

wind song

by Sheena Phillips

incorporating words by John Clare (1793 – 1864)

flexibly scored for 6 voices (soli or choral) and flute or other pitched instrument

duration 5:00

perusal score – not for rehearsal or performance

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wind song

A piece for 6 vocal parts (solo or choral) and flute or other pitched instrument capable of breathy sounds and tremolo.

The piece is written *in memoriam* Karen Weaver, a musician and friend who directed the Cleveland (Ohio) ensemble Windsong and who died in 2016 at the untimely age of 58. It's based on various vocalisations and other sounds that evoke the sound of wind in the trees. A wonderful poem by John Clare is the source of the lyrics. You can read the poem in full at <http://johnclare.blogspot.co.uk/2014/01/the-wind-trees.html>

wind song was first performed at the 2016 CoMA Summer School, under the direction of James Weeks.

Sheena Phillips

Notation and technical points

Timings and cues

Rough timings are given in minutes and seconds across the top of the score, each page of the full score lasting about 30 seconds.

Conductor cues (or, in an uncondacted ensemble, visual aids to the sequence of entries) are shown by dotted vertical lines.

Tempo

The tempo crotchet = c. 120 underlies much of the piece. However, the tempo is not strict – there's always freedom to use rubato. The narrator's speech in particular should have a natural rhythm and not strictly follow the notated rhythm, which is just a rough guide.

Voicing

Parts 1 – 5 are roughly high – low. Each can be sung at either treble or tenor register, but it's preferable to have at least some treble voices on each line if possible.

Independence

Unless otherwise marked, material is performed independently by different singers / speakers on the same part. If large numbers of singers are taking part, you may want to reduce independence if the sound becomes too undifferentiated, for example by working in pairs.

Noteheads

x indicates an unpitched sound (explained in the score).

diamond notehead (flute) - blow into flute rather than across mouthpiece and morph between 'ee' and 'oh' vowels.

slash (rhythm) notation (spoken part) – pitch is at the discretion of the speaker(s).

The semibreve notehead is used for any long note.

Noteheads appearing without stave and/or ledger lines have indeterminate pitch.

Box notation and line extensions

Repeat the material in the box for the duration of the extension line.

Rest in brackets – a rest of indeterminate length.

' – short rest between repetitions (time to take a breath).

Diction

Often the score marks a 'close to the m' (or , or ng), for example in "wind", "hum", or "sing". But on page 8, at the marking 'cantando', do *not* close to the ng / nd but keep the sound open and on the vowel.

Technique

Finger clapping – make light tapping sound with two fingers of one hand in the palm of the other. (You can hear this sort of sound in a strong breeze as leaves collide with each other).

in memoriam Karen Weaver

wind song

Sheena Phillips

senza misura - slow

[~ 0:05]

[~ 0:10]

[~ 0:20]

[~ 0:30]

Flute

1

2

3

4

5

Narrator

finger clapping
(two fingers tapping palm)

independently

unmeasured tremolo

long slow 'ff' over one breath

p ————— *mf* ————— *p*

ff, _____

start each new exhalation together

(let dynamic rise and fall with that of the ensemble)

long slow 'ff' over one breath

p ————— *mf* ————— *p*

ff, _____

start each new exhalation together

independently

fitful breeze snatches,
any length,
about 4 per breath

p < *mf* > *p*

ff, _____

independently

long slow blow through pursed "ooh" lips, over one breath

p ————— *mf* ————— *p*

whh, _____

start each new exhalation together

vary lip shape slowly for fluctuations in sound

[~ 0:30] [~ 0:36] [~ 0:38] [~ 0:42] [~ 0:46] [~ 0:50] [~ 0:56] [~ 1:00]

A

Fl. *blow into flute, morphing between 'ee' and 'oh' vowels*
p *mf* *p*

1

2 *pp* *independently*
any pitch around F'
p *o*
mm,
repeat intermittently, same pitch, each hum 1 or 2 seconds

3

4 *vary the fluctuations* *independently*
any pitch around C
p *o*
mm,

5 *breathy* *mp* *p*
any very low pitch
ooh *small rises and falls ad lib*

Narr. *p* *strong whisper* *close to the 'f' of 'sugh'* *close to the 'm'* *p* *mf* *p*
p *spoken with wonder* *close to the 'm'* *(pitched hum)*

from the south-west sugh sugh it comes sugh, _____ then whizzes round in plea-sant hums, _____

perusal score - not for rehearsal or performance

[C] [~ 1:30] [~ 1:36] about 3 seconds apart [~ 1:50]

