

POPULAR POETRY POPULAR VERSE Volume I

Shakespeare • Milton • Blake • Wordsworth • Byron • Shelley
Keats • Tennyson • Yeats • Brooke • Scott • Longfellow
Lear • Henley • Dowson • Hardy • Chesterton and many others

Read by **Anton Lesser** • **Simon Russell Beale**



Popular Poetry

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE 1564–1616

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | Shall I compare thee to a summer's day * | 1:50 |
| 2 | When in the chronicle of wasted time + | 0:59 |
| 3 | When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes + | 1:04 |

SIR WALTER RALEGH 1554–1618

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 4 | A Lover's Complaint + | 2:17 |
| 5 | The author's Epitaph, made by himself + | 0:38 |

JOHN DONNE 1572–1631

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|------|
| 6 | Death be not proud + | 1:19 |
|---|----------------------|------|

ANDREW MARVELL 1621–1678

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------|
| 7 | To his coy mistress * | 2:17 |
|---|-----------------------|------|

JOHN MILTON 1608–1674

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 8 | On his blindness + | 1:14 |
|---|--------------------|------|

ROBERT HERRICK 1591–1674

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------|
| 9 | To the Virgin + | 0:48 |
| 10 | Delight in Disorder + | 0:40 |

RICHARD LOVELACE 1618–1657

- | | | |
|----|--------------|------|
| 11 | To Lucasta + | 0:39 |
|----|--------------|------|

THOMAS GRAY 1716–1771

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 12 | An elegy written in a Country Church-Yard + | 10:03 |
|----|---|-------|

WILLIAM BLAKE 1757–1827	
13	Tyger Tyger * 2:33
14	London * 1:05
ROBERT BURNS 1759–1796	
15	My luv’s like a red red rose + 0:57
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH 1770–1850	
16	I wandered lonely as a cloud + 1:32
17	My heart leaps up when I behold + 0:37
18	I travelled among unknown men + 0:56
19	She dwelt among the untrodden ways + 0:45
20	A Slumber did my spirit seal + 0:34
21	The world is too much with us + 0:58
LORD BYRON 1788–1824	
22	She walks in beauty + 1:10
23	So we’ll go no more a-roving + 0:45
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY 1792–1822	
24	Ozymandias + 1:15
MUSICAL INTERLUDE	
25	Child falling asleep from Schumann’s Kinderszenen 2:00
JOHN KEATS 1795–1821	
26	Ode to a Nightingale + 6:24

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR 1775–1864		
27	Envoi *	0:35
ROBERT BROWNING 1812–1889		
28	Home thoughts abroad *	1:16
29	Meeting at Night *	0:51
30	Parting at Morning *	0:22
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING 1806–1861		
31	How do I love thee *	1:19
LORD TENNYSON 1809–1892		
32	Ulysses *	6:11
33	Now sleeps the crimson petal *	1:23
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI 1830–1894		
34	When I am dead *	0:56
MATTHEW ARNOLD 1822–1888		
35	Dover Beach +	2:28
GERALD MANLEY HOPKINS 1844–1889		
36	Pied Beauty +	1:03

	THOMAS HARDY 1840–1928	
37	The Darkling Thrush *	1:35
	RUDYARD KIPLING 1865–1936	
38	Recessional +	1:50
	WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS 1865–1939	
39	He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven *	2:41
40	When you are old and grey*	1:03
	EDWARD THOMAS 1878–1917	
41	Adlestrop +	1:15
	A. E. HOUSMAN 1859–1936	
42	From a Shropshire Lad +	0:46
	RUPERT BROOKE 1887–1915	
43	Soldier *	1:08
	WILFRED OWEN 1893–1918	
44	Strange Meeting *	4:27

