

FOLKSONGS



for Piano

Phillip A. Cooke

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for Piano

(2019-21)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

The Folksongs can be played individually, in small groups or as a set. If it is the latter, they can be played in any order.

‘The Oak and the Ash’ was first performed by Michelle Assay at the Cosmo Rodewald Hall, University of Manchester, UK on the 26 January 2020

‘The Turtledove’ was first performed by Duncan Honeybourne at St Mary’s Church, Weymouth, Dorset, UK on the 21 October 2020

For Duncan Honeybourne

Duration: 24 minutes

Cover photograph: www.unsplash.com

For more information: www.phillipcooke.com

CONTENTS

Name	Key	Tempo	Mood	Source
The Oak and The Ash	E Minor	♩ = c.66	Sadly	<i>Northumbrian Minstrelsy</i> (1882)
The Turtle Dove	A Minor	♩ = c.72	Hauntingly	Collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams from Mr Penfold, Sussex (1908).
Strawberry Fair	G Major	♩ = c.100	Playfully	Collected by Sabine Baring-Gould, Devon (1891)
Brigg Fair	D Minor	♩ = c.60	Distantly	Collected by Percy Grainger from Mr Taylor, Lincolnshire (1907)
O Waly, Waly	E Minor	♩ = c.56	Softly	Collected by Cecil Sharp from Mrs Cox, Somerset (1905)
Sheep Crook and Black Dog	G Major	♩ = c.84	Thoughtfully	Collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams from Mr Stacey, Sussex (1904).
Scarborough Fair	D Minor	♩ = c.48	Dreamily	Trad. English
D’Ye Ken John Peel	C Major	♩ = c.108	Hypnotically	Trad. English, Cumberland
The Lark in The Morn	E Minor	♩ = c.66	Wistfully	Collected by Sabine Baring-Gould, Cornwall (1895).
The Man of The River	D Minor	♩ = c.80	Simply	Phillip Cooke (2019)
Green Grow The Rushes, Oh!	C Major	♩ = c.136	Spiritedly	Trad. English. <i>Daily Express Community Song Book</i> (1927)
The Three Ravens	F Minor	♩ = c.72	Icily	Ravenscroft, <i>Melismata Musicall Phancies</i> (1611)

PROGRAMME NOTE

Folksongs are simple ‘re-imaginings’ of well-known English folksongs that have long since left their natural surroundings to become cultural artefacts in their own right. Another word for the compositional process exhibited here might be ‘deconstruction’ as each folksong is reduced to a handful of key features, such as a melodic fragment, a cadence or a rhythmic gesture and pieced together in a different fashion. In doing so, the essence of the song remains the same, but the mode of expression has changed, hopefully causing the listener to reassess these well-worn, but timeless tunes.

Another way of looking at *Folksongs* is as an aspect of ‘transfiguration’, which in its broadest sense is a complete change of form into a more beautiful or spiritual state – each of these short pieces seeks to do something similar (even the jauntier ones), taking the existing material and transfiguring it into something more ethereal and mystical. This act of composition has been present in my pieces for a long time, but it is only recently that I am realising that it is a concept with deep resonances and significance in my work. With that in mind, I have called the *Folksongs* ‘studies in transfiguration’ as they not only suggest the beginning of a process, but also that the very nature of the change of form is often slight or ephemeral – the opening of a door to another mode of being or thinking.

The twelve folksongs are all English in origin (though origin is a difficult word to assign to music that by its very nature is of dubious heritage) and many are amongst the most well-known pieces in the genre. Some were chosen as I had encountered them growing up (we sang *Green Grow the Rushes, Oh!* at primary school and *D’Ye Ken John Peel* was often sung before foxhunts in my home town), others purely for their links to pre-existing arrangements by more established composers and trailblazers. The one that is a red herring in the set is ‘The Man of the River’, which is a transfiguration of my own folksong pastiche that began life as a simple piano piece for my young daughter – I thought it both amusing and fitting that this piece should rub shoulders alongside its more illustrious forebears – perhaps emphasising the uncertain legacies of all music purporting to be ‘of the people’.

