

# THE SONG OF SHADOWS

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**for Mezzo Soprano & Piano**

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**Phillip A. Cooke**

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## for Mezzo Soprano & Piano

(2016)

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### PERFORMANCE NOTES

All breath marks are suggestions only

First performed (in orchestral version) on the 10 June 2016 by the Marischal Chamber Orchestra with Kathleen Cronie (soprano) and conducted by Chris Gray at King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, UK.

'Winter' and 'Autumn' first performed on the 05 May 2012 by Clare McCaldin and Paul Turner at Deddington Parish Church, Oxfordshire, UK

**Duration:** 14 minutes

**Cover photograph:** [www.celtic-trails.com](http://www.celtic-trails.com)

**For more information:** [www.phillipcooke.com](http://www.phillipcooke.com)

### PROGRAMME NOTE

*The Song of Shadows* is an enlargement of a work of mine from 2012, *Two de la Mare Songs* which was written for the mezzo soprano Clare McCaldin. I had always felt these two songs ('Winter' and 'Autumn') were a little on the short side for a set and had wanted to write some companion songs should the opportunity arise. In early 2016 I wrote two new songs ('Sleep' and 'The Song of Shadows') for mezzo soprano and piano, before arranging the whole set for soprano and chamber orchestra.

*The Song of Shadows* is one of the most romantic and yearning pieces I have written, what I initially had thought of as quite austere in *Two de la Mare Songs* has become something much more rhapsodic and colourful in *The Song of Shadows*. The work is imbued with a sense of English pastoralism, there is something wistful and resigned about the whole set from the opening line 'Clouded with snow the cold winds blow' to the final 'silence where hope was' – whether this is a response to de la Mare's poetry or my own state of mind, I'm not sure – but there is something dark and unresolved at the heart of this piece which isn't always apparent in my other work.

PAC

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## TEXT

### *Winter*

Clouded with snow  
The cold winds blow,  
And shrill on leafless bough  
The robin with its burning breast  
Alone sings now.

The rayless sun,  
Day's journey done,  
Sheds its last ebbing light  
On fields in leagues of beauty spread  
Unearthly white.

Thick draws the dark,  
And spark by spark,  
The frost-fires kindle, and soon  
Over that sea of frozen foam  
Floats the white moon.

### *Sleep*

When all, and birds, and creeping beasts,  
When the dark of night is deep,  
From the moving wonder of their lives  
Commit themselves to sleep.

Without a thought, or fear, they shut  
The narrow gates of sense;  
Heedless and quiet, in slumber turn  
Their strength to impotence.

The transient strangeness of the earth  
Their spirits no more see:  
Within a silent gloom withdrawn,  
They slumber in secrecy.

Two worlds they have--a globe forgot,  
Wheeling from dark to light;  
And all the enchanted realm of dream  
That burgeons out of night.

### *The song of shadows*

"Sweep thy faint strings, Musician,  
With thy long lean hand;  
Downward the starry tapers burn,  
Sinks soft the waning sand;  
The old hound whimpers couched in sleep,  
The embers smoulder low;  
Across the walls the shadows  
Come, and go.

Sweep softly thy strings, Musician,  
The minutes mount to hours;  
Frost on the windless casement weaves  
A labyrinth of flowers;  
Ghosts linger in the darkening air,  
Hearken at the open door;  
Music hath called them, dreaming,  
Home once more."

### *Autumn*

There is a wind where the rose was,  
Cold rain where sweet grass was,  
And clouds like sheep  
Stream o'er the steep  
Grey skies where the lark was.

Nought warm where your hand was,  
Nought gold where your hair was,  
But phantom, forlorn,  
Beneath the thorn,  
Your ghost where your face was.

Cold wind where your voice was,  
Tears, tears where my heart was,  
And ever with me,  
Child, ever with me,  
Silence where hope was.

Walter de la Mare (1873 – 1956)

# THE SONG OF SHADOWS

Four settings of Walter de la Mare for Mezzo-Soprano & Piano

WALTER DE LA MARE (1873 - 1956)

## I. Winter

PHILLIP A. COOKE (2016)

Andante espressivo (♩=c.69)

*p* dolcemente

Clou - ded with

*ppp* lontano

*pp* sempre, molto legato

The first system of the musical score for 'I. Winter'. It features a Mezzo-Soprano line and a Piano accompaniment. The Mezzo-Soprano line begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note 'Clou' and a quarter note 'ded with'. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand starts with a half note chord, followed by a series of eighth notes. The left hand has a half note chord. Dynamics include *ppp* lontano and *pp* sempre, molto legato. The tempo is Andante espressivo (♩=c.69).

*Ped.* (ad lib; molto sost.)

4 snow the cold winds blow,

*mp*

*mp*

The second system of the musical score. The Mezzo-Soprano line starts with a quarter note 'snow', followed by a quarter note 'the', a quarter note 'cold', a quarter note 'winds', and a quarter note 'blow,'. The piano accompaniment continues with eighth notes. Dynamics include *mp*. There are triplet markings (3) and (2+3) over the 'winds' and 'blow,' notes respectively. The system ends with a quarter rest.

7 And shrill on leaf-less bough The ro-bin with it's burn-ing breast a -

*p* sim.

*cresc.*

*pp* sim.

*cresc.*

The third system of the musical score. The Mezzo-Soprano line starts with a quarter note 'And', followed by a quarter note 'shrill', a quarter note 'on', a quarter note 'leaf-less bough', a quarter note 'The', a quarter note 'ro-bin', a quarter note 'with it's burn-ing breast', and a quarter note 'a -'. The piano accompaniment continues with eighth notes. Dynamics include *p* sim., *cresc.*, *pp* sim., and *cresc.*. The system ends with a quarter note.

