

# **WHAT FOOLS THESE MORTALS BE**

**DAVID STOLL**

**1 HAMLET**

**FOOLS BY HEAVENLY COMPULSION**

2 1 – Nothing

3 2 – Storm

4 3 – Never

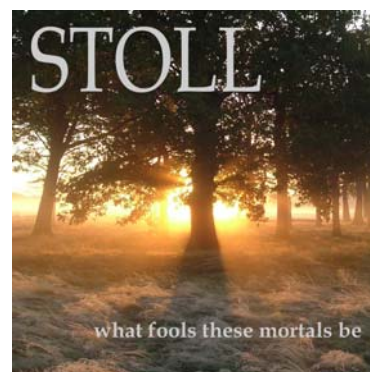
5 **THE FAIR SINGER** (words by Andrew Marvell)

6 **CLEOPATRA**

7 **MIRANDA**

8 **OTHELLO**

9 **PORTIA**



This new release combines five of the pieces from THE SHAKESPEARE SUITE with related works, including the first release of my third String Quartet, FOOLS BY HEAVENLY COMPULSION. All this music explores the human tendency to deceive ourselves, particularly in matters of love, a major theme in Shakespeare. As the meddler Puck says, watching unnoticed: “Lord, what fools these mortals be!”

HAMLET cannot reconcile what is and what should be, and drowns in indecision as a ghost stalks the castle. CLEOPATRA is a vision of loveliness, floating past in her golden barge, but where does Antony's duty lie? OTHELLO believes that Desdemona's love must be false because – having wooed her with stories – he is now listening to Iago's tales.

THE FAIR SINGER, a setting of the Marvell poem, is a contemporary setting based on the style of a Dowland lute song. The fair enemy who so captivates us represents not only the beloved but also the beguiling creation, and “all resistance ... is vain”.

FOOLS BY HEAVENLY COMPULSION takes its titles and imagery from 'King Lear'. The long central movement - 'Storm' - depicts the three types of folly portrayed in the painful central scenes on the heath: the child-like nonsense of the Fool, the assumed madness of Poor Tom (Edgar) and the pitiful loss of wits of the King himself, who gradually learns a truth beyond words. 'Storm' is framed by two short movements about Cordelia. 'Nothing' is concerned with her inability to play the court game of flattery; 'Never' is about her death.

All is not lost. MIRANDA sees through the villains and traitors to “how beautiful mankind is”. And PORTIA explains the difference between the human desire for revenge and the heavenly quality of mercy when “earthly power doth then show likest God's”.

For more detailed programme notes, please e-mail [davidstoll@btconnect.com](mailto:davidstoll@btconnect.com).