

The Empress's Feet
for solo voice

words
by
Valerie Whittington

music
by
Evelyn Ficarra

The Empress's Feet

A woman dreams and dreams about a woman who dreams....

A sleep and a forgetting. A sleep and a remembering. A dreamer wakes and tries to reconstruct from the fragments in her memory the story she has read and has found recurring in her dreams. In time and space far removed from her waking world.

The Empress's Feet was devised after a reading of a Chinese Fairy Tale. In the fairy story a large footed Empress is consumed by dreams which accompany her restless sleepwalking. Her husband, The Emperor, follows her nightly to protect her. Then one night she wakes from a nightmare and appeals to him for help. The Emperor has an answer.

THE EMPRESS'S FEET was commissioned by Linda Hirst with funds from the Arts Council of England, and received its first performance in Dartington Great Hall on the 21st of August, 1995.

Performance Notes

Although it may be performed as a straight concert piece, *The Empress's Feet* was conceived as a piece of music theatre. Performers are therefore encouraged to explore the visual/theatrical aspects of the piece, perhaps in collaboration with a designer/director. Live electronics may also be used to enhance the singer's sound world, although they are strictly optional. A description of the first staging in Dartington in summer 1995, together with an outline of the live electronic effects used, is available from the composer on request.








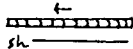
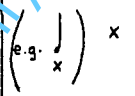
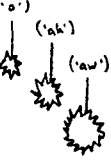










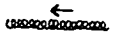


In this piece, the performer is called upon to portray several different characters (the Singer, the Empress, the Emperor, etc.) and should try to find a different vocal characteristic for each. My own prejudice, for example, is that the Emperor should sound a bit like Frank Sinatra, but I would not want to hold anyone to that. I will be pleased for the singer to use her imagination, find her own path.

Along these lines, the score may be treated more as an actor's script, in that the meaning of the words and the dramatic context should hold equal sway with the music. This is true even though the expression markings on the score are often quite detailed. If it is at times necessary to circumvent these in the interests of a performer's dramatic vision of a particular moment, scene or the piece as a whole, then so be it.

The score is a combination of traditional and graphic notation; the graphic notation is explained in the glossary of symbols adjacent. The piece is barred, though not always rationally; tempos are indicated with regard to a unit common across several bars. To avoid clutter of having a new time signature with each bar I have on occasion made use of a generalised time signature, e.g. $\frac{1}{q}$ or $\frac{1}{h}$. In this case the unit tempo is of course constant, though the number of units may change from bar to bar.

Basic dramatic instructions are indicated within the score itself, and the complete libretto is printed at the back of the score.

Glossary of Symbols

	a whispered note		a breathy whistle, blowing outwards, almost all breath and no note, with a big glissando as depicted
	a spoken note, approximate pitch indicated when necessary		a breathy whistle, sucking inwards, otherwise as above
	note sung a quarter tone flat or sharp, according to the direction of the arrow. The quarter tone may sometimes be reached by glissando:		a low breathy whistle, not much glissando
	a spoken or sung note with a slight glissando upwards or downwards.		'sh' on an in drawn breath
	over or under a note indicates that the note should be sung/spoken with a breathy tone		a low, wheezy in drawn breath. The larger the shape, the lower and more croaky the tone. Breathing as if unable to breathe. The vowel sound is indicated in brackets above.
	indicates that the note should be sung/spoken on the in breath		as above, but with lips closed, on the in breath
	a clicking sound, made with the tongue on the soft palette		a gentle, audible in drawn breath
	a quick, light in drawn breath		a gentle audible exhale
	a low, sensuous hum, with an upwards glissando, as if saying 'oh really?' - possibly in a slightly amused tone. The effect is always notated in this way, but on occasion the performer may wish to reverse the glissando like so, as if saying, 'indeed!':		little glissandi in the upper middle register, mouth closed, like a dog whimpering
			'tch', a sound made with the tongue just behind the teeth, as if scolding or in annoyance
	breathing in deeply through the nose, as of fresh mountain air		NB the rhythm for an effect may be indicated in brackets above the symbol, e.g.: 
	note sung with mouth almost completely closed		

