

Some fifteen years ago, William Shakespeare and I brought forth a series of pieces for choir, jazz piano and bass entitled *Music to Hear*. Because the efforts of the Shakespeare/Shearing team seemed to be received with enthusiasm by singers, choral directors and audiences alike, AND because we enjoyed working together so much, we thought we'd give it another go.

Mr. Shakespeare dug around in his trunk and came up with seven more songs and sonnets that we hadn't used yet. We got to work and came up with this collection entitled *Songs and Sonnets from Shakespeare*. Again, they are all set for choral ensemble, jazz piano and bass. In them, you'll hear my English musical background and my American jazz influence.

The collection includes *Live with me and be my love*, *When daffodils begin to peer*, *It was a lover and his lass*, *Spring*, *Who is Silvia?*, *Fie on sinful fantasy*, and last, but certainly not least, *Hey, ho, the wind and the rain*. We think you'll enjoy the variety of moods they cover . . . and, if we do say so ourselves, we like them . . . every one!

The working personnel is much the same. William Shakespeare, George Shearing, Frank Metis, who, again, did yeoman service with his pencil and eraser in putting notes to paper and all the other things necessary in transcribing such a work. There is one addition to our production team . . . a man considered to be one of the very best choral writers and directors in the business . . . a man whom I am honored to be able to call a very dear friend. His name is John Rutter.

I wish to thank each of these outstanding collaborators for their invaluable contributions to this effort. They were always there when I needed them. And, if Mr. Shakespeare hadn't done HIS part in the first place, we'd all be in the soup. Enjoy!

GEORGE SHEARING

*Songs and Sonnets from Shakespeare* was commissioned by the Mostly Madrigal Singers, St. Charles, Illinois (director, Jeffrey Hunt).

The first performance, on July 9th 1999, was guest-conducted by John Rutter, with the composer at the piano and Neil Swainson (bass).

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*Note:* The double-bass part may be purchased separately. (HMB-226A)