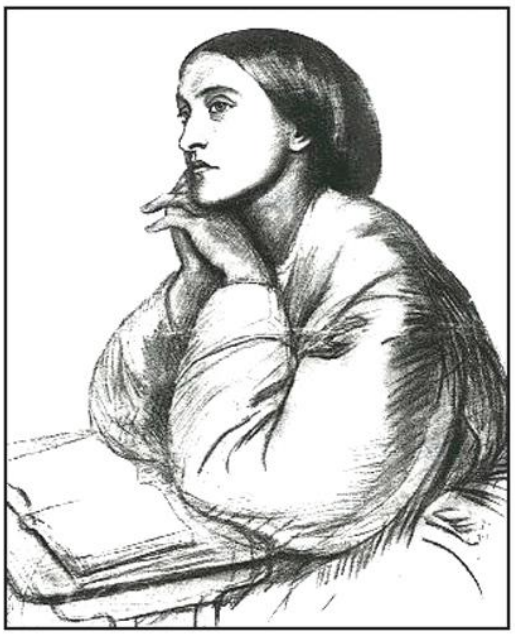
Five Christina Rossetti Songs

Music composed by Thomas More Hagger (1950-2023)



Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

drawing in coloured chalks by Dante Gabriel Rossetti,

September 1866

1. *Song 'When I am dead, my dearest'*
   12th December 1848

2a. *Song 'She sat and sang alway'*
   26th November 1848

2b. *Dream-Love* (Second stanza *'Soft moss the pillow'*)
   19th May 1854

3. *A Birthday*
   18th November 1857

4. *Withering*
   c. 1850

5. *Echo*
   18th December 1854

Christina Georgina Rossetti was born on 5th December 1830 at 38 Charlotte Street, Portland Place, London. She was the youngest of the four children of Gabriele and Frances Rossetti. The others were Maria Francesca, who became a nun, the poet and painter Dante Gabriel, and William Michael, later a civil servant. Their father was a political refugee from Naples and their mother half-Italian and half-English. Christina devoted much of her life to the care of her mother, and never married. Although she lived quietly and was reserved in company, Christina's circle of friends included Swinburne, Browning, Morris and the other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. She died on 29th December 1894 and is buried in Highgate Cemetery.

During Christina Rossetti's lifetime, five volumes of her poems were published, from *Goblin Market and other Poems* in 1862 to *Verses* in 1893. Her brother, William, collected and edited a further volume, *New Poems*, two years after her death. In 1904, he produced the preface, notes and a memoir of his sister for the collected works. The present musical settings draw the texts from this edition. Of the poems used, only *Withering* remained unpublished until after her death.

In his memoir, William writes that, 'along with religion, affection was the motive power of Christina's life.' Her profound religious faith is expressed in a great number of religious and devotional poems, the best known of which is the Christmas carol *In the bleak mid-winter*. Her secular poems are mainly concerned with human relationships and feelings and with the natural world, frequently using the cycle of the seasons as a metaphor for life. Although many of her poems are superficially dark in character, with death as a recurrent theme, deeper acquaintance with them reveals a delicate blend of acceptance and resignation with genuine optimism. The hallmarks of her works are simplicity and intellectual honesty, a balance between passion and control, and an absence of the mawkishness which pervaded the writing of many of her contemporaries.

Source - *The Poetical Works of Christina Rossetti with memoir and notes by William Michael Rossetti*, Macmillan, London 1904