

for Mezzo-Soprano, Viola & Piano

Phillip A. Cooke

for Mezzo-Soprano, Viola & Piano

(2011)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

All breath marks are suggestions only All grace-notes to be taken before the beat indicates gradually change playing style		
		sustain pedal until instructed e of sustain pedal at the player's discretion.
Each song may be sung individually, though if sung as a set they must be in the prescribed order		
For Andrew, Renna and the LDSM Festival		
Commissioned by the Lake District Summer Music Festival, with generous support from th Granada Foundation for the 2011 festival		
First performed at the Ambleside Parish Centre as part of the Lake District Summer Music Festival 2011 by Clare McCaldin, Yuko Inoue and Tadashi Imai on 09 August 2011		
Duration:		12'
Cover photogra	ph:	Lake Buttermere (Cooke)
For more info	rmation:	www.phillipcooke.com
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PROGRAMME NOTE

Lakesongs is a setting of three poems, rather unsurprisingly with lakes as a somewhat oblique subject matter. I was commissioned to write a companion piece to the Brahms Two Songs for alto, viola and piano and to draw upon the vast literary heritage of the Lake Poets as my inspiration – unfortunately I didn't gel with the Romantic poets and needed to look a little further afield for my texts. The idea of setting poems with lakes as the theme came to me after listening to Elgar's Sea Pictures and gave me the opportunity to set diverse poets all with the same general theme.

I say that lakes are an oblique subject matter as none of the three poems goes to great lengths to describe the lake in question; rather there is an omnipresence of a lake in all of the poems with a constant, unfaltering, monotonous presence. William Wilfred Campbell's *A Lake Memory* has a lake 'throbbing in with voice of pain' whereas Yeats has 'lake water lapping with low sounds' – this is a depiction of nature at its most sublime – a terror when faced with the unremitting force of nature. Edith Sitwell's *By The Lake* goes further and doesn't mention a lake but suggests a frozen wilderness, it is precisely that the lake is 'not' present that emphasises the emotional bleakness of the poem.

Lakesongs is very different in character to the Brahms songs and charts a descent into austerity from the warm tones of the opening A Major ostinato of A Lake Memory through the sparseness of The Lake Isle of Innisfree to the wintery tone of By The Lake. The inclusion of the viola with its very natural, almost human voice and tone adds an extra subtext to the work and the poems – it often has the role of a commentator, a distant representation of the emotional content and dark melancholy of the lakes mentioned.

Lakesongs is dedicated to Andrew Lucas, Renna Kellaway and the Lake District Summer Music Festival for all the help and input they have given me in my career so far, and to many more exciting future collaborations.

PAC

A Lake Memory

THE lake comes throbbing in with voice of pain

Across these flats, athwart the sunset's glow,

I see her face, I know her voice again, Her lips, her breath, O God, as long ago.

To live the sweet past over I would fain.

As lives the day in the red sunset's fire, That all these wild, wan marshlands now would stain,

With the dawn's memories, loves and flushed desire.

I call her back across the vanished years,

Nor vain—a white-armed phantom fills her place;

Its eyes the wind-blown sunset fires, its tears

This rain of spray that blows about my face.

William Wilfred Campbell (1858 – 1918)

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,

And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:

Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;

And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

William Butler Yeats (1865 – 1939)

By The Lake

ACROSS the flat and the pastel snow Two people go 'And do you remember

When last we wandered this shore?' . . . 'Ah no!

For it is cold-hearted December.'

'Dead, the leaves that like asses's ears hung on the trees

When last we wandered and squandered joy here;

Now Midas your husband will listen for these

Whispers--these tears for joy's bier.' And as they walk, they seem tall pagodas;