A Woman Wakes (♩ = 76-88)

Lightly and hesitantly, a piacere, rubato
pp

The Em-press wa - ksssssin my sleep a-gain. A dream, a dream, like a grow-ing camp-fire stor-y sh! It comes in parts (so still) each night, it gives

light and heat mmm? I re-mem-ber There was a wo-man with e-nor-mous feet A dream there was a wo-man (so still) a dream the Em-press wa - ksssssin parts

Quicker, machine-like, ca. ♩ = 96
sub.ppp

each night (I re-memb) it gives light There was a wom-and heat There was a wo-man with I~ re-mem-ber sh! There was a wo-man with e-NOR-mous feet! Ha, ha. How did it go?

spoken:

[INSTRUCTIONS]
She shuts her eyes.
Tries to remember.
When she has it
she opens them -

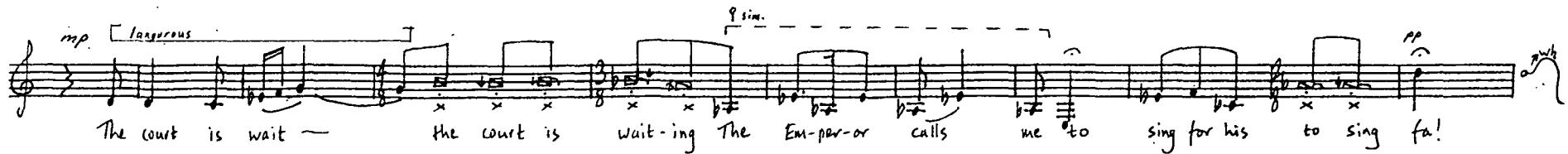
There is a court, a pa-lace mmm The Em-per-or calls me, The Em-per-or calls me to sing, to

wh
Tight, military tone

sing for his Queen, to sing, ah The court is wait - ing, The Em-per-or calls - me to sing, sing for his Queen, to sing Ha!

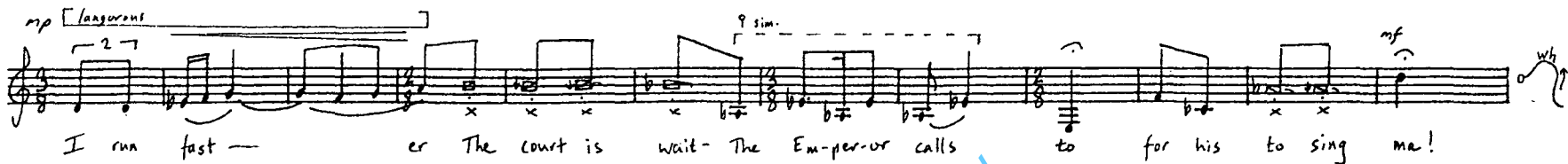
dangerous

mp [languorous] *9 sim.* *pp*



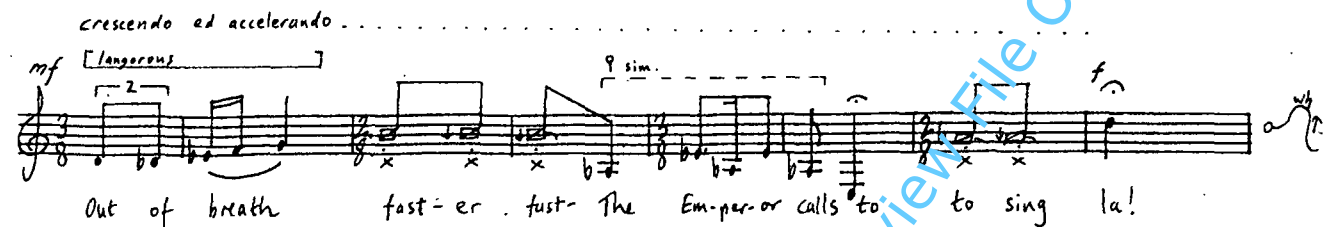
The court is wait - the court is wait-ing The Em-per-or calls me to sing for his to sing fa!

