

THE SWAN

for tenor and harp

by **JENNIFER FOWLER**

Text taken from the Carmina Burana collection of medieval Latin verses.
Translated and adapted by the composer.

Duration: 6'40"

Programme note.

THE SWAN

by Jennifer Fowler

The Swan is part of a collection of songs with the overall title of “Eat and Be Eaten”. The collection revolves around the subject of food in all its significance. The subject matter allows for a range of moods, from deadly serious (literally) to humorous. It is not forgotten that while one creature is indulging in the enjoyable bit - the eating - often it is another creature which is being eaten.

The rather gruesome text of this song is taken from the Carmina Burana collection of medieval Latin verses, translated and adapted by the composer. It presents the point of view of the about-to-be-eaten.

It is scored for tenor and harp.

The cycle of songs was commissioned by The Song Company of Sydney.

* * * * *

THE SWAN

Once I was a bird in flight
Once I made a lovely sight
Once I was a swan, snow-white.

Alas, alack,
I am now black,
My skin is scorched along my back.

The baster turns me on the spit,
The fire, I feel the force of it,
The steward carves me, bit by bit.






Alas, alack,
I am now black,
The skin is scorched along my back.

Now in the gravy dish I lie,
With broken wings I cannot fly,
Around me, (surrounding!), cruel teeth I spy.

So all you
In youth and prime,
Will turn to meet the Teeth of Time.

(Text taken from the Carmina Burana collection of medieval Latin verses.
Translated and adapted by Jennifer Fowler).

Notes

- Vocal:  Throat vibrato. Pitch is steady, but sound is interrupted by rapid staccato at back of throat.
- ng-uh  Mouth open, back of throat closed; then throat released into open "uh" sound (as in "but").
In bar 27 and bar 50, the release of the throat should be accompanied by an exhale of breath, giving a slight accent on 2nd note, the two notes joined by portamento.
- Harp:  Continuous sound made by stroking the string rapidly with thin stick (wood? cane? knitting needle? quill?).
-  (flutter) As above, but more of a fluttering sound, made between two strings (feather? wire brush?).
-  Damp the sound with a dull thump.
In bars 157 - 161 the right hand runs too and fro, lightly with fingertips, over the strings in the area indicated
- o Pick up string between thumb and fingers, and release violently.

The Swan

Jennifer Fowler

(q = 72)

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with a Tenor (T.) and Harp (Hp) part. The Tenor part is written in a single treble clef staff, and the Harp part is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs). The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, mp, mf, f, pp), articulation (gliss., trill), and fingerings (3, 5). Chord symbols (A♯, G♯, D♯, Ab) are placed below the Harp staves. The piece starts in 2/4 time and changes to 3/4 time at measure 3. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is oriented diagonally across the center of the page.

System 1 (Measures 1-4): Tenor part is mostly rests. Harp part begins with a piano (p) chord, followed by glissandos and a mezzo-forte (mf) section with a trill. Chord symbols include A♯ and D♯.

System 2 (Measures 5-8): Harp part features a mezzo-forte (mp) section with a triplet, followed by a mezzo-forte (mf) section with a 4:3 ratio, a forte (f) section with a D♯ chord, and a mezzo-forte (mp) section. Tenor part has rests until measure 8, where it begins with a piano-piano (pp) section and the lyrics "ng - uh".

System 3 (Measures 9-11): Harp part continues with a mezzo-forte (mf) section, a forte (f) section with D♯ and A♯ chords, and a piano (p) section. Tenor part has rests.

System 4 (Measures 12-15): Tenor part begins with the lyrics "eh". Harp part starts with a mezzo-forte (mp) section, followed by a piano (p) section with a D♯ chord, and ends with a mezzo-forte (mf) section featuring triplets. Chord symbols include D♯ and Ab.

17 *pp* *pp*

T. *ng - uh* *ng - uh*

Hp *D#, A♯* *p* *D♯*

21 *mp* *mp* *mp*

Hp *D#, Ab* *D♯, A♯* *Ab*

3 *3* *4:3* *gliss.*

25 *pp*

T. *ng - uh* *ng - uh*

Hp *D#* *mp* *p* *p* *D♯*

29 *rit.* *p* *p*

T. *Once*

Hp *D#* *rit.*

34 *pp* *p* *pp*

T.