And all the ropes let down from the cloud

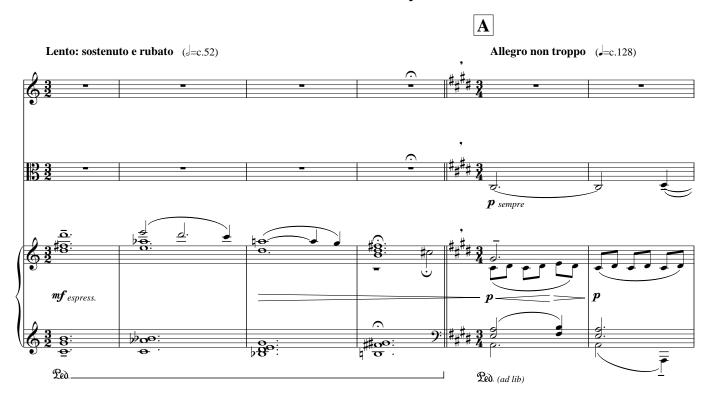
Ring the hard cold bell-buds upon the trees--codas

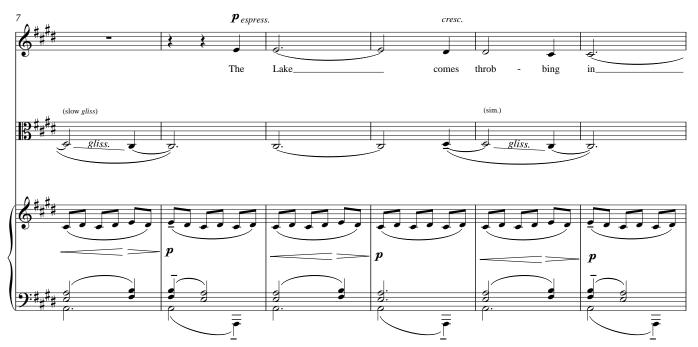
Of overtones, ecstasies, grown for love's shroud

Dame Edith Sitwell (1887 – 1964)

a Song-Cycle for Mezzo-Soprano, Viola and Piano

A Lake Memory





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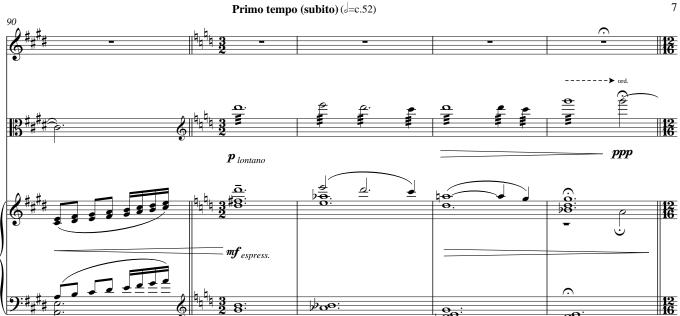




