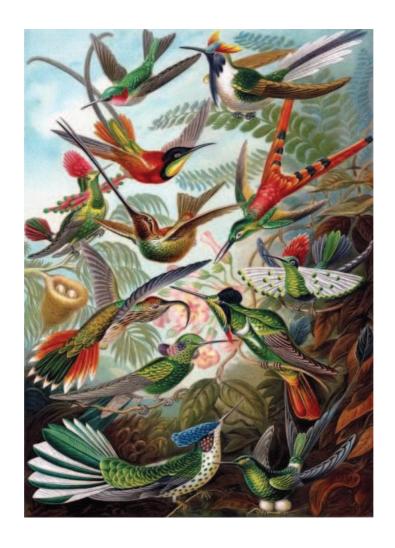
THREE PARTSONGS



for Mixed Choir (SATB)

Phillip A. Cooke

THREE PARTSONGS

for Mixed Choir (SATB)

(2008 - 2012)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

The *mmm* sound is a resonant humming sound, perhaps with a slightly open mouth if necessary to create a fuller sound.

The dotted arrow at bb 57-58 (*How Clear, How Lovely*) indicates a gradual shift from the word to a humming.

Duration: 12 minutes

Cover photograph: Hummingbirds (Ernst Haeckler)

For more information: www.phillipcooke.com

First performed (as a set) by the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College Cambridge, conducted by Nicholas Cleobury at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London, on 21 March 2013

I Stood on a Tower and How Clear, How Lovely were first performed by the Arcadian Singers, conducted by John Forster at Keble College, Oxford on 03 March 2012

A recording of this piece is available on *Phillip Cooke: Choral Music* released on Regent Records, REGCD411

PROGRAMME NOTE

The *Three Partsongs* are simple settings for SATB unaccompanied choir and are part of an ongoing set, taking their influence from the Romantic idea of the partsong as a simple, homophonic, melody dominated piece often taking its inspiration from nature and other Romantic notions. The partsong reached its apogee in the early years of the twentieth century with the likes of Parry, Stanford and Elgar being principal exponents, often bringing a high-minded seriousness to their settings of great English poetry both contemporary and from earlier epochs. The vogue for partsong writing carried on into the mid-twentieth century with notable contributions from Holst, Howells, Warlock and even Benjamin Britten. Perhaps the most famous set is Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Three Shakespeare Songs* of 1951. The partsong fell out of favour (along with its contrapuntal cousin, the madrigal) in the 1960s and is often viewed, today, as somewhat trivial and twee.

Like much of my work, I am trying to 're-encounter' previous genres and styles and make them more relevant for today – to speak the same language as previous composers but with a different accent - something that could only have been written today. 'I Stood on a Tower' is a setting of Tennyson and is bound together by a minor ninth harmony which colours the melancholy mood of the old year giving way to the new. 'Green' is a setting of DH Lawrence

and is sprightly and loose-limbed before a long crescendo matches Lawrence's passionate overtones. 'How Clear, How Lovely' is a setting of Alfred Housman's *XVI* from *More Poems* (1936) and is perhaps the closest in tone to the Edwardian partsong, however the sombre finale on the line 'falls the remorseful day' suggests somewhere darker and more painful than previous composers may have gone.

PAC

TEXT

I Stood on a Tower

I stood on a tower in the wet,
And New Year and Old Year met,
And winds were roaring and blowing;
And I said, "O years, that meet in tears,
Have ye aught that is worth the knowing?
Science enough and exploring,
Wanderers coming and going,
Matter enough for deploring,
But aught that is worth the knowing?"
Seas at my feet were flowing,
Waves on the shingle pouring,
Old year roaring and blowing,
And New Year blowing and roaring.

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809 – 1892)

Green

The dawn was apple-green, The sky was green wine held up in the sun, The moon [was] a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green They shone, clear like flowers undone For the first time, now for the first time seen.

DH Lawrence (1885 – 1930)

How Clear, How Lovely

How clear, how lovely bright, How beautiful to sight Those beams of morning play; How heaven laughs out with glee Where, like a bird set free, Up from the eastern sea Soars the delightful day.

To-day I shall be strong,
No more shall yield to wrong,
Shall squander life no more;
Days lost, I know not how,
I shall retrieve them now;
Now I shall keep the vow
I never kept before.

Ensanguining the skies
How heavily it dies
Into the west away;
Past touch and sight and sound
Not further to be found,
How hopeless under ground
Falls the remorseful day.

Alfred E. Housman (1859 – 1936)

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THREE PARTSONGS

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON (1809 - 1892)

for Mixed Choir (SATB)

PHILLIP A. COOKE (2008 - 2012)

I. I Stood on a Tower























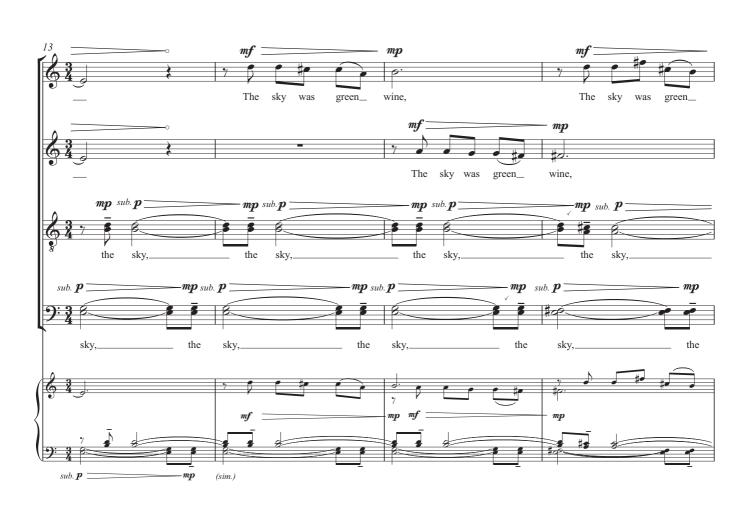
Sedbury Park, Middleton Cheney June - July 2008

