

## **PAYSAGE for baritone solo**

### **Programme Note**

Commissioned by Peter Pears for the 1973 Aldeburgh Festival and first performed there by Stephen Roberts. Text: Apollinaire.

The singer discovers the landscape to his audience. He explores the music as one explores a natural landscape; moving at will from place to place, lighting on detail while never losing sight of the overall direction of his exploration. From the picture-score he creates a landscape for himself.

The texts in the picture are all reproductions of Apollinaire's Calligrammes. The music in the picture is always to be read conventionally from left to right, and in the bass clef.

Paysage is intended as a recital show piece. The picture-score should be visible to the audience, either projected or photocopied into the programme.

The singer will be seen to be 'exploring' the music, but it will be helpful to him to have memorised the individual characters in order to move them more easily from one to another.

### **To the singer:**

Paysage is to be framed by the opening 'Voici' (lower edge of picture) and by the closing 'la douce nuit...etc' (top edge). Within this frame the singer is free to use and repeat the material in any order he will: except that he must not go from foreground ('earth') to background ('sky'), or vice versa, without touching on middleground material ('birds' 'gods' 'rain' or isolated 'voici'). The long opening and closing phrases may be recalled or anticipated during the course of the piece. In particular the word 'Voici' will be useful throughout the piece.

Pitch. Pitches in Paysage are exact. Singers without perfect pitch should use the note D as a reference point.

Tempo. The opening and closing of the piece should be very slow. During the piece there is scope for a variety of contrasting tempi. Metric phrases should be in some relation to one another.

Dynamics. Paysage needs great dynamic variety and clarity: particular attention should be given to characterising ideas dynamically. The piece should begin quietly and end very softly indeed.

Silence. The piece should be felt as one continuous growth, but this does not preclude telling use of silences, brief or longer, throughout the piece.

VOICI. The opening phrases are the slowest of the piece. Tone should expand very gradually with changing colour.

MAISON. The house should be built up very firmly. The 'divinités' should be forte with strong attack. The smoke from the chimney could use the same tone colour as the smoke from the train.

TRAIN. The train should be characterised with humour, e.g. train starting or stopping, train in the distance or approaching, etc. The 'où va donc' may be repeated as necessary according to the length of journey.

PLUIE. The phrases want to be rather slow and mournful. 'Il pleut' and 'goutellettes' can be repeated as necessary to suggest rain.

OISEAUX & ARBRISSEAUX. For the birds and trees the singer builds up his own phrases using the given pitches and rhythmic groups.

OISEAUX. Should be very simple, using a lilting rhythm suggesting their flight (bird-song is never suggested). They can be used as a flock, but chiefly in ones or twos; also in combination with other material e.g. in the 'arbrisseaux'. Use the word 'oiseaux' or, once the character is established, hum or sing wordlessly.

ARBRISSEAUX are more complex. The 'trunk' and 'branches' are associated with lower pitches and slower and varied rhythmic values. They should be carefully suggested drawing on the whole 'tree' text, fragmenting words as necessary. The higher register and quick rhythmic values are for the 'leaves' of which there should be a great many, very light gay and dancing in quality. Single sounds and syllables from the text are the most useful: for whole words use 'arbrisseau' and 'te ressemble'.

LA DOUCE NUIT LUNAIRE. The tone for all the moonlit sky music should be soft and creamy rather than brilliant and glittering. The closing phrases of the piece can be interspersed with 'etoiles' groups.

ETOILES. Using just the word 'étoiles' the singer fills his night sky with quietly shining stars. They should be predominantly restful; rhythmically, shaped freely as suggested by each individual layout and including some very still 'rapt' phrases.