mp [languorous] *9 sim.* *mf*



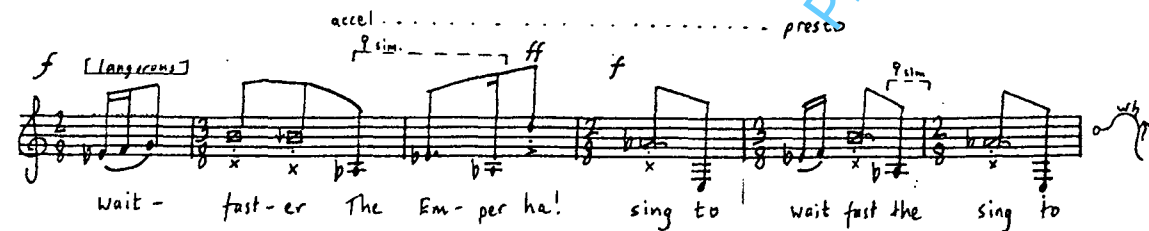
I run fast - er The court is wait- The Em-per-or calls to for his to sing me!

crescendo ed accelerando *mf* [languorous] *9 sim.* *f*



Out of breath fast-er. fast- The Em-per-or calls to sing la!

f [languorous] *9 sim.* *ff* *f* *9 sim.* *wh*



wait - fast-er The Em-per ha! sing to wait fast the sing to

Subito tempoprimo *mp*



wai-fa- the Hall is five - miles - long - .

(spoken) The music begins.

mmm?

3



I sing a strange song:

First Song

[Perhaps, she makes a beautiful shape in the air with her hand.]

Lyrical, ($\text{♩} = 69$) *a piacere*
mf
 The Em-press's feet are beau-ti-ful For they are so long ~ So

Quasi una cadenza, ad libitum

rubato
 no-ble and fine Such gran-d de-vine For such fine feet all wo-men long ~ The Em-press's feet are beau-ti-ful

($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$) ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$)
mp *p*

mp *mf*
 For they are so strong Per-fection in size An Em-per-or's prize Praise them oh-praise them in song ~ in song ~ in

Molto rubato *diminuendo*

Night Music One ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$)

pp *mf*
 song ~ ng ~ mmm ~ When night had fall ~ lalalalala-ten on the court ~ mmm ~ A-mmm-ber pa- la la la-la- lace wall ~ lalalalasssssss

Cool, distant

p *mp* *pp* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*
 be-gan to glow ~ lolololo ~ I lay my head ~ u-pon a wo-mmm-man's in-step ha, ha and with the cour- ooooo- tiers I slept sh ~ When night had

[d]

A Dream

Rapid whispering, mostly unintelligible, emphasising consonants, very sotto voce at first, gradually more frantic and a little louder, keep going, if you get in a muddle keep repeating the same line until you can move on, when you run out of breath inhale the words, at the end, or when you've had enough, interrupt yourself by waking up with a quick indrawn breath.¹

Sh—— e sleeps
 in her sleep begins this
 disjointed
 out of order
 she is repeating the same
 again and again
 get off get off
 don't touch them
 no they don't
 they don't keep me awake
 No
 don't
 they don't keep me
 get off get off
 she is repeating
 the same
 she sleeps
 again and again
 keep me awake
 keep me awake

don't touch
 get off don't
 sh—— e sleeps
 mmmmmmmmm*
 don't touch them
 she keeps me awake
 don't
 the same
 again and again
 they don't keep me
 inhale
 get off
 inhale the words
 she keeps me
 she keeps me awake
 again and again -

** this humming should be on the in breath, the first three notes of the First Song.*

¹Alternatively, or additionally, you could read out these instructions in the manner described by them.

Night Music Two

A little warmer, a little closer ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$)

The Em - mmm press wal lalalalala ksssss each night Through slee - li li ping pa - lalala - lace guard - ssss The wear - y Em - per - or

($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$)

fol - lololows to catch sh - her when she wakes The Em - mmm press wa - lala: laks through slee - ping pa: - lace wear - y Em - The

a tight military tone

Em - per - or fol - lows me

(She wakes as the Empress.)