8 *pp* *p* *pp*

Once I was a bird in fli -

39 *pp*

T.

8 *pp*

flight

Hp

8 *mp* *p*

43 *p* *mp*

T.

8 *p* *mp*

Once, once I made a lo - love -

47 *mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

T.

8 *mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

- ly sight

Hp

8 *mp*

D♭, B♭

50 *pp* *p* *p* *p*

T.

8 *pp* *p* *p* *p*

ng - uh ng - uh Once I

Hp

8 *p*

B# D#

54 *mp* *mp*
T. was a swan snow - whi - white

58
T.
Hp *p* *glis.* *D♯, A♯* *p*

62
T. *mf* *p*
Ya nguh
Hp *mp*

65 *mp* *mp* *p* *mp* *mp* *p*
T. ng - uh ng - neh ng neh nn - yuh,

69 *p* *pp* *mf*
T. nn - uh A - las, a -
Hp *mf* *D♯, A♯*

74 *p* *mf* *mf* *mp*
T. lack, I am now black My skin is scorched A long my back.

78 *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*
T. Ah, ah

Hp *f* *f* *B#*

82 *f* *mf* *mf*
Hp *B♭, E♭* *G#* *G♭* *G#* *B♭*

87 *mf*
T. The bast - er turns me,
Hp *B♭* *D#* *mf*

91 *f* *f*
T. turns me on the spit
Hp *D♭, G♭* *C♭, B♭*

95

T. *f*

Hp *ff*

The fire, I feel the

99

T. *f*

Hp *f*, *gliss.*, *mf*

force of it, Ya

103

T. *f*, *mf*

Hp *f*, *sfz*

Ya The steward carves me,

108

T. *f*, *mf*

Hp *ff*, *sfz*

carves me bit by bit

112

Hp

ff

f

C#

C#, G#

F#

116

T.

mf

p

mf

mf

A - las, a - lack, I am now black My skin is

Hp

C#, G#

Eb, G#

120

T.

mp

mf

mp

mf

p

scorched Along my back Ah, ah

124

Hp

f

f

B#

f

B#, E#

127

T.

rit.

mp

Now in the

Hp

mf

G#

mf

C#, Eb Db

D#, Gb

f

Db, G#

mf

132

T. *mp*
 gra - vy_ dish I lie (flutter) With brok - en

Hp
mp *p*
 D \flat , F \flat E \flat F \flat

136

T. *mf* *p* *mp*
 wings I can - not fly A - round me,

Hp
mf *mp*
 C \sharp , B \sharp , G \flat C \sharp A \sharp C \sharp , G \sharp , A \flat

140

T. *mf* *f*
 sur - round - ing sur - round ah

Hp
mf *f*
 C \sharp , G \flat , A \flat

144

T. *f* *mf*
 Teeth! Ah ah

Hp
f *mf*
 B \sharp , F \flat D \sharp , B \flat , G \flat B \flat , E \flat , A \flat

* This can be a squeal, rather than a sung note!

148

T. *mp* *mp*
Teeth, cru - el teeth, —

Hp (flutter) *mf* *mp*
D♯ Db, Ab ♯ cb

152

T. *mp* *p* *mp* *p*
I spy — round me, Teeth, — cru - el teeth, —

Hp *mf* *mf* *p* *mp* *p*
D♯, C♯ ♯ G♯ E♯ ♯ cb F♯ Db, A♯ ♯

156

T. *p* *pp* *mp*
teeth, — Ah! —

Hp (flutter) *pp* (fingertips) *8va* (flutter)

160

T. *p* *pp*
ng - uh ah - mm

Hp (8) *mf* *5*
G♯ B♯, A♯

164 mp

T. So all you, in youth and

Hp F# C#, F#, G# C# A# G#

168 mp

T. prime, Will turn to meet the teeth of

Hp mf D#, G# mp

171 p

T. Time teeth of

Hp (steady, not flutter) G# p f mf mp

176 p pp niente

T. time mm (exhale)

Hp pp gliss.