Although *Folksongs* can be performed as a 24-minute set, it can also be performed as individual pieces or selections from the whole – all are equally valid. These are simple pieces, easy to play and perhaps even more easy to understand. Though a concert performance of the set is possible, it is equally conceivable to consider these songs as some form of ‘background’ music (or if not background, then perhaps *not* foreground), something where the listener’s mind wanders in and out of focus on the music as the material softly changes and undulates. That is not to denigrate the concept or the process behind the composition (nor the original songs themselves) but to recognise the intrinsic qualities of these twelve pieces and the transfiguration at their heart.

PAC

FOLKSONGS

Twelve Studies in Transfiguration for Piano

PHILLIP A. COOKE (2019-21)

for John Casken on His 70th Birthday

I. The Oak and The Ash

A north-coun-try maid up to Lon-don had strayed, al-though with her na-ture it did not a-gree;

Sadly (molto rubato) (♩ = c.66)

p sempre

mp come un campanello

*
Ped.

*Keep pedal down until instructed to create an intense blurred sound

poco rit.

5

9/4

A tempo

9

mf ————— *p*

Ped. Ped.

13

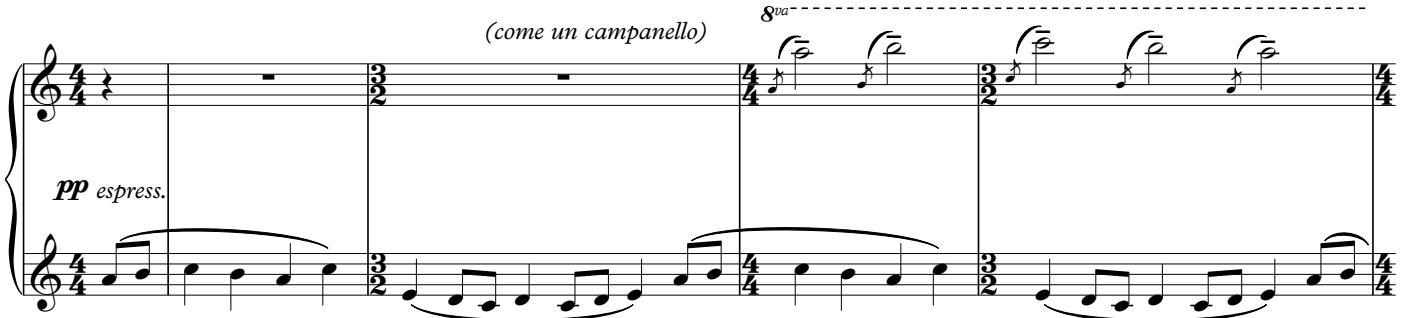
pp

II. The Turtle Dove



Oh— fare thee well, my dear - est— love, aye— fare thee— well a - while.

Hauntingly (not too slow) (♩ = c.72)




pp espress.

(come un campanello) ^{8^{va}}

* Ped.