Opera (J.=72)

The Empress *Highly strung* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *pp*
 Mmmmm — my bo- dy — is a- wake mmm — My eyes ah — My eyeeee — s are o — pen nnn

The Emperor

Emp^{SS} *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *mf* *mp*
 My-eee — my bo- dy — a wake — My eyeeee — s were o — pen

Emp^I *(J.=J) gently mp* *mp* *mp*
 Your eyes were o- pen But you saw no-thing You

Emp^{SS} *mf* *mf* *mf* *f*
 I saw ma-ny thin- ng — s I saw ma-ny thin- ng — s Then I had

Emp^I *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*
 saw no-thing You saw no-thing no-thing You dreamt them.

Emp^{SS} *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*
 ter- ri- ty- ing dream mmm —

Emp^I *mp*
 You dreamt them.

The Singer *Spoken:*
 In the dark She cannot see his face

mf Warm *right military tone*
 The Em — mm press sings — to the Em- per- or

Aria

An elaborate and delicate ritual, sung with great formality
(♩ = ca. 56) *Molto rubato a piacere*

The Empress

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time. Lyrics: "I dreamt my love my love my love mmm ~ my lo- - - - - ve mmm my lo- - - - -". Dynamics: *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *cresc.*, *mf*.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time. Lyrics: "...ve my love ~ mmm I dreamt that you were in a coun-try far a- way that you were in a coun-try far a- way a:". Dynamics: *3 dim.*, *p*, *mp*, *cresc.*, *mf*.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time. Lyrics: "way - mmm - a-way ay a-a-ay - a-wa- ay - I want-ed I want-ed to go to you I wan-dered many days and without". Dynamics: *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *mf*.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time. Lyrics: "rest mmm wan- - - - - dered - I ne-ver found you mmm ne-ver found you I ne-ver found you I wan-dered ma-ny days and with-out rest I ne-ver". Dynamics: *dim.*, *p*, *mf*, *mf*, *cresc.*, *mf*.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time. Lyrics: "found you ne-ver found ~ As I tra-velled as I tra-velled a mon - ster came u- pon me as I as I tra-velled a mon-ster came u- pon me si- lent-ly he wound his". Dynamics: *mp*, *cresc.*, *sub. p*, *mp*, *affettuoso...*.

Preview File Only

... ed cresc

coils a-bout me mmm his coils ~ a-bout me I could not scream ~ mmm ~ I could not run a-way ~ mmm mm-mm a-way a-

Way - - - a-a-a-a-a-y mmm a-way - a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-y ~ I woke with your arms a-round me mm-mm I woke

With your arms ~ a-round me I woke with your arms a-round me I woke with mm-mm your armmmmmms a-round me I woke

<p>The Empress</p>	
<p>The Emperor</p> <p>(spoken:)</p>	<p>mp gently</p> <p>I have an an-swer</p>
<p>The Singer</p>	<p>In the dark</p> <p>she cannot see his face.</p> <p>mp</p> <p>But he says:</p>

* V = a short pause

Preview File Only

Bowls and Towels

Quickly (1 = ca 152)
mp

There is move-ment ev-ery where hm-uh hm-uh, hm-uh hm-uh Peo-ple rush-ing. Doct-ors go-ing. Doct-ors com-ing hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh

Peo-ple go-ing. Doct-ors rush-ing. hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh Peo-ple rush-ing doct-ors go-ing doct-ors com-ing doct-ors go-ing doct-ors rush-ing peo-ple com-ing doct-ors go-ing

mf

What's the Em-per-or to do? hoo! His wife won't sleep the whole night through. What's the Em-per-or to do his wife won't sleep the whole night through

pp *f* *p* *mp*

Peo-ple rush-ing doct-ors go-ing hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh hm-uh Then a sur-geon in an a-pon, Then an

mf *p* *mp*

sur-geon in an a-pon Then an a-pon then a sur-geon in an a-pon What's the em-per-or to do? His wi-fe won't sleep a-ha who-la night through Then a sur-geon in an

f *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *f*

a- pron Bows and to-wels bads and towels Then an a- pron then a sur-geon in an a- pron Bows and towels when he comes his a- pron's white- What's the Em-per-or to

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

Senza vibrato

do? When he goes it's blood-y bright! His wife won't sleep the whole night through — Where's the Em-press? — Where's the Em-press? —

