# THE SWAN

for tener 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"

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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?).



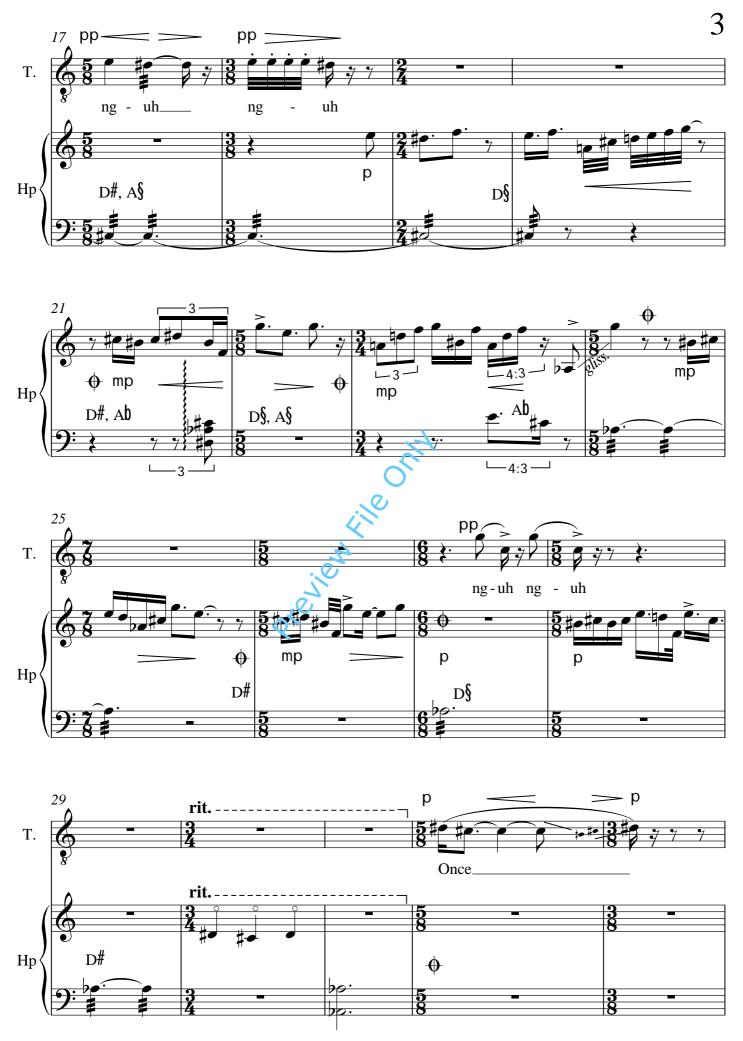
Damp the sound with a dull thump.

In bars 157 - 161 the right hand runs too and fro, lightly with fingertips, over the strings in the area indicated

between thumb and fingers, and release violently.