*Keep pedal down until instructed to create an intense blurred sound

poco rit. **A tempo**



5 ^{8^{va}}

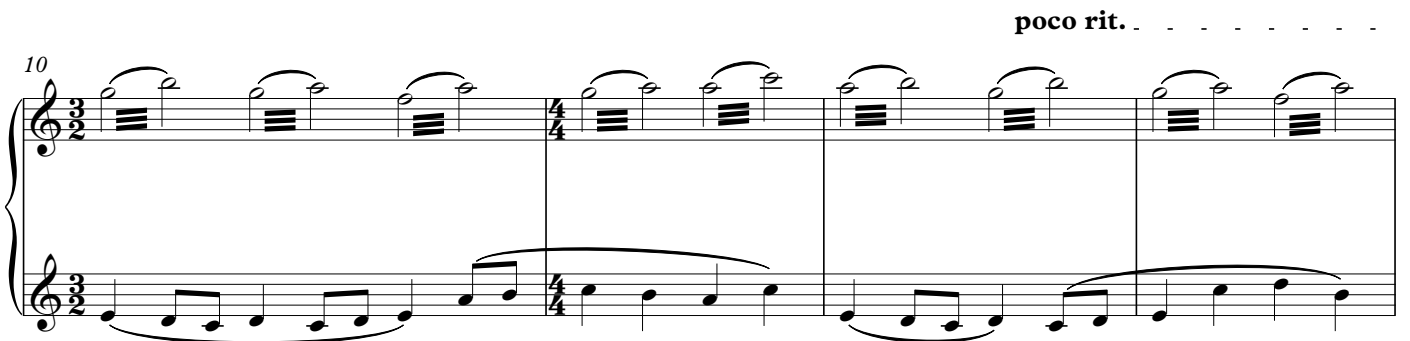
* lunga

pp delicato

lunga

! Ped.

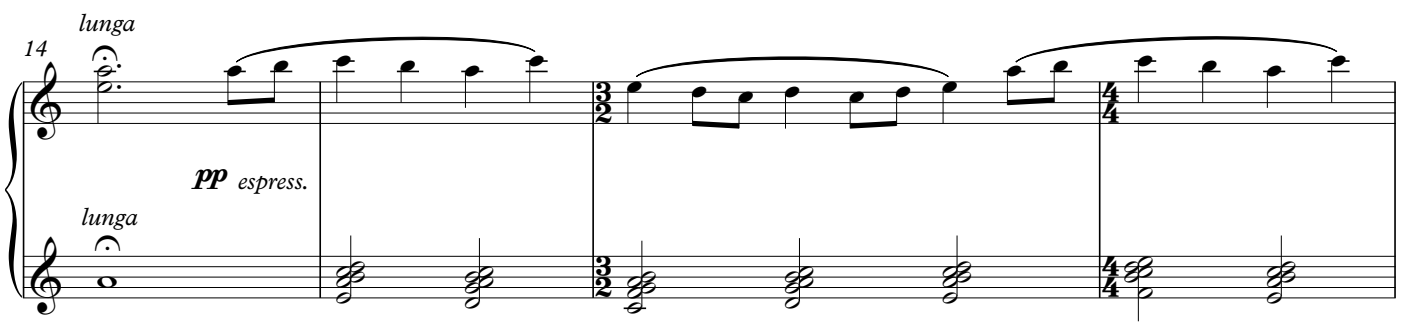
* Long pause to let resonate



10

poco rit.

A tempo



14

lunga

pp espress.

lunga

Ped.

poco rit. A tempo

poco rit.

18

pp *sonore*

Ped.

poco meno mosso (♩ = c.60)

23

lunga

p *espress.*

lunga

Ped.

molto rit.

28

lunga

mf

(1.v. a niente)

lunga

Tempore dolorem

Ped.

III. Strawberry Fair

As I was a-going to Straw-b'ry Fair, ri - tol, ri - tol, rid - dle tol de li - do,

Playfully (♩ = c.100)

poco accel.

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

A tempo

8 *f* *mp espress.*

Red. _____

12

16

poco rit.

A tempo

20

pp

lunga

mf \rightarrow *pp*

* Long pause to let resonate

poco accel.

26

mf \rightarrow *pp*

mf \rightarrow *pp* \rightarrow *f*

A tempo

32

P sub.

Ped.

poco rit.

37

P sub.

A tempo

42

lunga

pp

lunga

mf

pp

mf

pp

Broadly (a tempo)

49

p

f espress.

sib

sib

sib

Red.

54

sib

sib

sib

sib

*

* The *ossia* can be played if preferred.

rit.

58

decresc.

sib

sib

sib

sib

A tempo

rit.

62

lunga

mf *pp* *p* *pp* *pp*

lunga

A tempo

69

ff marc.

Tempore dolore

IV. Brigg Fair

It was on the fifth of Au - gust, the wea - ther fair and mild.

Distantly (♩ = c.60)

P sempre, liberamente

* Ped.

*Keep pedal down until instructed to create an intense blurred sound

poco

rit. **Warmly** (♩ = c.60)

lunga

* ↑

lunga

P espress.

Ped.

* Long pause to let resonate

rit.

21

8^{va}

3

3

3

pp lontanissimo

Tempore dolorem

V. O Waly, Waly

The wa - ter is wide, I can - not get o'er, and nei - ther have I wings to — fly.