Even quicker (Loc. 176)

p

There is move-ment ev-ery where, There is move-ment ev-ery where, Peo-ple rush-ing doc-tors go-ing doc-tors com-ing peo-ple go-ing doc-tors rush-ing Then a sur-geon in an

f *mp* *f* *mp* *mp* *mf*

a- pron ha ha ha When he comes his a- pron's white — When he goes it's blood-y bright There is move-ment, there is move-ment ev-ery Where's the Em-press? —

mp *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

Where's the Em-press? — What's the Em-per-or to to his wife- won't- sleep- a whole- night- through- Doc-tors com-ing peo-ple rush-ing doc-tors go-ing doc-tors

mf *f* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *tempo primo (♩=152)* *tempo secondo (♩=176)*

Then a sur-geon in an a-pon ah! When he comes his a-pon's white ha ha when he goes it's blood-y Now hear this. To-day the Queen has un-der-gone

tempo primo *tempo secondo* *tempo primo* *tempo secondo* *mf*

Now hear this. A mi-nor op-er-a-ti-on Now hear ky-ri-e e-le-i A slight in-ci-sion was the de-ci-sion a small re-vi-sion No

f *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *f*

cause for wor-ry ah! Now hear — this We are con-fi-dent the whole af-fair — Now — hear — this has been a great suc-cess —

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

Now hear this We ex-pect a full re-co-ver-y Now hear - this A slight in-ci-sion was the de-

f *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *f*

ci-sion a small re-vi-sion and a great suc-cess A great suc-cess We ex-pect a full re-co-ver-y

mf re-co-ver-y re-co-ver-y re-co-ver-y re-co-ver-y re-co-va slight in-ci-sion was the de-ci-sion a small re-vi-sion a great suc-

p *f*

ff cess! Re-joice, re-joice, re-joice, re-joice, re-joice

[] re-joice re-joice

[] re-joice, re-joice, re-joice

(♩ = 144) *mf* Calm, a little slower Where there was

(♩ = ca. 132) *mf* The Empress

dis-chord now there is har-mo-ny — Where there was strife now there is peace — Let

cym-bals sound — and the Min-strels sing —

f Re-joice, re-joice, re-joice, re-joice i-uh i uh i uh i

[Descent increasingly nasal, mouth almost closed by now]

The Singer (♩ = 72-76)

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

I try to sing but my voice gets weak-er I try to run but my feet won't move The Em-press-'s feet I see her

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

I try to sing The Hall is I see her feet I try to five miles I see her feet and they are mi-nute! You'd need a te-le-scope to

p *p*

see them. I sing:

Second Song

Lyrical, a piacere (J=69)

mp *mp* *mp* *mf* *mf*

The Em-press's feet are beau-ti-ful for they are so short. So pre-cious and neat di-vine-ly pe-tite Praise them, O

[Perhaps, she traces a beautiful shape in the air with her hand.]

molto rubato

dim. *mp* *p* *p* *pp*

praise-them in song — ng — The Em-press's feet are beau-ti-ful. So slender and slight, In the dark So still in the night. She cannot see his face.

She Dreams

Rapid whispering, in the manner of the first dream, only not as long. When you run out of breath inhale the words, at the end, or when you've had enough, interrupt yourself by waking up with a quick indrawn breath.¹

Sh— e sleeps
again and again
they don't keep me
get off
mmmmmmmm*

don't touch
get off don't
sh— e sleeps
keep me awake
she is repeating

don't
the same
again and again
they don't keep me
mmmmmm*

inhale the words
she keeps me
again and again
begins this

* this humming should
be on the in breath,
the last few notes of
the Second Song.

¹Alternatively, or additionally, you could read out these instructions in the manner described by them.