Popular Verse

	HENRY KING 1663–1712	
45	The Pessimist *	1:52
	BEN JONSON 1709–1784	
46	Song To Celia +	0:56
	WILLIAM COWPER 1731–1800	
47	Verses +	3:03
	OLIVER GOLDSMITH 1730–1774	
48	When lovely woman stoops to folly *	0:29
	WILLIAM WORDSWORTH 1770–1850	
49	Westminster Bridge +	1:09
	SIR WALTER SCOTT 1771–1832	
50	Lochinvar +	3:25
	THOMAS CAMPBELL 1777–1844	
51	Ye mariners of England +	1:39
	LEIGH HUNT 1784-1859	
52	About Ben Adhem *	1:00
53	Jenny Kissed Me *	0:28
	CHARLES WOLFE 1791–1823	
54	The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna +	1:46

	JOHN KEATS 1795–1821	
55	There Was A Naughty Boy *	0:30
	THOMAS HOOD 1799–1845	
56	I remember I remember +	1:37
	HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW 1807–1882	
57	The Wreck of the Hesperus *	3:44
	ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON 1809–1892	
58	The Charge of the Light Brigade +	2:11
59	The Lady of Shalott +	8:09
	ROBERT BROWNING 1812–1889	
60	Home thoughts, from the sea *	0:56
61	Pippa Passes *	0:23
	WILLIAM JOHNSON CORY 1823–92	
62	Heraclitus *	0:48
	ARTHUR WILLIAM EDGAR O'SHAUGHNESSY 1844–1881	
63	Ode +	1:21
	EDWARD LEAR 1812–1888	
64	Jumbles *	4:06
65	The Owl and the Pussy Cat *	1:24

LEWIS CARROLL 1832–1898		
66	Father William *	1:34
67	The Walrus and the Carpenter +	4:22
68	Jabberwocky *	1:33
MUSICAL INTERLUDE		
69	The organ grinders's song from Tchaikovsky's Album for the Young	1:34
HENRY NEWBOLT 1862-1938		
70	Vitae Lampada *	1:27
71	Drake's Drum +	1:42
W. E. HENLEY 1849–1903		
72	Invictus +	0:53
ERNEST DOWSON 1867–1900		
73	Non sum qualis *	2:06
74	Vitae summa brevis +	0:35
LAURENCE BINYON 1869–1943		
75	Invocation to youth *	0:42
THOMAS HARDY 1840–1928		
76	Wagtail and Baby *	0:48

RUDYARD KIPLING 1865–1936		
77	If *	2:13
78	Mandalay +	3:59
79	The Female of the Species +	4:17
G.K. CHESTERTON 1874–1936		
80	The Donkey *	0:54
81	The Rolling English Road +	1:52
WILLIAM H DAVIES 1871–1940		
82	Leisure +	0:56
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS 1865–1939		
83	Down by the salley gardens *	0:55
W.S. GILBERT 1836–1911		
84	The Nightmare +	3:25

Total time: 2:38:31

* Simon Russell Beale + Anton Lesser

POPULAR POETRY

POPULAR VERSE

Shakespeare • Milton • Blake • Wordsworth • Byron • Shelley
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The English attitude to poetry has been ambivalent.

Lord Macaulay once suggested (in 'The Edinburgh Review') that 'perhaps no person can be a poet, or enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind'.

On the other hand, poetry can crystallise and summon up for us certain responses to life and events that are important to us. It can lift our spirits, open up our hearts, broaden our sympathies and lead us, if only for a moment, into a different way of seeing – even of being. Above all, it can be memorable.

Poetry does not, in its essential nature, belong to literature. It comes before literature, when the place of books was occupied by voice and memory. It is meant not so much to be read as to be heard. And the artifice – the rhyme, the

rhythm, the language working to the limits of its capacity – is what makes poetry stick in the mind like music. At the same time, a skilled interpreter can make a well-worn poem as fresh as if it had never been read before.

In this collection, we have chosen to make a distinction between 'popular poetry' and 'popular verse'. It is in some way an artificial distinction, as 'poetry' and 'verse' are largely interchangeable terms. But if we consider that prose can sometimes be characterised as poetry (as in a 'prose poem') but never as verse, then we can begin to pick out the implications of the distinction.

