a 'royal progress'. The villagers are busy preparing

to receive her, and in the movement 'Country Girls' we hear of flower arrangements being made, ending with the phrase '...Norfolk's own garlands for her Queen'. It was not just village folk who lived in admiration of Elizabeth; in 1601 a large book of madrigals was published called 'The Triumphs of Oriana'. They were written by many of the leading composers in England at the time, coordinated by the composer Thomas Morley. Queen Elizabeth I was commonly referred to as 'Oriana', and this collection is dedicated to her; in fact, every single one of the madrigals ends with the phrase 'Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana: Long live fair Oriana'. One of the most famous of these madrigals is Thomas Weelkes' setting 'As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending', conjuring up some of the Greek mythology which so fascinated artists and composers in the sixteenth- and seventeenth century.

After Elizabeth I's death in 1603, James I was crowned as England's new monarch. James was of the same Tudor blood — his grandmother was the sister of Henry VIII and he had, until this point, been King of Scotland. During James I's reign as King of England, his son — Henry Prince of Wales — became very popular with the nation, and was expected to succeed James and become king. When, in 1612, Prince Henry died of Typhoid Fever, there was a national outpouring of grief. It is thought that Thomas Tomkins wrote his beautiful lament 'When David heard' in response to the death of Prince Henry around this time. If this is the case, then Tomkins uses

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the biblical childhood death of Absalom and the grief of King David to mirror that of Henry and the grief of the nation. Instead of Henry, James I's son Charles acceded to the throne, continuing the same family line. Upon the death of Charles, his son James II was crown king in Westminster Abbey in 1685. It was for this grand occasion that Henry Purcell's anthem 'I was glad' — a setting of Psalm 122 — the text of which continues to be sung at all coronations for the British royal family.

The final work on the first half of Royal Blood takes us to the more modern sound world of Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, one of the great British classical composers of the late 20th century, who was also a revered jazz musician, and good friend of The King's Singers. For the group's 25th anniversary, he wrote settings of words by John Donne, who was Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in the early seventeenth century. Donne wrote some of the best known and most beautiful sentences in the English language, and in Rodney Bennett's setting of 'The seasons of his mercies', we hear words from a sermon given by John Donne on Christmas Day 1624. From the pulpit of St. Paul's, Donne proclaimed 'In Paradise the fruit was ripe the first minute, and in Heaven in it is always Autumn', reminding his congregation of the promise of what was to come after earthly life.

No concert by The King's Singers is complete without at least a handful of songs 'in close harmony' — the arrangements of folk, jazz or pop songs which have become such a signature of the group over its fifty years on tour. The second half of the Royal Blood programme is a chance to explore some of that repertoire. In another nod to the (possible) composition prowess of King Henry VIII, the song which opens the second part is also often attributed to him. In reality, 'Greensleeves' is very unlikely to have been written by Henry VIII, but the popular myth goes that it was a song written for his second wife Ann Boleyn, whilst they were courting and she was rebuffing him, or, to quote the song, 'casting him off discourteously'. This arrangement is by former tenor in The King's Singers, Bob Chilcott, who has gone on to become one of the leading lights of choral composition in the world today.

After a set of English folksongs, all arranged by Gordon Langford — one of the group's earliest collaborators — there will be 'The Signature'. This will be a set of songs in close harmony, selected by the group for the audience on the night of the concert, and announced from the stage. There are likely to be some old favourites from the group's history, as well as a few new surprises to keep people on their toes.



vancouver cantata singers

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TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

THE KING

Henry VIII

Pastime with good company

Pastime with good company I love,
and shall until I die.
Gruch who lust but none deny;
so God be pleased, thus live will I
For my pastance, hunt, sing and dance;
My heart is set,
All goodly sport, to my comfort,
Who shall me let?
Company with honesty is virtue, vices to flee,
Company is good and ill,
but every man has his free will.
The best ensue, the worst eschew,
My mind shall be;
Virtue to use, vice to refuse,
This shall I use me.

THE PRAYER

William Byrd

O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth, our Queen

O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth our Queen
to rejoice in thy strength:
give her her heart's desire, and deny not
the request of her lips;
but prevent her with thine everlasting blessing,
and give her a long life, even for ever and ever. Amen.