10

*mf marc.*

lone sings now, a lone sings

*poco rit.*

13

now.

now.

*pp* *sub. mf* *p*

*A tempo*

16

*p dolcemente*

The ray - less sun, Day's jour -

The ray - less sun, Day's jour -

*ppp lontano* *pp*

20 *mp* *p*

ney done, Sheds its last eb - bing

23 *mp* *molto espress.*

light On fields in leagues of beau - ty spread Un - earth - ly

*poco rit.* - - - - -

26 *mf* *marc.*

white, Un - earth - ly white.

*mp* *pp*

29

sub. *mf* *p*

**A tempo**

33

*p espress.*

*cresc.*

Thick draws the dark, And spark\_\_\_\_\_ by

*p sost.*

37

*mf* *appass.*

spark,\_\_\_\_\_ The frost - fires kin - dle,\_\_\_\_\_ and soon O - ver that

*cresc.* *mp*

41 *dim.*

sea of fro - zen foam Floats the white moon, the white

A tempo

rit. al fine. - - - - -

45 *... p*

moon.

*... p*

*dim. al fine.*

49

*ppp lontano*

*pp*



## II. Sleep

6

Andante lontano (♩=c.60)

Musical score for piano accompaniment, measures 6-9. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic marking is *pp*.

*Red.* (ad lib; molto sost.)

5

Musical score for piano accompaniment, measures 10-13. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic markings are *mf* and *sub. p*.

9

Musical score for piano accompaniment and vocal line, measures 14-17. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic marking is *pp*. The vocal line is in the right hand of the upper staff, with lyrics underneath.

*p* ————— *mf* ————— *p* —————

When all, and birds, and creep - ing beasts, ————— When the dark of

13 *mf* *mp* *f* *p* *mf*

night is deep, From the mo-ving won - der of their lives. Com-mit them-selves to

17 *pp*

sleep.

21 *p* *mf* *p*

With-out a thought, or fear, they shut The nar - row gates of sense;

25 *f*

Heed - less and quiet, in slum - ber turn Their strength to im - po -

*mf*

29 *pp* *mf* *f*

tence. The trans - ient strange - ness of the earth

*pp* *p*

33 *mf* *f*

Their spi - rits no more see: With - in a si - lent gloom with drawn, They

36 *ff*

slum - ber\_\_\_\_\_ in sec - re - cy, They slum - ber\_\_\_\_\_ in sec - re -

*mp* *f*

**Primo tempo** (♩=c.60)

39 *p* *pp* *mp*

cy. Two worlds they have a globe for - got,\_\_\_\_\_

*pp*

43 *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp*

— Wheel - ing from the dark to light;\_\_\_\_\_ And all that en - chant - ed realm of dream\_

rit.

47

*pp*

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It begins with a fermata over a whole note chord, followed by a melodic line: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4-A4 (beamed eighth notes), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). The lyrics "That burg-eons out of night." are written below the notes. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs, respectively, with a key signature of two flats. The piano part features a steady accompaniment of chords and moving lines, with a fermata over the final chord in both staves.

### III. The Song of Shadows

Sostenuto e grazioso (♩=c.60)

*mp* *espress.*

'Sweep thy faint strings,

*Ped.* (ad lib; molto sost.)

Mus - ic - ian, With thy long lean hand;

Down-ward the star - ry tap - ers burn,

12  
7 *sub. f* *mp*

Sinks soft the wan-ing sand; The old hound whim - pers couched in

9 *f* *mp* *sub. mf*

sleep, The em - bers smoul - der

11 *f*

low; ac - ross the walls the shad - ows Come and go.

13 *mp*

*mp*

*p*

16 *mf espress.*

Sweep soft - ly thy strings, Mus - ic - ian, The min - utes

*mf espress.*

*p*

18 *f*

mount to hours; Frost on the wind - less case - ment

*f*

*p*



20 *mp* *sub. f* *mp*

weaves, A lab - y - rinth of flow - ers;

22 *f*

Ghosts lin - ger in the dark - 'ning air, Heark - en at the

24 *ff*

o - - pen door;

poco rit. . . . . poco meno mosso (♩=c.52)

26

*p* espress.

Mus - ic hath\_\_ called\_\_

rit. . . . .

29

*pp*

\_\_ them, dream ing, \_\_ Home once more.' \_\_

*pp* sempre

for Donald Lane  
IV. Autumn

Andante con malincolico (♩=c.60)

*mp poco espress.*

There is a wind where the rose was; — Cold

*p dolce, legato*

*Ad. (ad lib; molto sost.)*

5 rain where the sweet grass was; And clouds like sheep Stream o'er the

*p* *mf*

*rit. ————— molto accel.*

9 steep Grey skies where the lark was.

*p*

- Poco piu mosso; espressivo

13

*mp* \_\_\_\_\_ *pp*

Nought gold where your hair was;\_

*ppp*

*pp*  
*legatissimo*

16

*mp* \_\_\_\_\_ *pp*

Nought warm where your hand was;\_ But

rit. \_\_\_\_\_

19

*mf*

phan - tom, \_ for - lorn, Be - neath the thorn, Your ghost where your

22 *pp* *p esitante* *pp*

face was, — Your ghost where your face was, —

**Primo tempo**

26 *mp poco espress.*

Sad winds where your voice was; — Tears, —

*p dolce, legato*

30 *p* *mf molto espress.*

tears where my heart was; — And ev - er — with me, Child, ev - er — with me,

*mf*

34

*f*

Si - lence\_ where hope was, where hope was.

*dim. al fine.*

38

*pp*

(l.v. a niente)