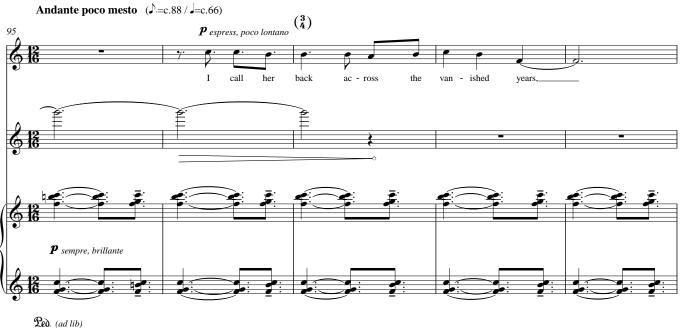




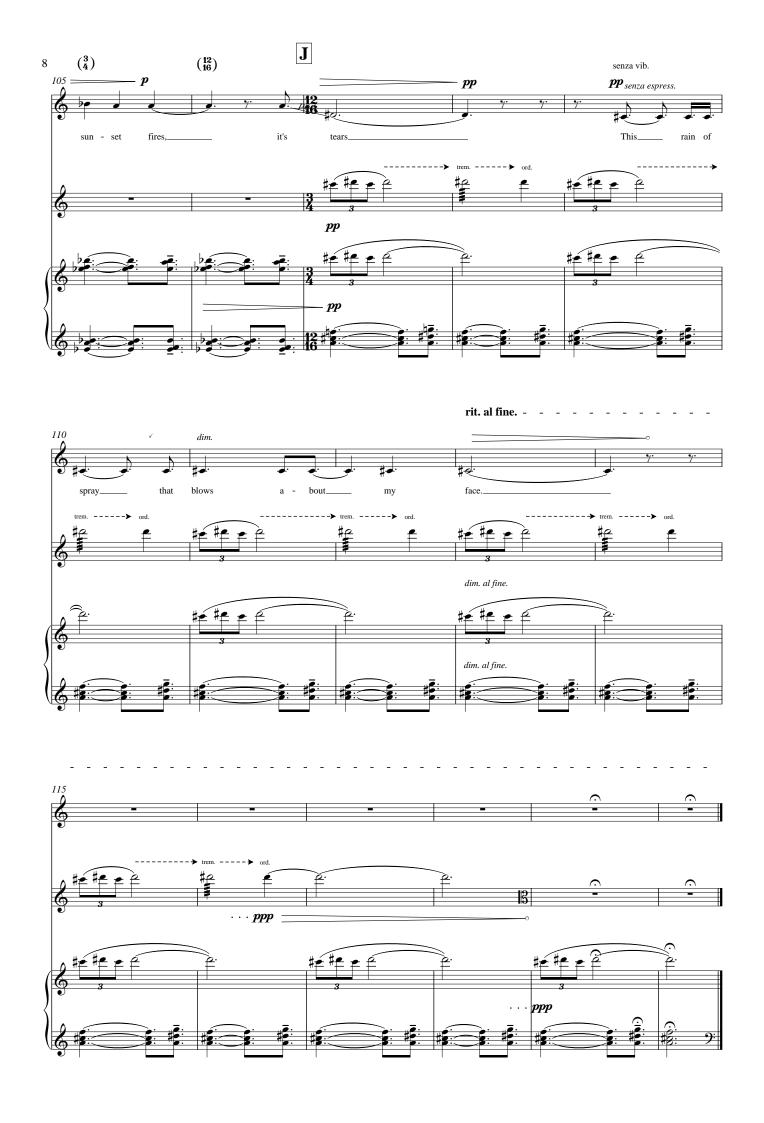
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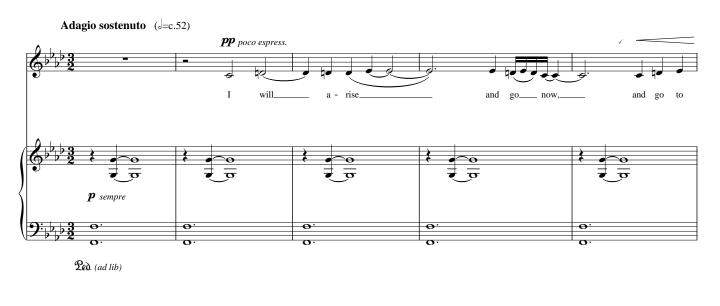


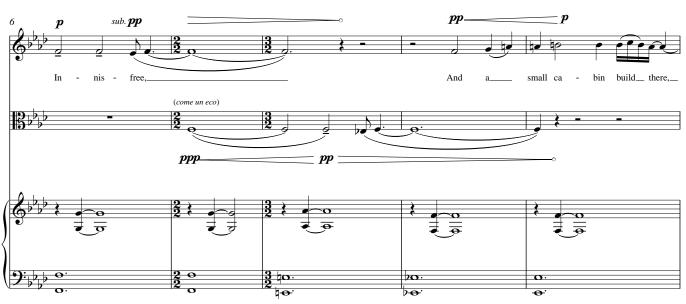


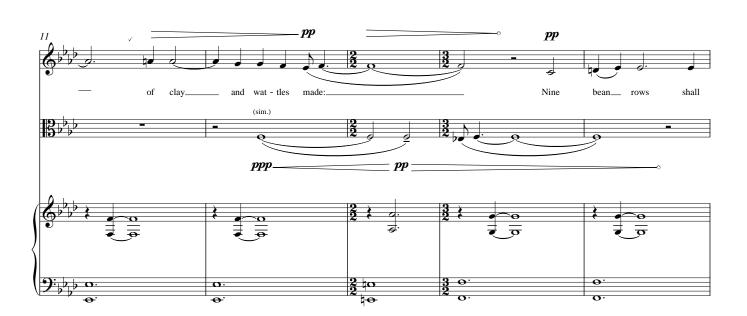


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