

NICHOLAS MAW
ROMAN
CANTICLE

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA
for medium voice, flute, viola and harp

Poem by Robert Browning

Preview File Only

FABER *ff* MUSIC

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Roman Canticle was commissioned by the Nash Ensemble on the occasion of their 25th anniversary in 1989, with funds provided by IBM (UK)

The first performance was given by Sarah Walker with the Nash Ensemble conducted by John Carewe in the Wigmore Hall, London on 4 November 1989

Duration: 9 minutes

*For my daughter Natasha and her husband Paul
on their wedding anniversary*

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TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I wonder do you feel to-day
As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

Help me to hold it: first it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin: yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles, – blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal, – and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air –
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting Nature have her way
While Heaven looks from its towers.

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above.
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

I would that you were all to me,
You that are just so much, no more –
Not yours, nor mine, – nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? what the core
Of the wound, since wound must be?

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs, – your part, my part
In life, for good and ill.

No. I yearn upward – touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth, – I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak –
Then the good minute goes.

Already how am I so far
Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern –
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

ROBERT BROWNING

ROMAN CANTICLE

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

ROBERT BROWNING

NICHOLAS MAW

Allegro molto e impetuoso (♩ = 160-168)

Medium Voice

Flute

Viola

Harp

f con agitazione *mf cresc.*

f con agitazione *mf cresc.*

ff *mf cresc.*



Fl.

Vla.

Harp

ff (*ff*)

ff (*ff*)

ff (*ff*)

Fl. *f meno, dim.* *rall.*

Vla. *f meno, dim.*

Harp *f meno, dim.*

Fl. 13 *(dim.)* *(rall.)* *Meno mosso* *p* *p*

Vla. *(dim.)* *p*

Harp *(dim.)* *p*

Fl. 17 *Tempo I* *pp* *pp*

Vla. *p* *pp* *trem. leggermente* *pp sempre*

Harp *p* *pp* *p delicato*

21 *rall.*

Fl.

Vla.

Harp

Recit. in tempo: Molto sostenuto *senza rigore*

25 *p sotto voce, espr.*

Voice *I won - der*

Fl. *pp molto sensibile*

Vla. *pp sul tasto molto sensibile*

Harp *p poco deliberato accel. pp repeat ad lib. p*

27 *3*

Voice *do you feel to-day As I have felt since,*

Fl. *pp possibile*

Vla.

Harp