She Wakes

Heistantly (♩=69) *moving (♩=72-84)* *cresc.*

The Em-press is in mourn-ing A dream, a dream, like- a grow-ing camp-fire stor-y she! It comes in parts (so still) each night It gives light and heat-

mf *p* *Spoken:* *mf* [*♩*] *(♩=♩.)*

- mmm? I re-mem-ber There was a wo-man who had lost her feet. ha, ha. How did it go? There is a court a pa-lace The Em-peror

Quicker, a tight military tone *a tempo* *Slower (ca. ♩=69)* *mf Warm* *rall.....*

calls, the Em-per-or calls- me to sing m-m- to sing for his Queen I sing for them she! But I have a dif-ferent song - ng In-side my

head mmm

Third Song

(♩ = 184) *flowing*
mf
 I lay in bed - listen - ing for the foot - step of my love O she did not step light - ly mmm? she strode -

Pin mosso, un po' rubato
 (♩ = 126-132)
mp *mf*
 - a - cross the moun - tains and through woods she walked the dark - ness I dreamt that she ~ was in a coun - try far a - way a -

p *mf* *mf*
 way a - wa - ay a - way I dreamt that she was run - ning (a - gain and a - gain) swift - ly ov - er grass - y fields she ran to my

mp *p* *mf*
 home - com - ing sh! to my home com - ing to my home ~ mmm - com - mmm? Her foot was long ~ ~ ~ and

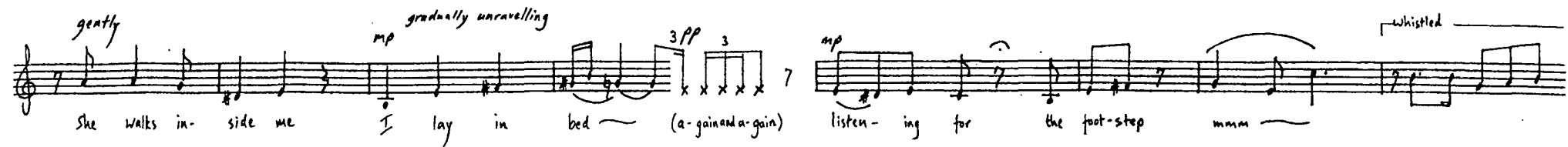
p *mf* *mf*
 broad, (ha ha) her ank - le round and strong O she did not step light - ly sh! As in her foot - steps I trace my way

gently
She walks in-side me

mp *gradually unravelling*
I lay in bed — (a-gain and a-gain)

mp
listen - ing for the foot-step

whistled
mmm —



pp
ha, ha

mp
mmm —

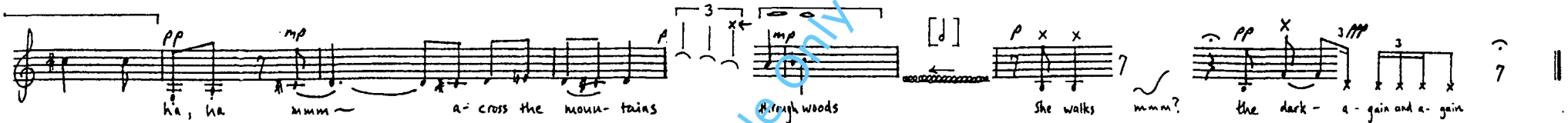
p
a-cross the moun-tains

mp
through woods

p x x
She walks

pp x
mmm?

3pp
the dark - a-gain and a-gain



Preview File Only

The Empress's Feet

LIBRETTO

Words by
Valerie Whittington

as set to music by
Evelyn Ficarra

A WOMAN WAKES

Singer: The Empress walks in my sleep again.

A dream a dream
like a growing camp fire story
it comes in parts (so still) each night
it gives light and heat

sh!
mmm?

I remember
There was a woman with enormous feet!

A dream
there was a woman
so still
a dream
The Empress walks
in parts each night
it gives light
and heat
I remember

*I rememb -
there was a wom -
there was a woman with -*

sh!

There was a woman with enormous feet!
How did it go?

ha, ha.

She is thinking of a song. She shuts her eyes. Tries to remember. When she has it she opens them.

There is a court
a palace

mmmmmm

The Emperor calls me

*the Emperor calls me
to sing*

to sing for his Queen

to sing ah

the court is waiting

*the Emperor calls me
to sing*

Ha

sing for his queen
the court is waiting

the court is waiting

sing for his

*the Emperor calls me to
to sing
Fa!*

I run faster

*The court is wait -
The Emperor calls to
to sing
ma!*

Out of breath

*faster, fast -
The Emperor calls to
to sing
la!*

The Hall is five miles long.

