DOWN BY THE SALLEY GARDENS

arr. Seán Doherty 2023 T(div.)TBB a cappella TEXT

Down by the Salley Gardens

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet; She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet. She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree; But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

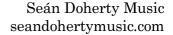
In a field by the river my love and I did stand, And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand. She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs; But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)

PROGRAMME NOTE

The salley gardens are thought to be on the banks of the river at Ballysadare, near Sligo. 'Salley' are young willow branches, grown as material to thatch roofs. This poem of young and lost love is a direct imitation of a traditional Irish song. Yeats noted that the poem was 'an attempt to reconstruct an old song from three lines imperfectly remembered by an old peasant woman (...) who often sings them to herself'. In this arrangement, we hear the direct speech of the lover in the background vocals, and their commands to 'take love easy' and 'take life easy'.

Performance Time: c. 3 mins



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