

Five Flower Songs

Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

To daffodils (*Robert Herrick*)
The succession of the four sweet months (*Robert Herrick*)
Marsh flowers (*George Crabbe*)
The evening primrose (*John Clare*)
The ballad of green broom (*anon.*)

Britten composed this delightful set of pieces in 1950, for the silver wedding of Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst, amateur botanists and founders of the Dartington Hall project which was dedicated, amongst other things, to the development of the arts. Britten's significant body of choral music ranges from large-scale works with orchestra to intimate unaccompanied miniatures like the *Flower Songs*. Each of these songs is a masterly characterization of its subject, from the darkly dissonant *Marsh Flowers* and the lyrical *Succession of the Four Sweet Months*, to the exuberant *Ballad of Green Broom*.

programme notes by John Bawden

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