THE QUEEN

William Byrd

Ne irascaris, Domine - Civitas sancti tui

Ne irascaris Domine satis,
et ne ultra memineris iniquitatis nostræ.
Ecce respice populus tuus omnes nos.

Be not angry, O Lord,
and remember our iniquity no more.
Behold, we are all your people.

Civitas sancti tui facta est deserta.

Sion deserta facta est,
Jerusalem desolata est.

Your holy city has become a wilderness.
Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem has been made desolate.

THE CELEBRATION

Benjamin Britten

Choral Dances from "Gloriana"

Time

Yes, he is Time,
Lusty and blithe!
Time is at his apogee
Although he thought to see
A bearded ancient with a scythe.
No reaper he
That cries 'Take heed!'
Time is at his apogee!
Young and strong in his prime!
Behold the sower of the seed!

Concord

Concord is here
Our days to bless
And this our land to endure
With plenty, peace and happiness

Concord and Time
Each needeth each:
The ripest fruit hangs where
Not one, but only two, only two can reach.

Time and Concord

From springs of bounty
Through this county
Streams abundant
Of thanks shall flow.
Where life was scanty,
Fruits of plenty
Swell resplendent
From earth below!
No Greek nor Roman
Queenly woman
Knew such favour
From Heav'n above
As she whose presence Is our pleasure ...
Gloriana
Hath all our love!

Country girls

Sweet flag and cuckoo flower
Cowslip and columbine
Kingcups and sops-in-wine,
Flower deluce and calaminth,
Harebell and hyacinth,
Myrtle and bay and rosemary between,
Norfolk's own garlands for her Queen.

Please turn page quietly, and only after the music has ended.

Rustics and Fishermen

From fen and meadow
In rushy baskets
They bring ensamples of all they grow.
In earthen dishes
Their deep-sea fishes;
Yearly fleeces,
Woven blankets;
New cream and junkets
And rustic trinkets,
On wicker flaskets,
Their country largess
The best they know.

Final Dance of Homage

These tokens of our love receiving
O take them, Princess great and dear.
From Norwich city you are leaving,
That you afar may feel us near.

THE DEDICATION

Thomas Weelkes

As Vesta was descending

As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending,
She spied a maiden queen the same ascending,
Attended on by all the shepherds swain,
To whom Diana's darlings came running down amain,
First two by two, then three by three together,
Leaving their goddess all alone, hasted thither;
And mingling with the shepherds of her train,
With mirthful tunes her presence entertain.
Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana,
Long live fair Oriana.

Music by Thomas Weelkes

THE HERALD

Thomas Tomkins

When David heard

When David heard that Absalom was slain
He went up into his chamber over the gate and wept,
and thus he said: my son, my son, O Absalom my son,
would God I had died for thee!

THE CORONATION

Henry Purcell

I was glad

I was glad when they said unto me:
We will go into the house of the Lord.
For thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord:
to testify unto Israel, to give thanks
unto the Name of the Lord.
For there is the seat of judgement:
even the seat of the house of David.
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
they shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls:
and plenteousness within thy palaces.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son; and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be;
world without end. Amen.

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

THE LESSON

Richard Rodney Bennett

The seasons of his Mercies

God made Sun and Moon to distinguish seasons,
and day, and night, and we cannot have the fruits of the
earth but in their seasons; But God hath made no decree to
distinguish the seasons of his mercies;

In Paradise the fruits were ripe the first minute, and
in heaven it is always Autumn, his mercies are ever in their
maturity.

If some King of the earth have so large an extent
of dominion, in North, and South, as that he hath Winter
and Summer together in his Dominions, so large an extent
East and West as that he hath day and night together in his
Dominions, much more hath God mercy and judgement
together.

He brought light out of darknesse, not out of a
lesser light; he can bring thy summer out of winter, though
thou have no spring; Though in the ways of fortune or
understanding or conscience, thou have been benighted till
now, wintered and frozen, clouded and eclipsed, damped
and numbed, smothered and stupefied till now, now, God
comes to thee. Not as in the dawning of the day, not as in
the bud of the spring, but as the sun at noon to illustrate all
shadowes, as the sheaves in harvest, to fill all penuries, all
occasions invite his mercies, and all times are his seasons.

INTERVAL

**Recordings of The King's Singers
will be for sale in the lobby during the interval and after the concert**

THE LEGACY

Trad. (arr. Bob Chilcott)

Greensleeves

Alas, my love, you do me wrong,
To cast me off discourteously.
For I have loved you well and long,
Delighting in your company.