*wait - faster The Emper - ha!
sing to wait fast the
sing to wai - fa -*

The music begins

mmm?

I sing a strange song:

FIRST SONG

The Empress's Feet are beautiful
For they are so long
So noble and fine
Such grandeur divine
For such fine feet all women long.

The Empress's Feet are beautiful
For they are so strong
Perfection in size
An Emperor's prize
Praise them O praise them in song, in song, in song.

mmmmmm

NIGHT MUSIC ONE

When night had fallen on the court

mmmmmm

Amber Palace walls
began to glow

I lay my head upon a woman's instep

ha, ha

and with the courtiers I slept.

When night had fall -

She is settling into sleep when she suddenly sits up as if she has heard something.

It's nothing
The Empress walks in her sleep again

A DREAM

Rapid whispering, mostly unintelligible, emphasising consonants, very sotto voce at first, gradually more frantic and a little louder, keep going, if you get in a muddle keep repeating the same line until you can move on, when you run out of breath inhale the words, at the end, or when you've had enough, interrupt yourself by waking up with a quick in drawn breath.¹

She sleeps
 in her sleep begins this
 disjointed
 out of order
 she is repeating the same
 again and again
 get off get off
 don't touch them
 no they don't
 they don't keep me awake
 No
 don't
 they don't keep me
 get off get off
 she is repeating
 the same
 she sleeps
 again and again
 keep me awake
 keep me awake
 don't touch
 get off don't
 she sleeps
 mmmmmmmmmmm*
 don't touch them
 she keeps me awake
 don't
 the same
 again and again
 they don't keep me
 inhale
 get off
 inhale the words
 she keeps me
 she keeps me awake
 again and again -

As if from a nightmare she suddenly wakes herself.

¹Alternatively, or additionally, you could read out these instructions in the manner described by them.

NIGHT MUSIC TWO

The Empress walks each night
 through sleeping palace guards
 The weary Emperor follows
 to catch her when she wakes

The Empress walks
 through sleeping palace
 weary Emperor

The Emperor follows me

OPERA

Empress: My body is awake *mmmmmm*
 my eyes *mmmmmm*
 my eyes are open *ah*
 my - my body

Emperor: Your eyes were open

Empress: awake

Emperor: But you saw nothing.

Empress: My eyes were open.

Emperor: You saw nothing.

Empress: I saw many things.

Emperor: You saw nothing.

Empress: I saw

Emperor: nothing

Empress: many things

Emperor: You dreamt them.

Empress: Then I had terrifying dreams.

Singer: In the dark

Emperor: You dreamt them.

Singer: She cannot see his face.
 The Empress sings to the Emperor:

ARIA

Empress: I dreamt my love
my love
my love
mmm
my love
mmm
my love
my love
mmm

I dreamt that you were in a country far away
that you were in a country far away
away
mmmmmm
away away

I wanted
I wanted to go to you
I wandered many days and without rest
wandered

I never found you
mmm
never found you
I never found you

I wandered many days and without rest
I never found you
never found

As I travelled
As I travelled a monster came upon me
As I travelled a monster came upon me silently
He wound his coils about me
mmm
his coils about me

I could not scream
mmm
I could not run away
mmmm
away away
mmmm
away

I woke with your arms around me
I woke with your arms around me
I woke with your arms around me
I woke with your arms around me
I woke with
your arms

sh!
mmm?

Singer: In the dark

Empress: around me.

Singer: she cannot see his face.
But he says:

Emperor: I have an answer.

BOWLS AND TOWELS

Singer: There is movement everywhere.
hm - hm - hm - hm
People rushing.
Doctors going.
Doctors coming.
hm - hm - hm - hm
People going.
Doctors rushing.
hm - hm - hm - hm
People rushing doctors going doctors coming doctors going
doctors rushing people coming doctors going.

What's the Emperor to do?
His wife won't sleep a whole night through.
What's the Emperor to do?
His wife won't sleep a whole night through.

