

INVOCATION

“POOR NAKED WRETCHES”

Words by W. Shakespeare
from “King Lear”



for Alto, recorder, cello and piano

Julia Usher
Primavera

INVOCATION:

Poor Naked Wretches

For Alto, Tenor Recorder, Cello and Piano
Text from *King Lear* by William Shakespeare

The storm on the heath dies away, and King Lear, rejected by two of his daughters, and shorn of his honours and power, is left unhoused and unclothed. He rages in a terrifying madness that equals the storm itself. As the weather subsides, the outcast King has a moment of tender lucidity in which he identifies for the first time with the "houseless wanderer", and the ragged poor of his kingdom. He invokes the dispossessed; his concern for who will "defend" them is the first dawning of an awareness of his own former responsibility - which he can barely glimpse. In this invocation he feels the indignities of the poor, experiencing them at first hand in the outrage of his own rejected state.

Performance

This setting of King Lear's words is meant to be very simple and direct. The vocal part should be sung in a subdued, inward and intent manner. With the exception of the rising sequence "loop'd and window'd raggedness", which is more strongly emotional, the alto holds back on vibrato and expressiveness.

The piano part is also very much in a supporting role - and can even be dispensed with. At times there are phrases in brackets which should be omitted where feasible, if the cello and recorder are present. However, the piano part allows the song to be performed as a duo.

The recorder and cello describe the rumbling and fading of the storm at the beginning, and otherwise echo the imagery of the text.

This work was specially composed for a CD of music by Julia Usher, recorded in the Great Hall of Manchester University for Metier Records. It was sung by Nikki Bloomfield, and performed by John Turner, Jonathan Price, Peter Lawson and Julia Usher.

q = 45

A Subdued, not too much vibrato, but tenderly

B

13

T. Rec. *mp* *mp*

Perc.

Alto *mp* *pp*
 Poor na- ked wret ches, where so e'er you

Pno *p* *p*
arco

Vc. *p* *p*



Preview File Only

C

22

T. Rec. *pp*

Perc.

Alto *mf*
 are, that

Pno *pp* *pp*
cue only

Vc. *pp* *pizz* *arco*
gliss

26

T. Rec. 

Perc. 

Alto 

Pno 

Vc. 



Preview File Only

30

T. Rec. 

Perc. 

Alto 

Pno 

Vc. 

