The Spell That Beams in Woman’s Eye
For voice and piano
Sydney, 1850-1852

Stephen Hale Marsh
Devon, 1806 – San Francisco, 1888

Text by Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell
Scotland, 1792 – Sydney, 1855

Edited by
Richard Divall

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Introduction

According to baptismal sources Stephen Hale Alonzo Marsh was born in Sidmouth, Devon on 4 February 1806.\(^1\) The ADB entry by Catherine Mackerras, based on materials provided by the Marsh family gives the date as 4 January 1805. His father, John Marsh operated concert halls in Sidmouth and the young Stephen made his musical debut there in 1817 at the age of eleven. Marsh married in 1826 and studied keyboard and also harp with the pioneer of the modern instrument, Nicholas Charles Bochsa (1789-1856). In England Marsh composed a considerable number of works, which were published by the noted music houses of Chappel and Co and Wessell and Co. including a Grand Sacred Cantata *The Spirit of Music*.

Following his sister, Marsh and his wife immigrated to Sydney in 1842, on the same ship as the explorer and his friend, Dr Ludwig Leichardt. During the voyage the composer wrote several works on immigration, and later Marsh was to compose two works on Leichardt. In collaboration and in competition with Isaac Nathan, he gave numerous concerts in Sydney, some of them orchestral concerts. In 1843 Marsh published a list of his English compositions as well as some of his first works written in Australia in the short-lived *Arden's Sydney Magazine*.\(^2\) In 1849 he was joined in Sydney by his younger brother, the composer and musician Henry Marsh, who set up as a music and instrument importer and publisher. His opera *The Gentleman in Black*, to a libretto by Edward Searle was premiered on 24 July 1861 by the William Saurin Lyster Opera Company at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne. The opera had probably been composed in England before his departure for Sydney. The performance was reviewed in *The Argus* on the following day, and the writer complimented Marsh on the orchestra whilst mentioning that the opera contained some balletic sequences.\(^3\) No portraits of the composer survive although a likeness was published in the *Illustrated Sydney News* in 1854. For thirty years Marsh made an active contribution to music and composition in Sydney and in 1872 departed Australia for Yokohama, before finally settling in San Francisco where he died on 21 January 1888. Much of his music and his harp survived until the great earthquake in that city in 1905. Details concerning Marsh’s opera are addressed in Graeme Skinner’s ‘The Search for Stephen Marsh’s *The Gentleman in Black*’, and on his career in Skinner’s doctoral thesis which is available online.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Occasionally spelled Stephan Alonso  
\(^2\) *Arden’s Sydney Magazine of Politics and General Literature* October 1843.  
\(^3\) *The Argus* 25 July 1861.  
\(^4\) www.graemeskinner.id.au
Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell was one of Australia’s most dedicated explorers. Born in 1792 in Grangemouth in Stirlingshire, Scotland, he lost his father when he was only twelve years old, but was sent by the family at an early age to The University of Edinburgh. Mitchell saw service in the Peninsula Wars and specialised in the drawing up of maps and gathering topographical intelligence for the campaign. An active and enquiring man, he was appointed Surveyor-General of New South Wales in 1828, succeeding the explorer John Oxley. Between the years 1831 and 1846 Mitchell undertook four expeditions into the interior, ranging from the northern reaches of the Darling River in Queensland, to opening up an overland route from Sydney to Portland, Victoria. For his successes in this field he was knighted in 1839 and received an Honorary Doctor of Civil Laws from Oxford University. He was a keen admirer of poetry and during the period, several of his poetic works were published in Sydney journals and newspapers. Fifty-five of his own poems survive, and he did a complete translation from the Portuguese of the epic poem *Lusiads* of Luís Vaz de Camões.
Mitchell’s three verses of *The Spell that Beams in Woman’s Eye* were set by Marsh probably around the same time as Nathan’s setting of *The Meeting of the East and the West*, also to a poem by Mitchell. The song was published on two pages, possibly by the music house of Henry Marsh. Only the first verse is set to music, with verse two and three being printed below the score on the final page. The only copy of the song is found in Volume VII of the Papers of Sir Thomas Mitchell, (M 3122), held in The Mitchell Library, which is named after him.

![Portrait by an unknown artist - Sir Thomas Mitchell –The Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales](image)

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Richard Divall
July 2014
THE SPELL THAT BEAMS IN WOMAN’S EYE,

Words by Sir T. Livingstone Mitchell
Music arranged by S. H. Marsh Esq.

Sempre Legato

Andante

The spell that beams in woman’s eye, when Cupid draws his bow,

Surprize! see all that shines on high, and all we find below. The charm

Stephen Hale Marsh – The Spell that Beams in Woman’s Eye - Facsimile
The Mitchell Library – State Library of New South Wales
CRITICAL NOTES

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The Editor
Frà Professor Richard Divall AO OBE is a Vice-Chancellor’s Professorial Fellow at Monash University, an Honorary Principal Fellow in Music at The University of Melbourne, and Visiting Professor at The University of Malta. He is Chairman of the Marshall-Hall Trust and is a Knight of Malta in Solemn Religious Profession. He was awarded a D.Lett. (Hon Causa) in 1992 by Monash University, and a Doc. Univ. (Hon Causa) by the Australian Catholic University in 2004. He holds a PhD in Theology from the University of Divinity on eighteenth-century sacred music on Malta that includes an edition of the complete sacred works of Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818), and is an Honorary Research Fellow at the same university. Richard Divall has edited early Australian music since 1967.
The Spell that Beams in Woman's Eye

Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell 1792-1855
Stephen Hale Alonzo Marsh 1805-1888
Edited by Richard Divall

Andante

[Tenor]

Andante

There is a power surpasses all that,

It turns our fancy

Wo- man's eye, when Cu- pid draws his bow,

The silent light ning

pas sing Art in that be

Virgin prob ing charm, The sil en t light ning

sies to rhyme: To mu sic turns the voice, gives mo tion grace; makes
shines on high, and all we find below. The moon beams on the waters blue, the strikes the heart to quicken, soft, warm. As varied as the human mind, and form sublime; And bids the heart rejoice. Most like the soul it makes men bold, And

li-ly's sweet, it's sweet perfume, The rose bud gem'd with morning dew. All change ful as the sky; It animates all human kind. That banishes de- spair; More precious than the purest gold; Yet

blos som and all bloom. light in wo man's eye. light-er than the air. 2. There 3. It