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harrison birtwistle

songs by myself

BRITISH MUSIC INFORMATION CENTRE
10 STRATFORD PLACE,
LONDON, W1A 2BE

Preview File Only

universal edition

Affectionately dedicated to my godson
Thomas Michael Raphael Mustill
in the year of his christening, 1984

First performed at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London,
by the London Sinfonietta and Penelope Walmsley-Clark
for Harrison Birtwistle's 50th Birthday Concert, 18th October 1984

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Instrumentation

Soprano Solo
Flute (doubling Alto Flute)
Piano
Vibraphone
Violin
Viola
'Cello
Double Bass

Score in C

Duration: approximately 10 minutes

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I

O light set a flame in amber, and freeze
the rose's pulse.

II

I lean against a shade; cold thoughts,
so warm your heavy lids with still
shrouded dreams.
This wind which caught me leaving,
becalmed its own shyness . . . so twist
its keen direction towards a final end.

III

Cold statements thaw time's stillness,
but once the daydream's midnight
belled slow refrain ends, — listlessly
dipping my finger in the petrified waters of
its daytime ring, I move the fretting pulse
of yesterday's tomorrow.

IV

Steps; bequeathed entrances, falling
below a line of shore . . . lie still,
move your eyes, let this vision of time
declare itself void.

V

This silence before light cuts a knot
of dreams
1 — 2 2 — 1 1 — 2 2 — 1 . . .
glass framed shadows from blue
circles
stops my breath.

Harrison Birtwistle