

PREFACE

The songs in this collection by the English baroque composer Henry Purcell (1659-1695) have been chosen from some of his most popular theatre works. Most have been taken from music he wrote to be performed during plays, also known as semi-operas. His only work considered a genuine opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, whereby there is no spoken dialog, but rather the action progresses in the Italian recitative form, was one of the first English operas.

The original orchestration of these pieces is generally light. Thus they lend themselves rather well to the arrangement for voice and guitar. All pieces were at the very least composed for voice and ground bass. The original score for *Music for a While* consists merely of a vocal line and a bass line. *One Charming Night* and *Hark! The Echoing Air* have additionally two flutes and a trumpet respectively. *Fairest Isle* and *Dido's Lament* are scored for two violins and a viola as well as the voice and bass.

CHOICE OF KEYS

In attempting to make these arrangements work well on the guitar whilst still being comfortable for the voice, I have decided in most cases to transpose them from the original to a nearby key. Use of a capo can in most cases be incorporated to get closer to the original pitch with little or no extra difficulty for the guitarist. That said it should be noted that before the 19th century there was no standardised pitch. It is now widely accepted that the baroque concert pitch was for an A to be tuned to 415 Hz, which is a semi-tone lower than today's standard of 440 Hz. This must be understood with a degree of uncertainty. In the performance of these arrangements the singer's preference should take priority when choosing the key, provided it is playable for the guitarist.

RECOMMENDED CAPO USE

The following suggestions of capo and sounding modern key may be observed:

	Originally notated key	Key of the arrangement	Suggested capo position	Sounding modern key
1. One Charming Night	C minor	A minor	II	B minor
2. Music for a While	C minor	A minor	II	B minor
3. Fairest Isle	B flat major	E major	III	G major
4. Dido's Lament	G minor	G minor	no capo	G minor
5. Hark! The Echoing Air	C major	A major	no capo/II*	A/B major

The first four pieces in the collection have been released on the album *Come Away* by Christina Röckelein and Rossini Hayward.

The arrangement of *Music for a While* has been based on an improvisation by Brandon Acker.

ROSSINI HAYWARD

* A capo in position II would be closer to the C major original. It however adds an extra degree of difficulty for the guitarist.