

EAT AND BE EATEN

song cycle for 6 singers (S1, S2, A, T, Bar, B) & harp

by JENNIFER FOWLER

Preview File Only

Programme note.

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Eat and Be Eaten is a collection of songs for 6 singers and harp. It was commissioned by The Song Company of Sydney.

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!

Several themes recur: the apple features as a catalyst for the expulsion from the Garden of Eden in "Adam Lay", and also as an illustration of the growth cycle of seed-plant-bud-flower-fruit-seed in "The Apple Tree". