

Jolyon Laycock

Three Shakespeare Sonnets



for tenor or high baritone
and piano

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Shakespeare
Sonnets

for tenor or high baritone
and piano (2016)

*First performed as a complete set
by the composer accompanied by
Alistair Dawes at Bristol Music Club
Friday 21 October 2016*

Sonnet 18: Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Sonnet 116: Let me not to the marriage of true minds...
Sonnet 65: Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea...

texts by William Shakespeare (1564-1716)

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Programme note

I set sonnet 18 as my entry for the English Poetry and Song Society Shakespeare competition held in 2015 in celebration of the tri-centenary of the poet's death. It is perhaps the best known of Shakespeare's 154 Sonnets, containing, as it does, the immortal phrase "...the darling buds of May". My setting was first performed by Gordon Pullin at the Bristol Music Club in September 2015.

I then decided to set two more of the sonnets to make up a set of three to perform myself. They are therefore intended to suit the capabilities of my own voice.

Like all my compositions written in the last six years they employ versions of the all-interval fractal sets that I discovered in 2010. Although these little 6-note motives are derived by a strictly systematic arithmetical process, they are paradoxically lyrical in quality. As a result a great deal of my compositional work over the past 6 years has been in the form of songs.

These three Shakespeare settings exploit the many tonal implications of the sets to produce music which, though still fundamentally atonal, is at the same time lyrically expressive and harmonically rich. The fractal process tends to produce its own characteristic formal structure. Reconciling this with the fourteen-line structure of the Shakespearian sonnet presents an interesting creative challenge. The first twelve lines are divided into three quatrains. Typically, in the first two quatrains, the poet establishes some kind of theme. In the third quatrain a contradiction is presented creating a dilemma which is then resolved in the final couplet. Sonnets 18, 65 and 116 share a common preoccupation with the poet's wish to achieve a kind of immortality through the preservation of his written legacy.

I would like to express my huge gratitude to my old friend Alistair Dawes who drove 180 miles from his home in St. Leonards on Sea to accompany me for the first complete performance.

Jolyon Laycock
October 2016

Sonnet 18

page 3

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
 Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet 116

page 11

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove:

O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Sonnet 65

page 18

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
 But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
 How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
 Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

O! how shall summer's honey breath hold out,
 Against the wrackful siege of battering days,
 When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
 Nor gates of steel so strong but Time decays?

O fearful meditation! where, alack,
 Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
 Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
 Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

O! none, unless this miracle have might,
 That in black ink my love may still shine bright

Biographical note

Jolyon Laycock was born in Bath in 1946 and studied for B.Mus. and M.Phil. in composition at the University of Nottingham between 1965 & 1971. His composition teachers included Arnold Whittall, Henri Pousseur and Cornelius Cardew. Later in life he studied for his Ph.D. at York University under Nicola Lefanu.

During the 1970s he pursued a freelance career as an experimental sound artist based at the Birmingham Arts Laboratory and Spectro Arts Workshop, Newcastle. In 1979 he took up the post of Music and Dance Coordinator at the Arnolfini, running a programme of contemporary music and dance regarded as one of the most innovative outside London. In 1990 he became Concert Director at the University of Bath and at the newly opened Michael Tippett Centre at Bath Spa University College where he founded the award-winning concert series *Rainbow over Bath*. He left the University in 2000 to complete his book *A Changing Role for the Composer in Society*. In 2004 he was appointed Senior Lecturer in Arts Management at Oxford Brookes University until 2010.

In 2012 he won the EPSS Jubilee Song Competition with his setting of Philip Larkin's *The North Ship* which led to a collaboration with Sarah Leonard resulting in the composition of *Dark Seas*, a setting of five poems of Philip Larkin for soprano, clarinet and piano. Other song settings include *Six Sonnets of Edna St. Vincent Millay* written for the English mezzo-soprano Lore Lixenberg and first performed by her in 2012, and *Three Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins* first performed in 2013 by the composer himself accompanied by Geoffrey Poole.

Sonnet 18

William Shakespeare (1564-1716)

Jolyon Laycock

$\text{♩} = 72$ *accel.* *rall.*

Tenor or Baritone Solo

Piano

$\text{♩} = 72$ *accel.* *rall.*

p *f* *p*

a tempo

4 *p* *mf*

Solo

Shall I com-pare thee to a sum-mer's day?

a tempo

Pno.

6 *p*

Solo

Thou art more love-ly and more tem-per-ate.

Pno.

8 *accel.* *rall.*

Solo

Pno.

pp *p*

a tempo

Solo

10 *f* *mf*

Rough winds do shake the dar-ling buds of May, the

a tempo

Pno.

sub. mf *f* *sub pp*

12

Solo

8 dar-ling buds of May,

Pno.

p *pp* *lightly*

15

Solo *mp*

And sum-mer's lease hath all to short a

Pno. *p* *mp* *legato*

17

Solo

date:

Pno. *p* *lightly* *pp* *legato* *mp*

20

Solo *mp* *f*

Some-time too hot the eye of hea-ven shines, the

Pno. *mf*

22

Solo

8 eye of hea-ven shines, *p* And of - ten is his gold com-ple-xion

Pno.

f *p* *p*

25

Solo

8 dimm'd, *mp* And

Pno.

sub. f *ff* *sub. pp* *mp*

28

Solo

8 ev' - ry fair from fair some-time de-clines, *p* By chance, or

Pno.

p *mp*

30

Solo *mf*
na - ture's chang - ing course un - trimm'd,

Pno. *mf*

poco rall.

32 *mf* *p*
Solo or na - ture's chang - ing course un - trimmed:

Pno. *poco rall.* *p*

34 *rall.* **a tempo**
Solo *p*
But **a tempo**

Pno. *f* *p*

36 *f*

Solo
8 thy e - ter - nal Sum - mer shall not fade, Nor

Pno.

38 *p*

Solo
8 lose pos - ses - sion of that fair thou ow'st, -

Pno.

40 *accel.* *rall.*

Solo

Pno.

a tempo

Solo *f* *ff* *sub p* *mp*

8 *3*

Nor shall death brag thou wan-der'st in his shade, thou

a tempo

Pno. *f* *sub. p*

Solo *mp* *pp* *p*

8 wan-der'st in his shade,

Pno. *mp* *pp* *p*

molto rall.

Solo *pp*

8 *3*

When in e - ter - nal lines to time thou grow'st:

Pno. *mf* *mp* *pp*

a tempo

50 *accel.* *rall.* *mf*

Solo

Pno.

52 **a tempo** *ossia* *ff* *mf*

Solo

long as men can breathe or eyes can see, So long lives

Pno.

54 **poco rall.** *ff* *freely* *pp*

Solo

this, and this gives life to thee, and this gives life to thee,

Pno.

Sonnet 116

Moderate ♩=84 *p* *mf*

Tenor or Baritone Solo

Let me not to the mar-riage of true_ minds ad-mit im-

Moderate ♩=84 *p* *mf*

Piano

5

Solo

ped - i - ment. Love_ is not

p

Pno.

8

Solo

love which al - ters when it al - ter -

Pno.

10 *mf* *p*

Solo

a - tion finds or bends _____ with the re-

Pno.

13 **poco rall.** **a tempo** (♩=84) *mf* *mp*

Solo

mov - er to re - move. O no it is an

Pno.

16 *ff* *f*

Solo

e - ver fix - ed mark that looks on tem - pest

Pno.

19 *ff* *mp*

Solo *8* and is ne-ver sha - ken.

Pno.

22 *mf* *p*

Solo *8* It is the star_ to ev - - ry_ wand - d'ring

Pno.

25 *p*

Solo *8* bark, whose worth's un - known al-though his

Pno.

28 *mf* *p* **poco rall.**

Solo

height be ta - ken

Pno.

mf *dim.* **poco rall.**

31 **Briskly** (♩=84) *mf* *p*

Solo

Love's not time's fool, though

Pno.

Briskly (♩=84) *pp* *mf* *f*

33 *f*

Solo

ro - sy cheeks and lips with in his bend - ing sick - le's com - pass

Pno.

p *mf*

35

Solo

8 come. Love al - ters

Pno.

f

37

Solo

8 not! Love al - ters not with

Pno.

sub ff *mp* *sub ff*

39

Solo

8 his brief hours and weeks,

poco rall.

Pno.

mp *p*

41 **a tempo** (♩=84) *mf*

Solo

but bears it out, bears it out

Pno.

a tempo (♩=84) *mf* *f* *p*

43 *ff* **Broadly** ♩=72

Solo

e - ven to the edge of doom.

Pno.

Broadly ♩=72 *f* *ff*

46 *p*

Solo

If this be er - ror,

Pno.

p

49 **Slower** ♩=64

Solo *mf* *mp*

and up - on me prov'd, I

Pno. **Slower** ♩=64 *mf*

51

Solo

ne - ver writ, nor no man e - ver

Pno. *mp*

53

Solo

loved.

Pno. *p dim. poco a poco* *pp* *mf*

Sonnet 65

Strong and forceful ♩=60

Tenor or
Baritone Solo

Since brass, nor

Strong and forceful ♩=60

Piano

Solo

4
stone nor earth, nor bound - less sea,

Pno.

Solo

8
But sad mor - tal-i - ty o'er

Pno.

poco rall. **a tempo** ♩=60

Solo 13 sways their pow'r, How with this rage shall

Pno. *sub p* **a tempo** ♩=60 *ff*

poco rall. *p* **piu mosso** ♩=75 *pp*

Solo 18 beau - ty hold a plea, whose

Pno. **poco rall.** *p* **piu mosso** ♩=75 *pp*

poco rall. *mp*

Solo 23 act - ion is no strong - er than a flow'r?

Pno. **poco rall.** *p* *mp*

28 **Lightly** ♩.=40

Solo

p

Oh how shall

Pno.

Lightly ♩.=40

p

33

Solo

molto ————— *ff*

sum - mer's hon - ey breath hold out _____ A

Pno.

molto

38 **a tempo** ♩.=60

Solo

gainst the wrack - ful siege of batt - 'ring

Pno.

a tempo ♩.=60

ff

42 *mf*

Solo

8 days, When rocks im -

Pno.

46 *ff*

Solo

8 preg - na - ble are not so stout,

Pno.

50

Solo

8 Nor gates of steel so

Pno.

54 **molto rall.** *mf*

Solo *strong* but time de - cays?

Pno. *sf* **molto rall.** *mf*

58 *mp* **fast and nervous** ♩=120 *p sotto voce*

Solo *mp* O

Pno. *mp* **fast and nervous** ♩=120 *p*

63

Solo fear - ful med - i - ta - tion. where a -

Pno.

68

Solo *mp*

8 lack, Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest_____ be

Pno. *mp*

73

Solo *f*

8 hid?_____ Or_____ what strong

Pno. *mf*

77

Solo

8 hand can hold his_____ swift foot back,_____

Pno. *f*

81 *mf*

Solo

Or who his spoil of

Pno. *mf*

85 *ff*

Solo

beau - ty can for - bid?

Pno. *ff* *sfz*

89 **slow and peaceful** ♩=60 *f*

Solo

O none, un - less this

Pno. **slow and peaceful** ♩=60 *p*

95

Solo *p* mir-a-cle have might: That

Pno. *p* *pp*

100

Solo *poco rall.* in black ink my love may still shine bright. bright.

Pno. *pp* *poco rall.* *pp*

105

Solo *a tempo* ♩=60 *pp* *poco rall.*

Pno. *a tempo* ♩=60 *poco rall.*

Music by Jolyon Laycock

Four Times Four for 16 actors/dancers/singers with electronics (1971)

Locations I, II, III, and IV - sound sculptures (1970 rev. 1973)

Lattice - for 12 solo strings and electronics (1972 - Commissioned by the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham)

Pluramusic - electronic sound installation (1972-1977)

This Could Happen to You - participatory audio-visual installation (1974-1976)

Tyrannos - 12 audio-visual cycles on the myth of Oedipus (unfinished) - Earth Cycle, Moon Cycle, Uranus Cycle, Pluto Cycle, and Equinox Cycle first performed 1977

Bladud - a wordscape with music - commissioned by Bathampton Primary School (1985)

Woden's Dyke - music-theatre for school and community performance based on the story of the Anglo-Saxon chieftain Ceawlin of Wessex. Commissioned by Wansdyke Arts Council (1987).

Hetty Pegler - music theatre piece commissioned by Prema Arts Centre, Uley, Gloucestershire (1988)

High Wood - solo oboe (1988)

In Bruton Town - Fantasia of a Somerset folk song for string orchestra (1988)

Seven Stars - Community opera based on Thomas Clarkson's investigations into the Bristol slave trade in 1787. Bristol City Commission. (1994)

A Dream of Flying - for clarinet, horn, bassoon, string trio, double bass and piano (1995).

Eadgar Cyning - settings for soloists, choir and orchestra in the original language of three poems from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle about the coronation and death of King Edgar at Bath. (1996).

Un Tiento Rasgado (homage to Joaquin Rodrigo) junior competition test piece for the Bath International Guitar Festival 1996.

Sinfonietta for String Orchestra (1998) - revised and re-issued as ***Tetraktis*** (2014)

Mengjiang Weeping at the Wall - Music-theatre piece for soprano, choir, small ensemble, Chinese instruments and junior school children; Commissioned by the Corsham Festival (2002).

Die! A-One Sparrow for piano duet (2002)

Among Seven Hills Sinfonia Concertante for piano and orchestra (2009)

12 Landscape Studies for piano (1996-2010)

12 River Preludes for piano (2011)

6 Sonnets of Edna St. Vincent Millay for mezzo soprano and piano (2011)

3 Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins for tenor or high baritone and piano (2012)

String Quartet (2012)

An Entangled Bank - A setting for 8 part *a cappella* choir of the final paragraph of *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin (2013).

Cantilena for solo cello and open score ensemble (2013)

Clarion Call for solo bass clarinet and open score ensemble (2014)

Dark Seas - 5 poems of Philip Larkin for coloratura soprano, clarinet and piano (2014)

The Swan - after Camille Saint-Saëns for cello and two pianos (2014)

Orbium Caelestium - Cantata for mixed chorus, soloists and orchestra on a text by Nicholaus Copernicus

Trilithon for orchestra (begun 1968 – completed & revised 2015)

Three Shakespeare Sonnets for tenor or high baritone and piano (2016)

Latham Variations for oboe and piano (2017)

Theoretical writings:

A Changing Role for the Composer in Society

A Study of the Historical Background and Current Methodologies of Creative Music-Making

Peter Lang, European Academic Publishers, Switzerland (2005) <http://www.peterlang.com/all/index.cfm>

All Interval Fractal Sets - a technical explanation - <http://www.jolyonlaycock.uk/theoretical-writings>

Poetry:

To Tolverne - a Riddle A poem inspired by the D-day museum at Tolverne, Cornwall (2001)

Berliner Schnauze A collection of poems in the form of an entertainment in words and music inspired by a visit to Berlin ten years after the fall of the Berlin wall (1999).

A Mendip Ploughing Match at Priddy and other Mendip poems

Estrildis operatic libretto in verse on a story from Geoffrey of Monmouth *The History of the Kings of Britain*.

Polonaise of Chopin declamation with piano accompaniment (2015)

For more details visit: <http://www.jolyonlaycock.uk/>