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

1 any slightly higher pitch
increase glide to around a minor third
ooh, *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

2 similar pitch(es)
increase glide to around a minor third
ooh, *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

3 similar pitch(es)
increase glide to around a minor third
ooh, *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

4 similar pitch(es)
increase glide to around a minor third
ooh, *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

5 build up the volume of each blow

Narr.

wind song

[~ 2:00]

(on Narrator "wind")

[~ 2:15]

(after "sing")

[~ 2:30]

D own tempo
blow normally

p *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

1 own tempo
mm,

2 own tempo sing on vowels rise / fall about a minor third
wind, song,

3 own tempo sing on vowels rise / fall about a semitone
wind, song,

4 own tempo sing on vowels rise / fall about a minor third
wind, song,

5 own tempo sing on vowels rise / fall about a semitone
wind, song,

f spoken close to the 'n' *f* close to the 'ng'

I love the song of tree and wind! How beau-ti-ful they sing!

con moto

[~ 2:30]

[~ 2:45]

(on "bow")

E

♩ = c.120

about 2 or 3 seconds apart

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

1 *f* own tempo, mm, *p* repeat once

2 own tempo *f* warm *mp* wind accel.

3 own tempo *f* warm *mp* wind accel.

4 own tempo *f* warm *mp* wind accel.

5 own tempo *f* warm *mp* wind accel.

Narr. *mf* excited *p* The trees with danc-ing wax-es war - mm, They dance and bow, and dance a - gai - nn, any very low pitch

[~3:00] [~3:03] [~3:10] [~3:12] [~3:14] [~3:20] [~3:30]

(on "bow") (on "beautiful")

F

Fl. *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

1 *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *own tempo* *own tempo* *mf* *own tempo* *mf*

How beau - ti - ful! How beau-ti - ful they sing!

2 *mp* *f* *mp* *mp* *mf* *p* *p* *p*

How beau - ti - ful! They dance and bow,

3 *mp* *mf* *p* *p* *p*

They dance and bow,

4 *mf* *f* *p* *fitful breeze snatches* *any length, about 4 per breath*

sshh,

5 *breathy* *p* *mp* *p* *independently (start on part 3 "bow")*

any very low pitch small rises and falls ad lib

ooh

Narr.

[~ 4:00]

[~ 4:20]

[~ 4:30]

about every 2 seconds

c. every 2 secs.

flutter tonguing

Fl.

1

2

3

4

5

Narr.

The musical score is written for five flutes (Fl. 1-5) and a Narrator. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into three time segments: [~ 4:00], [~ 4:20], and [~ 4:30].

- Fl. 1:** Starts with a rest, then plays a melodic line starting at 4:00. A box highlights a section with *mp* dynamics and a *mm,* marking.
- Fl. 2:** Plays a melodic line with lyrics "wind, wood,". A box highlights a section with *p* dynamics and the instruction "any pitch around F slow small glides up and down".
- Fl. 3:** Plays a melodic line with lyrics "wind, wood,". A box highlights a section with *p* dynamics and the instruction "any pitch around F slow small glides down and up".
- Fl. 4:** Plays a melodic line with lyrics "mm, wood, wind,". A box highlights a section with *p* dynamics and the instruction "any pitch around C slow small glides up and down".
- Fl. 5:** Plays a melodic line with lyrics "mm, wood, wind,". A box highlights a section with *p* dynamics and the instruction "any pitch around C slow small glides down and up".
- Narr.:** Provides a vocal line with the instruction "getting quieter" and "last one in a whisper".

Additional markings include *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), and *mm,* (murmuring). The instruction "flutter tonguing" is placed above the Fl. 1 staff in the [~ 4:30] segment.

wind song

[~ 4:30] [~ 4:35] [~ 4:45] [~ 4:50] [~ 4:52] [~ 5:00]

I

Fl. blow into flute, morphing between 'ee' and 'oh' vowels

1 gentle blow through pursed lips start together *p* *mp* *p* start together *p* niente

2 unmeasured tremolo *p* *mp* *mp* niente

3 finger clapping (independent) start together *p* *p* start together *p* niente

4 indep. small gusts *p* < > *p* about two sets of about four little gusts *ff* niente

5 indep. *p* *mp* *p* one or two more short gusts, getting quieter *whh...* niente

Narr. *p* *mp* *pp* niente

about every 2 seconds

whh, whh...

ff, ff...

sugh...