

# The Last Rose of Summer

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***The Last Rose of Summer*** is a poem by Irish poet Thomas Moore, who was a friend of Byron and Shelley. Moore wrote it in 1805 while at Jenkinstown Park in County Kilkenny, Ireland. Sir John Stevenson set the poem to its widely-known melody, and this was published in a collection of Moore's work called *Irish Melodies* (1807–34). In Ireland, it is claimed that the melody was composed by George Alexander Osborne, a composer from Limerick City.

Ludwig Van Beethoven composed Theme and Three variations for flute and piano, Op 105, based on the song late in his life. Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy composed a Fantasia in E major, Op. 15, based on the song (1827?, publ. London, 1830). Friedrich von Flotow uses the song in his opera "Martha," premiered in 1847 in Vienna. It is a favorite air ("Letzte Rose") of the character Lady Harriet. The interpolation works, and indeed the song helped popularize the opera. (According to the 1954 *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the opera grew from an 1844 ballet-pantomime, "Lady Henriette," for which Flotow wrote the music to Act One. Burgmuller and Deldevez wrote the rest of the music; "Lady Henriette" was produced in Paris.)

It has been arranged into a set of extremely difficult variations by Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst for the violin.

The song is mentioned by James Joyce in *Ulysses*.<sup>[1]</sup>

Opera singer Luisa Tetrazzini began with the song in her free public concert in the streets of San Francisco, California on Christmas Eve, 1910.<sup>[2]</sup>

As well as being a common phrase<sup>[citation needed]</sup>, the poem is alluded to in the Grateful Dead song "Black Muddy River".

Clannad released a rendition of the song on their album *Crann Úll*. Sarah Brightman recorded the song for her album *The Trees They Grow So High*. It was made popular in the twenty-first century in a recording by Charlotte Church and the Irish Tenors.

It is sung in the musical group Celtic Woman by Méav Ní Mhaolchatha and Hayley Westenra. Chloë Agnew's solo version is recorded on her self-titled album. In the *Celtic Woman: A New Journey* tours, she sang duets with Ní Mhaolchatha, Westenra, and the vocalist-guitarist of the same group, Lynn Hilary. Agnew and Hilary are performing the same version in the *Isle Of Hope* tour. Ní Mhaolchatha's solo version is included in her *Celtic Journey* album.

In the 1941 film *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* it is the character Joe Pendelton's inability to play "The Last Rose of Summer" on his saxophone anything other than badly which allows him to prove that he is alive in another man's body; all the other characters think he is the dead man from whom he got the body, but when he plays the sax for his old boxing manager, he uses the same wrong note in the melody as he always did, and which thus confirms his story of coming back from the after-life.

In the 16th (final) episode of the 6th season of the UK Channel 4 television show *Shameless*, the song was sung by Jamie Maguire (played by Aaron McCusker) at the funeral of his sister Mandy Maguire (Samantha Siddall).

In the 1995 film *An Awfully Big Adventure*, the song is used as P.L. O'Hara's theme music and is a recurrent musical motif in the film's score.

The song was featured in Ric Burns' documentary series, *New York: A Documentary Film*, broadcast on PBS in the USA.

The song was used in the game Endless Ocean: Blue World as the theme of the Depths area of the Zahhab Region. It is also playable on the jukebox that the player can purchase in-game.

Off their 1977 album "Sin After Sin", Judas Priest recorded a song entitled "Last Rose of Summer". Written by Rob Halford and Glenn Tipton, the song is all about "unyielding love". A 1977 3 hr. Science Fiction BBC radio production written by Stephen Gallagher.

February 2011, the song was featured in FOX TV series, "The Chicago Code" Season 1 Episode 2, "Hog Butcher". This traditional Irish song was sung by Jason Bayle, as the uniformed officer during the memorial service of fallen Chicago police officer Antonio Betz.

## Poem

“ 'Tis the last rose of summer  
 Left blooming alone;  
 All her lovely companions  
 Are faded and gone;  
 No flower of her kindred,  
 No rosebud is nigh,  
 To reflect back her blushes,  
 To give sigh for sigh.  
  
 I'll not leave thee, thou lone one!  
 To pine on the stem;  
 Since the lovely are sleeping,  
 Go, sleep thou with them.  
 Thus kindly I scatter,  
 Thy leaves o'er the bed,  
 Where thy mates of the garden  
 Lie scentless and dead.  
  
 So soon may I follow,  
 When friendships decay,  
 From Love's shining circle  
 The gems drop away.  
 When true hearts lie withered  
 And fond ones are flown,  
 Oh! who would inhabit,  
 This bleak world alone?

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## Notes

- <sup>^</sup> "Ulysses by James Joyce: The Last Rose of Summer (http://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/~rac101/concord/texts/ulysses/ulysses.cgi?word=The+Last+Rose+of+Summer) , accessed 29 June 2009
- <sup>^</sup> Luisa Tetrzzini's gift ends S.F. era on high note (http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/12/24/MN211GTC0N.DTL) , San Francisco Chronicle

## External links

- Audio (midi) and poem (http://www.reelyredd.com/0906last\_rose.htm)

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