Greensleeves was all my joy
Greensleeves was my delight,
Greensleeves was my heart of gold,
And who but my lady greensleeves.

Your vows you've broken, like my heart,
Oh, why did you so enrapture me?
Now I remain in a world apart
But my heart remains in captivity.

I have been ready at your hand,
To grant whatever you would crave,
I have both wagered life and land,
Your love and good-will for to have.

If you intend thus to disdain,
It does the more enrapture me,
And even so, I still remain
A lover in captivity.

My men were clothed all in green,
And they did ever wait on thee;
All this was gallant to be seen,
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

Thou couldst desire no earthly thing,
but still thou hadst it readily.
Thy music still to play and sing;
And yet thou wouldst not love me.

Well, I will pray to God on high,
that thou my constancy mayst see,
And that yet once before I die,
Thou wilt vouchsafe to love me.

Ah, Greensleeves, now farewell, adieu,
To God I pray to prosper thee,
For I am still thy lover true,
Come once again and love me.

Traditional English arranged by Bob Chilcott

Trad. (arr. Goff Richards)

Dance to thy Daddy

*Dance to thy Daddy,
Sing to thy Mammy,
Dance to thy Daddy,
To thy Mammy sing;*

Come here me little Jacky,
Now ah've smoked me baccy,
Let's hev a bit of cracky,
Till the boat comes in.
Dance to thy Daddy,

*Sing to thy Mammy,
Dance to thy Daddy,
To thy Mammy sing;*

Thou shalt have a fishy
On a little dishy,
Thou shalt have a fishy
When the boat comes in.

Here's thy mother humming,
Like a canny woman;
Yonder comes thy father,
Drunk - he cannot stand.

*Dance to thy Daddy,
Sing to thy Mammy,
Dance to thy Daddy,
To thy Mammy sing;*

Thou shalt have a fishy
On a little dishy,
Thou shalt have a haddock
When the boat comes in.
Dance to thy Daddy,

*Sing to thy Mammy,
Dance to thy Daddy,
To thy Mammy sing;*

Our Tommy's always fuddling,
He's so fond of ale,
But he's kind to me,
I hope he'll never fail.
Dance to thy Daddy,

*Sing to thy Mammy,
Dance to thy Daddy,
To thy Mammy sing;*

Thou shalt have a fishy
On a little dishy,
Thou shalt have a mackerel
When the boat comes in.
I like a drop myself,

When I can get it sly,
And thou, my bonny bairn,
Will like't as well as I.

*Dance to thy Daddy,
Sing to thy Mammy,
Dance to thy Daddy,
To thy Mammy sing;*

Thou shalt have a fishy
On a little dishy,
Thou shalt have a salmon
When the boat comes in.

Please turn page quietly, and only after the music has ended.

Trad. (arr. Gordon Langford)
The Oak and the Ash

A North Country maid up to London had strayed,
Although with her nature it did not agree.
She wept and she sighed, and so bitterly she cried,
"How I wish once again in the North I could be!
Oh the oak and the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,
They flourish at home in my own country."

"While sadly I roam I regret my dear home,
Where lads and young lasses are making the hay.
The merry bells ring and the birds sweetly sing,
The meadows are pleasant and maidens are gay.
Oh the oak and the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,
They flourish at home in my own country."

"No doubt, did I please, I could marry with ease,
For where maidens are fair many lovers will come,
But the one whom I wed must be
North Country bred,
And tarry with me in my North Country home.
Oh the oak and the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,
They flourish at home in my own country."

Trad. (arr. Gordon Langford)
Bobby Shaftoe

Bobby Shaftoe's gone to sea,
Silver buckles at his knee;
He'll come back and marry me,
Bonny Bobby Shaftoe!
Bobby Shaftoe's bright and fair,
Panning out his yellow hair;
He's my love for evermore,
Bonny Bobby Shaftoe!

Text: Traditional English

THE SIGNATURE

A selection of songs,
to be announced during the concert,
in The King's Singers' signature close-harmony style.

EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER

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Photo credit: Jan Gates

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- Naming the Vancouver Society for Early Music as a beneficiary of a Life Insurance Policy or RRSP
- Creating or contributing to an Endowment Fund

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