Molière's 'Bourgeois Gentilhomme' is told: 'All that is not prose is verse, and all that is not verse is prose'. As literary theory this is not all that profound, but it

makes the point that verse is the straight antithesis of prose.

So verse basically amounts to the arrangement of words in lines, usually governed by metre. It might even be possible to translate the full meaning of a piece of verse into prose: all that would be lacking would be the delight communicated by the form. In this sense verse conforms to the neo-classical model of poetry as 'ornamented thought'. We may even say that the eighteenth century, the great age of prose, produced the poetry that it did rather despite its own better judgement.

Poetry is really a more complicated category. Its creation is a mysterious process, even a religious one, born out of the poet's relationship with a power beyond himself - what is traditionally termed his 'Muse'. And the result is something which puts the listener in touch with that which is beyond words, with that which cannot be spoken of. Content and form are more closely involved, and an unusually sensitive handling of language and images communicates an unusually complex or profound meaning. So poetry is verse that

fulfils a more ambitious project than simply the decoration of an idea.

Perhaps the usual distinction is between 'serious verse' and 'light verse'. However, this leaves out of the reckoning some well-loved serious verse that is very much stranded on the lower slopes of Parnassus - commonly late-Victorian, and in intent sentimental or stirring. Such a piece is Tennyson's *'The Charge of the Light Brigade'*. It was, apparently, produced in a matter of minutes, and we have only to compare it with his laboured attempt to honour an altogether worthier feat from the same battle, *The Charge of the Heavy Brigade*, to realise what truly inspired versifying went into it.

We may go so far as to say that every item in this collection, whether great poetry or popular verse, is in some way a masterpiece. All have survived the comings and goings of literary fortune by lodging themselves in the minds of a whole people, as the brightest and most enduring fragments of a national culture. Notes by Duncan Steen

The music on this CD is taken from the NAXOS Catalogue

ANON FROM THE MULLINER BOOK GALLIARD Joseph Payne, organ	8.550718
WEISS SONATAS FOR LUTE Franklin Lei, lute	8.550470
COUPERIN PIÈCES DE CLAVECIN Alan Cuckston, harpsichord	8.550460
SCHUMANN KINDERSZENEN TCHAIKOVSKY ALBUM FOR THE YOUNG	
DEBUSSY CHILDREN'S CORNER SUITE Idil Biret, piano	8.550885
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BRAHMS CELLO SONATAS Maria Kliegel, cello, Kirstin Merscher, piano	8.550656
BRAHMS INTERMEZZI OP 117 ETC Idil Biret, piano	8.550354



Anton Lesser is one of Britain's leading classical actors. He has played many of the principal Shakespearean roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company including Petruchio, Romeo and Richard III. His career has also encompassed contemporary drama, notably *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter. Appearances in major TV drama productions include *The Oresteia*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Mill on the Floss*.



In his first five years with the Royal Shakespeare Company, **Simon Russell Beale** has played many leading Shakespeare roles ranging widely from Richard III to Ariel in *The Tempest*, though his dramatic range extends to Samuel Beckett. He also frequently appears on TV and Radio.

Credits

Selected and produced by Nicolas Soames and Duncan Steen
Post-production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording Company
Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

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*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day...Death be not proud...
An Elegy written in a country churchyard...The world is too much
with us...Pied Beauty...He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven...Soldier...
Ye mariners of England...Jabberwocky...Vitae Lampada...If...The
Donkey...Down by the Salley Gardens*

With more than 80 of the most popular and loved poems in the English language, this collection is one of the most comprehensive anthologies of its kind available. It covers a remarkable range, from the striking visions of Blake and Shelley and the insights of Keats to lighter but equally memorable verse by Tennyson, Kipling, G.K. Chesterton and Edward Lear.



Anton Lesser and **Simon Russell Beale** are two of Britain's leading classical actors, having played many of the major Shakespearean roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Both appear on other Naxos AudioBooks: Lesser reads Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Russell Beale contributes to Shakespeare: *Great Speeches and Soliloquies*.

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Selected and
produced by
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and
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POETRY

Total time
2:38:31