Softly (hymn-like) (♩ = c.56)

pp sempre, sonore

poco a poco cresc.

Ped.

* Accent upper note until b.13

6

... *p* ...

^ Ped. *sim.*

11

... *mp* ...

... *mf* *pp sub.*

16

cresc.

... *mp* ...

* Accent upper note until b.21

21

... *mf* *pp sub.*

Detailed description: This block contains musical notation for measures 21 through 25. The score is written for piano in G major (one sharp). The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *pp sub.* (pianissimo subito). The tempo marking *rit.* (ritardando) is indicated at the top right of the page.

26

(l.v.)

Tempore dolorem

Detailed description: This block contains musical notation for measures 26 through 28. The right hand has a melodic line with a fermata over the final measure. The left hand continues with a quarter-note accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) is present. The tempo marking *Tempore dolorem* is written vertically on the right side of the staff.

VI. Sheep Crook and Black Dog

Oh, spread the green branches o-ver whilst I am young,

Thoughtfully (♩ = c.84)

p espress.

lunga

* Ped.

*Keep pedal down until instructed to create an intense blurred sound

* Long pause to let resonate

lunga

p teneramente

poco rit.

lunga

A tempo

pp legatiss.

Ped.

21

Musical score for measures 21-25. The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note melody with slurs. The left hand plays chords in a steady rhythm.

26

Musical score for measures 26-30. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand has a more active line with slurs and a dynamic marking *p espress.*

31

Musical score for measures 31-35. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand has a more active line with slurs. A tempo marking *poco rit.* is present.

36

Musical score for measures 36-40. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand has a more active line with slurs. Tempo markings *meno mosso* ($\text{♩} = c.72$) and *rit.* are present. A *Ped.* marking is at the bottom.

41

lunga

ppp

lunga

Tempore dolorem

Little Ythsie
April 2021

VII. Scarborough Fair

Where are you go-ing; to Scar - bo-rough Fair? Par - sley, sage, rose - ma - ry and thyme,

Dreamily (♩ = c.48 / ♪ = c.144)

p cantabile

pp sempre

Red.

