

British Song - Special Terms and Abbreviations

About the Database

The British Song database gives you access to a wealth of information. In addition to English songs, there are songs from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Canada, Australia and South Africa. Some songs are in a foreign language, but by British composers.

With the information in the British Song database, you could find:

- A composer's dates
- Who wrote a song to your favorite Shakespeare poem
- Tennyson's dates
- Unusual combinations, like songs for soprano and cello
- Tenor and baritone duets
- A song that goes no higher than F, or lower than D
- A cycle or set of three songs' length
- Who publishes the songs of Roger Quilter
- A song that is 1:30 in length, or songs between 1:00 and 3:00 in length

These are just a few of many inquiries that can be quickly answered. You can also print your search results. Give it a try and have fun exploring!

Special Terms and Abbreviations

When searching the database, you will most often search by whole words - a composer's last name, for example. For the sake of brevity a few codes or abbreviations are used. Learning these codes and abbreviations will help you get the most out of your searches.

What follows is an field-by-field explanation of the various shortcuts you can use in your searches.

Composer

- **Anonymous** indicates an unknown composer.
- **Various** indicates a group of composers. The composer's dates are included, when known. Note the spacing in this example: (1913 - 1976).
- **fm** will find female composers.

Title / First Line

- Titles in **ALL CAPS** indicate cycles, sets, collections, albums. Example: ON WENLOCK EDGE.
- Separate song titles are capitalized: Bredon Hill / In summertime on Bredon the bells they sound so clear. Occasionally more than just the first line of text is included.
- For a search of vocal ensemble pieces, use **duet**, **trio**, etc.

Tempo - Key - Meter

- All three music elements are given when known or appropriate.
- 'Cut time' is indicated by 2 / 2, 'common time' by 4 / 4.
- A capital letter signifies a major key = Ab or F#. A lower case letter signifies a minor key = bb is b flat minor. The opening tonality of the piece is usually noted.
- **Mixed meter** is used for frequent changes of meter.

Example:

*"**Allegro - G**" (note spaces) would give you all songs in allegro, and in either G major or minor tonality.*

Poet

- **Anonymous** indicates an unknown poet.
- **Traditional** means that the poem is a folk poem or nursery rhyme.
- **Various** indicates a group of poets in the work.
- **fm** finds female poets.

Voice / Range

- To find ensemble pieces, type: "**and**". For example, "**Soprano and**" to find duets, etc., involving soprano. For a Bass Baritone, type "**Bass baritone and**". "**Tenor and baritone**" will give you some fine pieces!
- Range is indicated by the U.S.A. Standards Association pitch designation system, where

middle C is C4 (C below the treble clef staff). The soprano 'high C' is C6. If you have a soprano with the range of C to G, a request of "**C4 - G5**" (note spaces) would list all pieces with that range. "**- G5**" would list only songs with highest note of G5.

- When a piece seems appropriate for either man or woman, for the sake of brevity only the higher range is printed. Example: **High / E4 - G5** could be sung by either a soprano, or a tenor an octave lower (E3 - G4). I suggest that when looking for tenor songs, search separately for **tenor** or **high**; for baritone search separately for **medium** or **baritone**.
- Use "**or**" for songs suited for more than one voice range, as in **tenor or baritone**
- Note: other keys, voice terms, and vocal ranges can additionally be found in the COMMENT field.
- The following voice terms are used in this database:
 - High
 - Medium
 - Low
 - Soprano
 - Mezzo (mezzo-soprano)
 - Alto (contralto)
 - Tenor
 - Countertenor
 - Baritone
 - Bass Baritone
 - Bass

Instrument

- Use "**and**" (note italics) to find combinations other than just one accompanying instrument, or a specific request like "**flute and**" or "**flute and piano**".
- Use **or** for pieces suited for more than one instrument, such as "**piano or harp**".
- Instrumental terms used in this database:
 - Unaccompanied (voice only)
 - Guitar
 - Piano (pianoforte)
 - Lute
 - Harpsichord
 - Virginal
 - Clarinet
 - Organ

- Oboe
- Keyboard (piano, harpsichord, virginal, Bassoon organ, as style period suggests)
- Violin
- Recorder
- Viola
- Flute
- Cello (violoncello)
- Bass (double bass)
- Orchestra
- Gamba (viola da gamba)
- Chamber Orchestra
- String Orchestra
- Harp
- String Quartet
- String Trio

Publisher / Cycle, etc.

- **Album** = songs by one composer
- **General Collection** = anthology of songs by various composers, or folksongs
- **Cycle** = a cycle by one composer
- **Set** = a grouping of songs by one composer, but not considered a cycle
- **Single** represents a song published separately.
- **Cantata** = an extended single piece, which may or may not have individual movements.
- **/ Cycle 3** (note spaces) would list a song cycle of three pieces.
- **/ Album 13** is an album containing thirteen songs by one composer.

Comments

This catch-all field includes other versions of the piece, including different keys / ranges, other publishers, different editors or arrangers, etc. If the song is part of a larger work, or an album or collection, its position in the work and its page number are given.

- The term **advanced singer** is used for extremely difficult pieces, often requiring perfect pitch and/or very difficult ensemble requirements.
- The approximate duration of a piece, when known, is indicated with a colon (:). In the case of simple strophic songs, only the first verse is timed.
- When searching for a specific duration, do not add an unnecessary '0'. Example: **3:30**, not

03:30, for a duration of three and a half minutes.

- **CONTAINS** and ":" will create a list of all songs with timings. Want to find a range of timings? Example: **3:00...3:30** will list all songs between three and three and a half minutes in length.
- Usually the nationality of the composer is stated, when other than English.
- Note: No subject category is included other than 'Humorous'. You can try a subject search, however, by using keywords in the TITLE / FIRST LINE field. For example, for Christmas songs , ask separately for **Christmas**, or **manger**, or **shepherd**, or **oxen**, **angel**, **star**, **mule**, **Mary**, and so forth. From these lists you can ascertain Christmas songs.

Printing

Printing is easy. Multiple listings will print on one page. For everything to fit, go to SETUP on your menu (Mac or Windows), set the printing mode to vertical, and printing size to 75%.