People rushing. Doctors going.
hm - hm - hm - hm

Bowls and towels. Bowls and towels.
Hm uh hm uh hm - hm
Then a surgeon in an apron
Then a surgeon in an apron
Then an apron then a surgeon in an apron

What's the Emperor to do?
His wife won't sleep a whole night through.

Then a surgeon in an apron
Bowls and towels. Bowls and towels.
Then an apron then a surgeon in an apron
Bowls and towels.
When he comes his apron's white.
What's the Emperor to do?
When he goes it's bloody bright.
His wife won't sleep a whole night through.

Where's the Empress?
Where's the Empress?

There is movement everywhere.
There is movement everywhere.
People rushing doctors going doctors coming people going
doctors rushing. ha, ha, ha
Then a surgeon in an apron.
When he comes his apron's white.
Bowls and towels.
When he goes it's bloody bright.
There is movement there is movement every -

Where's the Empress?
Where's the Empress?

What's the Emperor to do?
His wife won't sleep a whole night through.
Doctors coming people rushing doctors going doctors -
Then a surgeon in an apron.
When he comes his apron's white.
When he goes it's bloody

Now Hear This.
Today the Queen has undergone
Now Hear This.
a minor operation
Now Hear
Kyrie elei -
A slight incision
was the decision
a small revision
No cause for worry.

Now Hear This.
We are confident the whole affair
Now Hear This.
has been a great success.
Now Hear This.
We expect a full recovery.
Now Hear This.
A slight incision
was the decision
a small revision and a great success
A great success
We expect a full recovery.
Recovery recovery recovery recovery recov -
A slight incision
was the decision
a small revision
a great success

Rejoice rejoice rejoice rejoice rejoice
rejoice rejoice
rejoice rejoice rejoice

Where there was discord now there is harmony.
Where there was strife now there is peace.

Empress: Let cymbals sounds and the minstrels sing!
Rejoice rejoice rejoice rejoice rejoice

Singer: I try to sing.
But my voice gets weaker.
I try to run.
But my feet won't move.
The Empress's feet.
I see her
I try to sing.
The Hall is

I see her feet
I try to
Five Miles
I see her feet and they are minute!
You'd need a telescope to see them.

I sing:

SECOND SONG

The Empress's feet are beautiful
For they are so short
So precious and neat
Divinely petite
Praise them, O praise them in song.

The Empress's feet are beautiful
So slender and slight
in the dark
So still in the night
she cannot see his face

She closes her eyes and instantly falls asleep.

SHE DREAMS

Rapid whispering, in the manner of the first dream, only not as long. When you run out of breath inhale the words, at the end, or when you've had enough, interrupt yourself by waking up with a quick in drawn breath.²

She sleeps
again and again
they don't keep me
get off
mmm
don't touch
get off don't
she sleeps
keep me awake
she is repeating
don't
the same
again and again
they don't keep me
mmm
inhale the words
she keeps me
again and again
begins this

²Alternatively, or additionally, you could read out these instructions in the manner described by them.

SHE WAKES

The Empress is in mourning.

A dream a dream
 Like a growing camp fire story *sh!*
 It comes in parts (so still) each night
 It gives light and heat *mmm?*
 I remember
 There was a woman who had lost her feet. *ha, ha*

She tries to remember. She has already forgotten the first dream.

How did it go?
 There is a court
 a palace
 The Emperor calls me *The Emperor calls me to sing*
 to sing for his Queen

I sing for them. *sh!*
 But I have a different song
 inside my head
 mmm

THIRD SONG

I lay in bed listening for the footstep of my love
 O she did not step lightly *mmm?*
 She strode across the mountains and through woods
 She walked the darkness

I dreamt that she was in a country far away
 away away away
 I dreamt that she was running *again and again*
 Swiftly over grassy fields she ran
 to my homecoming *sh!*
 to my homecoming
 to my homecom - *mmm?*

Her foot was long and broad, her ankle round and
 strong *ha, ha*
 O she did not step lightly *sh!*
 As in her footsteps I trace my way
 She walks inside me

I lay in bed *again and again*
 listening for the footstep
 across the mountains *mmm ha, ha*
 through woods
 She walks *mmm?*
 the dark - *again and again*