A Song about Fish

Cambiata 1, Cambiata 2, Baritone, piano

Lyrics and music by Sheena Phillips

There's a long history of fishing in Cornwall as well as in much of the British Isles and many other countries worldwide. But over the past several decades it has become clear that many species of fish are endangered, from overfishing as well as from climate change. This song is all about fish: their wonderful variety, the dreadfully efficient ways we have of killing them, and how we need to take care if we are not to hunt them all to extinction.

The lists of fish and our ways of catching them came from an article about the Cornish fishing industry (http://www.cornwallgoodseafoodguide.org.uk/cornish-fishing/the-cornish-fishing-industry-today.php)

The Marine Conservation Society publishes excellent information on which fish are endangered and which can be eaten without damaging the marine environment (see for example https://www.mcsuk.org/goodfishguide/search)

This is not an anti-fishing anthem. Many fisheries have good fishing practices and a number of countries are taking steps to protect fish populations. But it is a song of sorrow for all that's lost or endangered by our rapacious quest for profit from the sea.

Duration 3:00

Commended in the Cornwall International Male Choral Festival Composing Competition 2018

Perusal score – not for rehearsal or performance

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A Song about Fish

We cast care aside For the ocean was wide, There were tonnes in the sea To catch for our tea...

Pollack and pouting and pilchard and plaice, Oyster and limpet and lobster and ling, Mack'rel and whiting and scallops and skate, Monkfish and marlin and haddock and hake, Turbot and megrim and sea bass and crab, Mussels and cuttlefish, anchovy, dab:

Our joy and our being, Our whole way of seeing, Our living, our pleasure, Our hist'ry, our future?

We net 'em, we pot 'em, we dredge 'em, we trawl 'em,
We trap 'em, we slip 'em, we line 'em, we haul 'em,
We trick 'em, we bait 'em,
We chase 'em, we net 'em an' kill 'em, we box 'em, we ship 'em to market and sell 'em,
We eat them: we poach 'em, we fry 'em, we bake 'em, we grill 'em,
We know them, we love 'em, we want 'em, we need them!

We know them, and we know how to catch 'em, We love them, and they're part of our hist'ry, We need them!

but we're taking too many and robbing the future and filling the oceans with plastic.

We cast care aside For the ocean was wide, There were tonnes in the sea To catch for our tea...

But fishers, take care To leave Gaia* her share, Or those fish that we love Will be finished and gone.

^{*} Gaia is the name of the ancient Greek goddess who personified Earth. The environmentalist James Lovelock revived the name to describe the whole set of interlocking process maintaining life on earth.

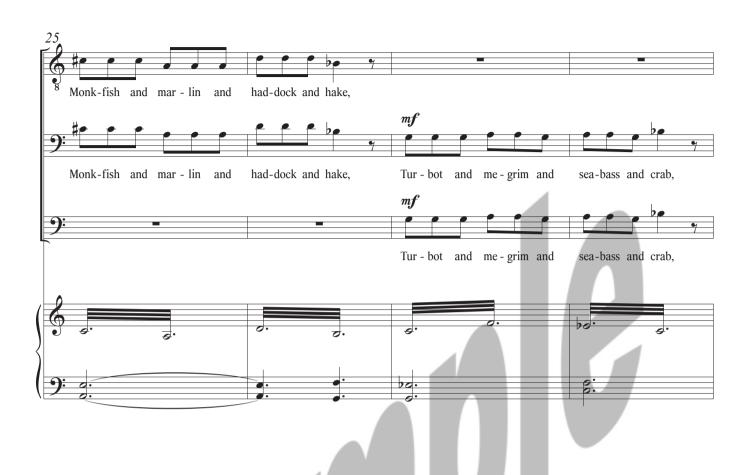
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