7

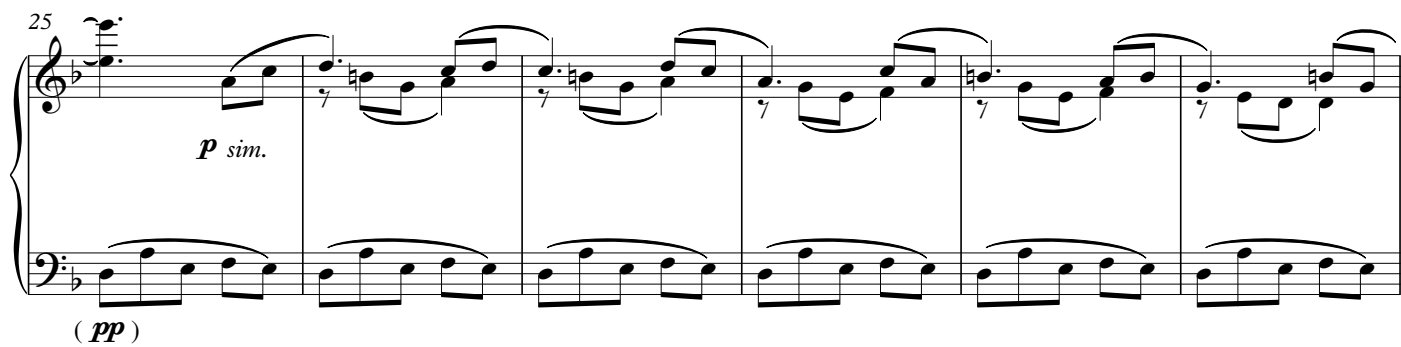
13

mp

19

pp

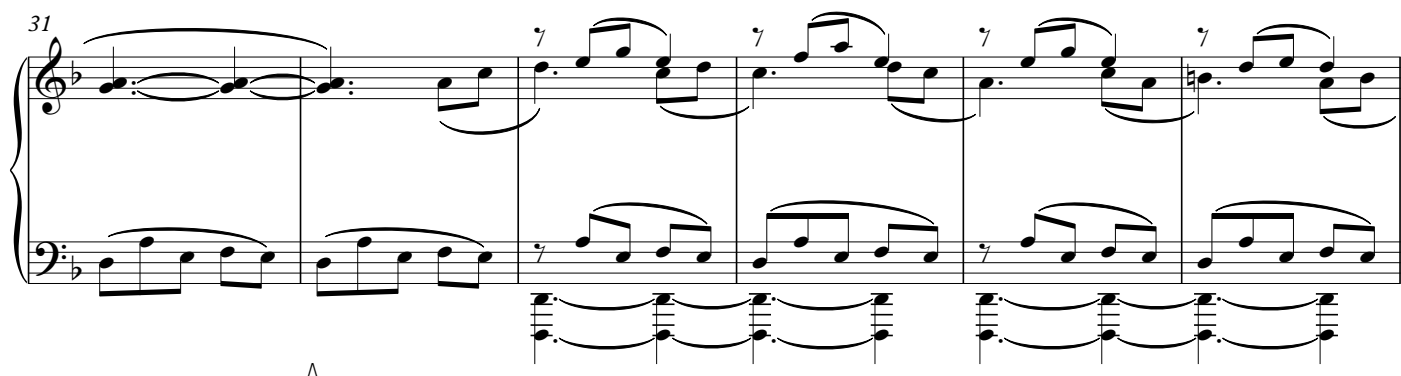
25



p sim.

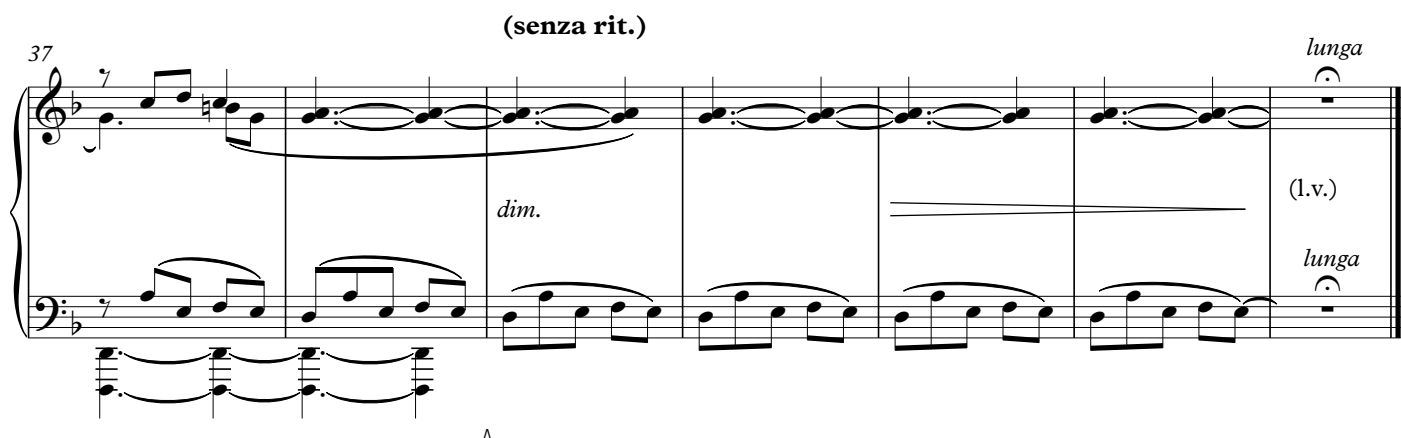
(*pp*)

31



37

(senza rit.)



dim.

lunga

(*l.v.*)

lunga

Tempore dolorem

VIII. D'Ye Ken John Peel

D' ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay, d' ye ken John Peel at the break of day,

Hypnotically (♩ = c.108)

pp *sempre, teneramente*

Ped.

5

9

(l.v. *a niente, sempre*)

p *come un campanello*

13

17

21

25

* Try to make the switch between hands as smooth as possible

+ Increase and decrease rate of oscillation of trill in line with crescendo and diminuendo

29

33

poco

37

poco

41

poco

pp

+ Decrease rate of oscillation of trill over the bar

rit.