II. Green

D H LAWRENCE (1885 - 1930)



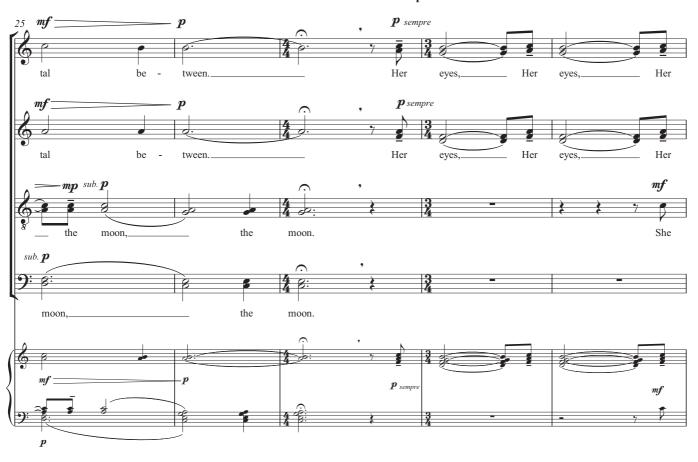


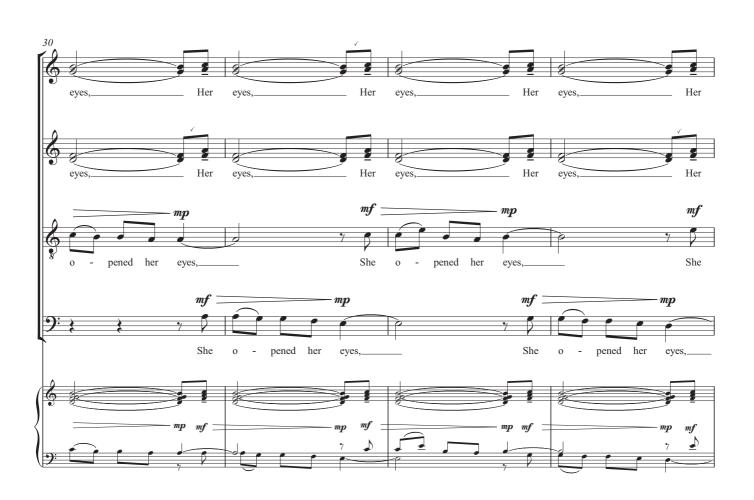


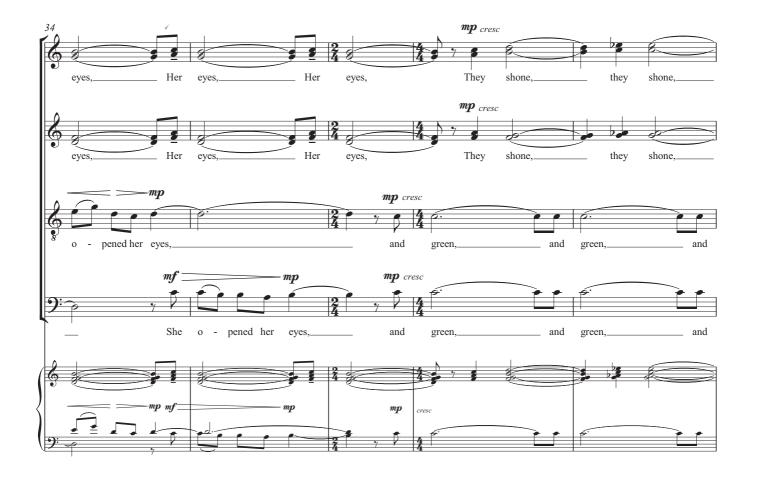




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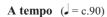


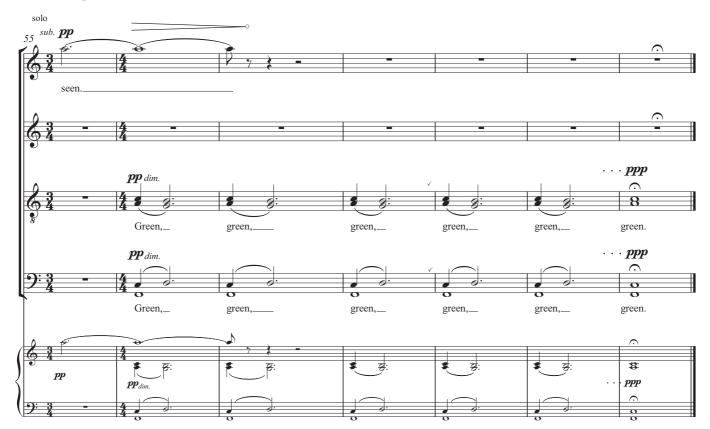












Little Bourton, Oxford June 2012





