

PROGRAMME NOTE

In 1990 the Polish poet Jerzy Pietrkiewicz, a close friend of my father's, showed him a prayer that he had written to the Virgin of Sienmpa. My father was already ill and trying to finish his cello concerto while he still had the energy, so he only set part of the poem, leaving the rest to be narrated. It is a beautifully poignant and simple setting which Jerzy asked me, 9 years later, to 'complete' by setting the omitted words to music, also. The outer sections are by my father and the inner one by me.

The original version of the piece was commissioned by the Al Buxton Festival for the Chilingirian String Quartet but it has been requested in a variety of formats since. It can now be heard as voice & piano, piano solo, string orchestra and clarinet quintet.

My father often likened the sound of stringed instruments to the human voice – referring to the 'singing qualities' of the cello in particular. It is for this reason that I have given much of the melody to what is traditionally a bass instrument in its string versions.

From lake to lake,
from islet to islet a pagan Sienmpa,
But you baptised it with your smile,
Maiden, bent over sin,
In the image and likeness
of the waiting girl
a transient chisel brought you out to light,
so that even from this conception in wood,
shavings of miracle would fall into perance.

Oh, angel my guardian
whose face and name I do not know,
stand always by my side
at a precipitous distance of conscience.

Jerzy Pietrkiewicz (1955)
Prose version in English by the author

Duration: c. 5 minutes

*Original version for String Quartet commissioned by
the Al Buxton Festival for their 1999 Polish Season*

do Matki Boskiej Słotkiny na dzień 8 września

Modlitwa ("Prayer")

for Clarinet and String Quartet
based on the prayer by Jerzy Piwnkiewicz (1953)

Andrzej Panufnik
(1914-1991)
Romanus Panufnik
(b. 1958)

(Andrzej)
♩ = 45 (veloce - slowly)

Clarinet in B♭

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Cl.

VL. 1

VL. 2

Vn.

Vc.