45

p *come un campanello*

8^{vb}

49

lunga

(1.v. a niente)

lunga

Tempore dolore

Oldmeldrum
March 2021

IX. The Lark in the Morn

The lark in the morn as she ris - es from her nest mounts_ through the white air with the dew on her breast,

Wistfully (♩ = c.66)

pp sempre, lontano

Ped.

5

9

p sonore

rit.

13

Softly (a tempo)

17

mp teneramente

Ped. (ad lib.)

22

f *mp*

rit. Wistfully (a tempo) rit.

27

pp sempre *decresc. al fine.*

(l.v.)

Ped.

32

ppp

Tempore dolorem

X. The Man of the River

The man of the ri - ver came_ for me, The man of the ri - ver came_ for me,

Simply (♩ = c.80)

(come un campanello)

mf brillante

* *pp* sempre, legatiss.

Ped.

*Keep pedal down until instructed to create an intense blurred sound

Measures 1-5 of the piano accompaniment. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Measures 6-10 of the piano accompaniment. Measure 10 includes the instruction (l.v.) and *pp* delicato.

Ped.

Measures 11-15 of the piano accompaniment. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

poco rit.

21

mp

meno mosso (♩ = c.52)

Simply (♩ = c.80)

26

* lunga

pp

lunga

p sost.

pp sempre, legatiss.

Ped.

Ped.

* Long pause to let resonate

rit.

32

36

lunga

ppp

lunga

Tempore dolorem

XI. Green Grow The Rushes, Oh!

I'll sing you one - oh! Green gro the rush - es, oh!

Spiritedly (♩ = c.136)

f marc.

mf sempre, giocoso

Ped. (ad lib)

7

13

accel. **Softer (hymn-like)** (♩ = c.112)

19

ff

pp cresc.

Ped.

25

...p... ...mp... ...mf...

This system contains measures 25 through 30. The music is written for piano in a grand staff. Measures 25-26 are marked *p*, measures 27-28 are marked *mp*, and measures 29-30 are marked *mf*. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

31

...f... *ff* *decresc.*

This system contains measures 31 through 36. Measures 31-32 are marked *f*, and measures 33-36 are marked *ff* with a decrescendo hairpin. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand has a steady accompaniment.

37

...f... ...mf... ...mp...

This system contains measures 37 through 42. Measures 37-38 are marked *f*, measures 39-40 are marked *mf*, and measures 41-42 are marked *mp*. The right hand has a melodic line with some rests, and the left hand has a consistent accompaniment.

rit. Spiritedly (♩ = c.136) accel.

43

pp *ff* *8^{va}* *f* *sempre, giocoso*

This system contains measures 43 through 46. Measure 43 is marked *pp*. Measures 44-46 are marked *ff* with an *8^{va}* (octave up) instruction. The right hand has a melodic line with some rests, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. The instruction *f sempre, giocoso* is written below the system.

49

V.

⊗-----J

ffz

Tempore dolore

V.

V.

Oldmeldrum
April 2021

XII. The Three Ravens

There were three ra - vens sat on a tree, down a down, hey down a down;

Icily (♩ = c.72)

pp sempre

* lunga

lunga

lunga

* Ped.

*Keep pedal down until instructed to create an intense blurred sound

* Long pause to let resonate

poco rit. . . .

poco cresc.

Ped.

A tempo

11

pp

8^{va}

Ped.

16

8^{va}

Ped.

rit.

Musical score for measures 20-24. The piece is in a minor key (three flats). Measure 20 starts with a circled '8' above the staff. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. A 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking is placed above the right hand in measure 24. A dashed line above the staff indicates a performance boundary.

Musical score for measures 25-27. Measure 25 begins with a circled '8' above the staff. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and rests. The left hand has a long horizontal line in measure 26 and a note in measure 27. The word 'lunga' is written above the right hand in measure 25 and below the left hand in measure 27. A vertical line on the right side of the score is labeled 'Tempore dolorem'. A dashed line above the staff indicates a performance boundary.