

I love Roger Quilter songs because of the tunes and the harmony he uses linked to the wonderful poetry he chooses to work with. They are sympathetic to la voce, the range is not too daunting, they are not too long and the printed music comes in different keys. If you are not a musician get a friend to put the tune on a tape for you and then play it on your head phones on the way to work. Get to know and understand the words and learn the music before you apply our map to it. Then write the phonetic sounds under the words and make sure you are doing the hums. Below is a list of Quilter songs. Start with the words and see which one you identify with. Then it will become part of you.

Blow Blow thou winter Wind	Shakespeare
Come Away death	Shakespeare
Love's Philosophy	Shelley
Now Sleep The Crimson Petal	Tennyson
Fair House of Joy	anon 16th century.

I am going to tell you a story in a minute about Now Sleeps The Crimson Petal because we both need a rest from this work but first let me say this. Go along with me and you will have made a huge step into the world of a singer. Try not to stand outside this world but step into it, even if you have stepped into an unknown place. You will soon get the hang of things like ordering your music, getting it on tape, sitting reading it instead of a book, singing bits of a tune to yourself and not knowing where it came from.

Writing fearlessly on your music to remind you of things. Perhaps listening to music in a different way. Notice that I have not suggested listening to a singer singing your song. It is yours and should be only yours until you really know it. After you know it well, you could listen to someone else singing it and enjoy the differences. Remember your ideas could be just as interesting as theirs. The singing world is not a closed shop. We can all be part of that world if we choose but it takes a bit of application and thought.

What I hate is the idea that it is automatic and that we can all do it. Our singing voices are instruments just as surely as a violin or a trumpet and no one ever suggests that we can all play these without knowing how. I want everyone to come in but with the idea that is something they have to work at and improve rather than the idea that a glorious sound will just suddenly pop out of our mouths if we want it enough. If it doesn't, we are made to feel inadequate as it is the easiest thing in the world to do!

My mother said about lots of things in life "It is easy if you know how" and being a good singer is no exception.

Now for the story. The last line of "Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal" is "Slip into my bosom and be lost in me" "There was once a little boy of about eight who was standing in the front row of the Promenade Concerts in The Albert Hall and one of the items was this song, sung by a very famous mezzo of the time, Astra Desmond. As she came to this line she clasped her hands under her rather ample bosom, lent forward and invited the audience and this little boy in particular to slip into her bosom. As a very elderly adult he still remembers this moment with delight and says it changed his whole life as he was awakened to the joys of manhood in such a wonderfully grown up but innocent way. This story always makes me smile as it links me to the possibilities of what an artist can bring to our lives.