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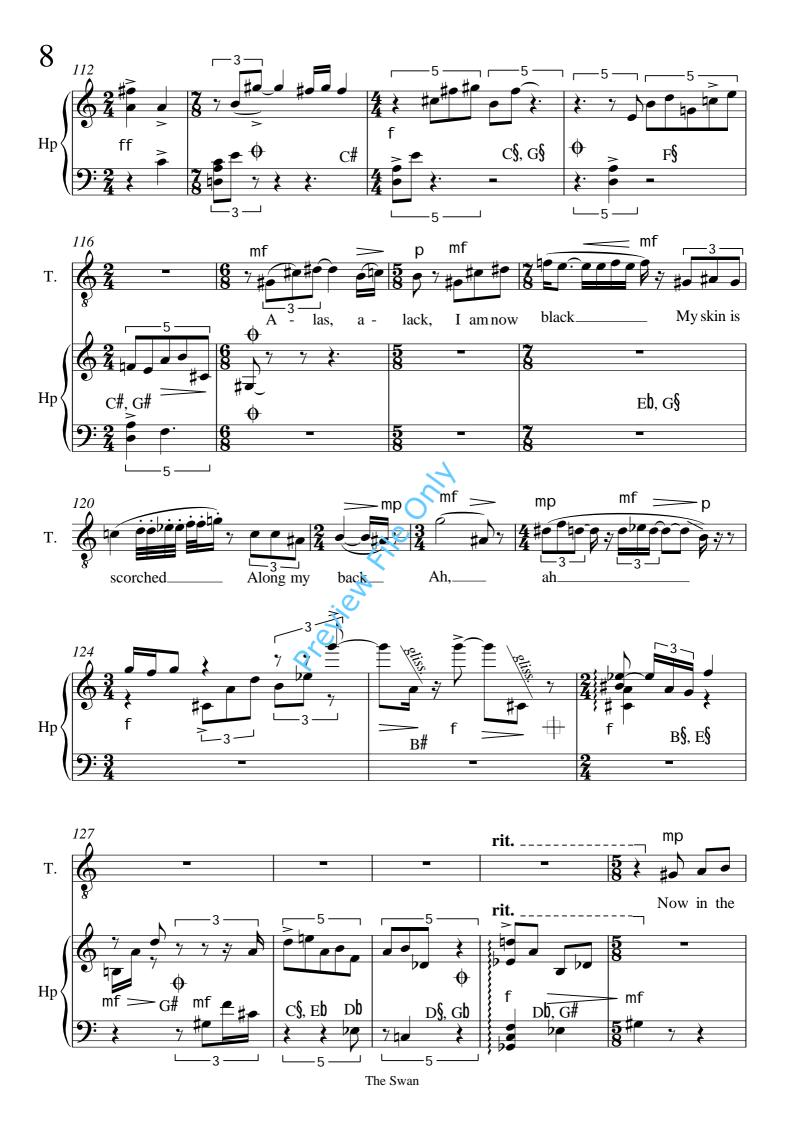
The Swan



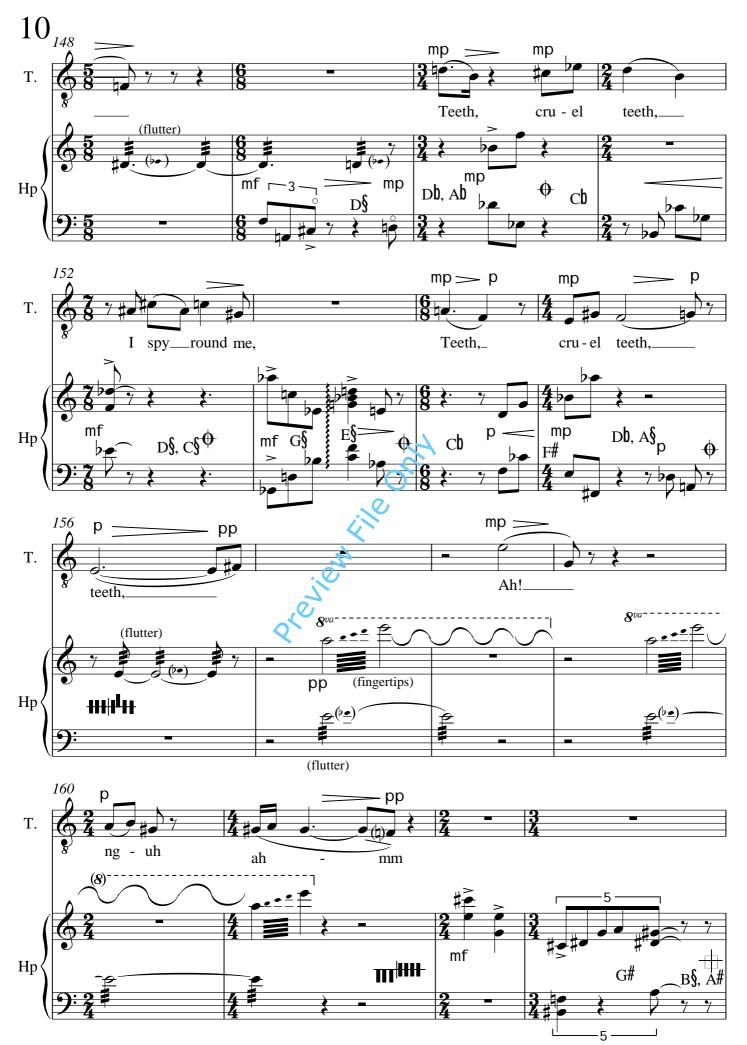
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