

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים

Song of Songs

10 songs for soprano and pianoforte

by Ekkehard Böttcher

Song of Songs

The Song of Songs was interpreted in the Middle Ages as the relationship between Jesus Christ and his community and was the most discussed book in the Bible at that time. Because of its royal symbolic ornamentation, it is often attributed to the encounter between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The huts and shepherd romance that is, despite tradition, less fitting for a royal couple should be seen as an indication that the songs in the shepherd idyll arose from the dreams of their protagonists. The lovers have met and, in their dreams, have embarked on a journey of their longings. The positions of the couple are quite clearly conventional. The male part courts incessantly, the woman being courted slowly opens herself to his desire. While he sees it as his duty to put her above everything else and not to return to "his thing" after the initial phase of passionate love, she is worried that he will kidnap her from the strong domestic and familiar bond to which she is in danger of returning in her role as a girl and young woman and to the attention that society gives her. As a woman, she is as cautious as ever in her promises and reassures herself in the dreams of her songs about the individual steps of opening up her love. During her initial infatuations, she sees herself in the mirror, her beauty suddenly becomes serious in his passionate desire. In the apple tree, he becomes a threatening seducer and she looks for the inner voice, which he in turn takes over for her. So she retreats to the bed of her dreams, but even there he penetrates and she defends herself against him by giving in to his desire and opening herself to him. She sees him lying next to her and he appears white to her, i.e. caring love, and red, i.e. desiring love, at the same time; he becomes visible in her eyes and cute in her infatuations. Then she decides to go on her honeymoon, to the land that they will enter alone together. Now that she has him by her side, as she wants him in her deepest longings, she seals this image of him and lets go of him in order to sing of the suffering of the world in lamentation and thus to regain him in his image, which she herself had brought to fruition, and to have him recognized by God, the world and fate. The text of the 10 songs is taken fragmentarily from the individual book chapters.

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1. Let him give me the kisses of his mouth

S. $\text{♩} = 140$

Let him give me the kis-ses of his mouth, for his love is bet - ter than wine, bet - ter than
is the smell of your per-fume, your name is as per - fume run - ning out, your name is
king has ta-ken me in - to his house, we'll be glad and full of joy in you, we'll give more

p.

10 To Coda

wine, his love is bet - ter than wine, let him give me the kis-ses of his mouth, of his mouth.
run-ning out as per-fume, your name is as per-fume, as per-fume run-ning out, is run-ning out.
thought to your love than to wine, than than to wine, right - ly they're your lo - vers.

20

1. 2.

Sweet So the young girls give you their love, so the young girls give

33 D.S. al Coda

you their love. Take me to you and we'll go af - ter you, take me to you and we'll go af - ter you. The

43

Right - ly they are your lo - vers.

2. I am dark, but fair of form

♩ = 140

S. I am dark, but fair of form, you daughters of Je - ru - sa - lem, as the tents of Ze - dar,

P.

39

vine - gar - dens.

44

But my own vine - gar - den I have not kept.

50

Say, o love, to me, where you give food for your flock.

62

And where you make them take their rest in the heat of the day. Why have I to be

16

flag o - ver me was love. Makemestrongwith wine cakes, let me com
it is rea - dy, rea - dy. Do not let love get moved till

20

-for - ted with ap - ples, I'm o - ver - come with love. Fine D.S. al Fine
it is rea - dy, till it is rea - dy.

4. The voice of my loved one

♩ = 140

The voice, the voice of my love one. See, he comes

dan - cing, dan-cing on the moun-tains, stepping quick-ly on the hills. My loved one's like a roe, he's

on the other side of our wall. Look there, there is him, he is look - ing in at the win-dows.

My loved one said to me, Get up, my love,

get up, my love, my fair one, and come a-long. For see, the

win - ter is passed, the rain is o - ver and

31

gone, the flow - ers are come

35

on the earth. Get up, my love and

39

come a - long. Take for us the fo - xes.

45

The lit - tle fo - xes, whododa-mageto the vines, our vines have young grapes. My loved is

mine, and me, I am his. He eats 'mong the flow ers, till the

evening comes and the sky will get dark. Come, come, my loved one.

Be like a roe, be like me on the moun-tains of Be-ther.