

PROGRAMME NOTE

The five songs of *Candlebird* are all settings of texts by Don Paterson. The selection and ordering are my own; four songs are taken from *Rain* (Faber & Faber) and the final song is from Paterson's earlier collection *God's Gift to Women* (Faber & Faber).

The choice was, initially, merely personal preference; I was attracted to those poems that 'spoke' to me. That said, I knew from the outset that I wanted the primary vocal impulse to be lyric – in other words I set out to write *songs*, in a rather traditional sense perhaps (though I didn't necessarily remain faithful to this desire!) – and so the regular metric- and rhyme-schemes of the poems I chose struck me as being particularly suited to musical setting.

Only the central song is a Paterson 'original': the others are his versions of texts by Robert Desnos, Antonio Machado, and Abbas Ibn Al-Ahnaf. Paterson has described this 'versioning' as a remaking, a process in which he remains faithful to the spirit rather than the letter of the text; not an attempt to capture the original author's voice but an independent poem of his own, albeit one based on a earlier work. This is, I feel, very similar to the process of setting text to music, and the resulting nesting of versions appealed to me, from untexted music at one extreme, to my musical versions of Paterson's versions of pre-existing poetry at the other.

In the first song, *The Landscape*, the voice triggers orchestral passages of gradually increasing harmonic density. These suddenly release on to an open sonority that remains frozen while a long trombone melody using a quarter-tone inflected scale glides on top. *Sky Song* is a simple alternation of orchestral and vocal lines. In the third song, *Motive*, the texture is woven from an unpredictable sequence of scurrying fragments, their configuration continually changing while the harmonic underpinning remains constant. *The Wind* is an exuberant polyphony of dances in which strings, wind and voice live in related but entirely separate worlds.

The final movement, *Candlebird*, is a song-within-a-song. This is set as a melismatic central section in which the baritone moves freely through many quarter-tone derived scales. Bordering this, intensely expressive string polyphonics gradually shed their ornamentation until they fuse into a simple sequence of harmonies, their repeated cadence bringing the work to a close.

M.S.

CONTENTS

I	The Landscape	page 1
II	Sky Song	page 21
III	Motive	page 31
IV	The Wind	page 65
V	Candlebird	page 97

106 **L**

A. Fl.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bar.

you.'

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Db.



114 **M**

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

75

Fl. *ff* senza tempo *rall.* *pp*

A. Fl. *ff* senza tempo *rall.* *pp*

Ob. *ff* senza tempo *rall.* *pp*

Cl. *ff* senza tempo *rall.* *pp*

B. Cl. *ff* senza tempo *rall.* *pp*

Bsn. *ff* senza tempo *rall.* *pp*

Tpt. *p* *poco f*

Perc. Maracas *mf*

Hp. *p*

Vln. 1 *mp* *f* col legno

Vln. 2 *mp* *f* col legno

Vla. 1 *mp* *f* col legno

Vla. 2 *mp* *f* col legno

Vc. 1 *mp* *f* col legno

Vc. 2 *mp* *f* col legno

Db. *mp* *f* col legno