

The Lily and the Rose

The maidens came
 When I was in my mother's bower,
 I had all that I would.
 The bailey beareth the bell away;
 The lily, the rose I lay.
 The silver is white, red is the gold;
 The robes they lay in fold.
 The bailey beareth the bell away;
 The lily, the rose I lay.
 And through the glass windows shines the sun,
 How should I love, and I so young?
 The bailey beareth the bell away,
 The lily, the rose, I lay.

Text: Anon. 16th-century English

OXFORD

Secular
 BC66
 upper voices (SS)
 and piano

Bob
 Chilcott

THE LILY AND THE ROSE

Ever since I have been working as a full-time composer, I have written music for upper voices. One of my first commissions was from Jean Ashworth Bartle's Toronto Children's Chorus back in 1994, and it was soon after I fulfilled this commission that I found myself becoming more and more involved with upper voice choirs, both as a composer and a conductor.

This gave me the opportunity to write songs, which I love to do. It also gave me the opportunity to work with many different young choirs from all over the world, who showed me very quickly how much joy could be had from working with people such as these who were open, energetic, funny, unprejudiced, honest, and ultimately always determined to do the very best work that they could.

As a composer in this context, I have always looked for texts that might inspire or motivate, and looked for melodic devices that might help both trained and untrained singers shape phrases in the most natural and musical way that they are able. I am at heart a melodist, and I unashamedly draw on many of the influences that have touched my musical life - from my time as a chorister in King's College, Cambridge, my time working as an arranger and orchestrator for BBC Radio 2, and as a singer with The King's Singers, with all the breadth of repertoire that they embrace.

Nothing however has touched my musical life more than the legions of young choirs with whom I have worked over the past eleven years, who with their energy, their community, and their musical diversity have inspired me to look at the way I think about what music and singing gives and can give to us all.

Bob Chilcott

The 16th Century text of 'The Lily and the Rose' is full of multiple meaning, but perhaps the most compelling one suggests it is a song the Virgin Mary sings, grieving for her dying son.

The piece was written for the 2002 Oklahoma Music Educators Association Children's Chorus, conducted by Jean Ashworth Bartle.

Bob Chilcott's rare gift for crafting the most poignant and beguiling melodies is rarely more apparent than in his setting of this enchanting medieval poem.

The style is akin to folk ballad, lyrical with just a hint of melancholy. This beautiful and seductive music will draw in singers and listeners alike.

Duration: c. 4.02 minutes