

PROGRAMME NOTE

1. The Miracle Tree 1
2. The trees are troubled 7
3. Vigil. 17
4. The tree is a changing sky . . . 26
5. Bushes and Briars 32

The idea for this collaboration first came about in 2009, when the Coull Quartet approached me about writing a work with Fiona Sampson. The quartet, Fiona and I discussed at length what form the piece might take, and after some months, Fiona sent me three 'tree' poems. I felt I could respond to them immediately. Once I started to write the music, though, I realised more poems would be needed, and Fiona created two more to complete the set.

I asked to write for Roderick Williams, and the settings are written very much with his voice in mind. I know Roddy's voice well, as he created the role of Byron in my opera with Janice Galloway, *Monster*, in 2002. The songs tend to feature the higher register of the baritone range.

The first poem is set against a string 'shimmer' with small solos breaking through. The second is a canon, building with gusts which hover around an unsettled 'heartbeat' rhythm in 5/8 time. The central movement is recitative-like, with aggressive chordal interjections from the strings, containing a brief lullaby interlude before the angry mood returns. The fourth song is characterised by wide, searching intervals and pulsing chords. The work finishes with a song accompanied by birdcalls overlapping in a circular canon, with raw rising fifths.

Sally Beamish, 2013

Commissioned by the University of Warwick

*First performed by the Coull Quartet with Roderick Williams (baritone)
on 5th March 2014 at Warwick Arts Centre, University of Warwick*

Tree Carols

1. The Miracle Tree

Fiona Sampson

Sally Beamish

Andante calmo *p* *mf* *p*

Baritone

The true Rood is in the

Violin I *ppp*

Violin II *ppp*

Viola *ppp*

Violoncello *ppp*

8 *mp* *mf* *f* **A**

tree white as ri - sing sap, the Christ - white

2. The trees are troubled

Presto

bar = 60

1

Musical score for measures 1-5. The score is in 5/8 time and features five staves: Baritone (bass clef), Violin I (treble clef), Violin II (treble clef), Viola (alto clef), and Violoncello (bass clef). The Baritone part is silent. The Violin I part begins in measure 5 with a *pp* dynamic. The Violin II part begins in measure 2 with a *pp* dynamic. The Viola part begins in measure 2 with a *pp* dynamic. The Violoncello part begins in measure 1 with a *pp* dynamic. Dynamics for Violoncello are *pp*, *mf*, *mf*, and *f*. Dynamics for Viola are *pp* and *mf*. Dynamics for Violin II are *pp* and *mf*. Dynamics for Violin I are *pp*.

G

Musical score for measures 6-10. The score continues from the previous page. Dynamics for Violoncello are *f*, *p*, *f*, *mf* cresc, and *f*. Dynamics for Viola are *f*, *p*, *f*, and *mf* cresc. Dynamics for Violin II are *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *f*. Dynamics for Violin I are *f*, *f*, and *p*. The Viola part includes a *pizz* instruction in measure 10. The Violoncello part includes a *pizz* instruction in measure 10.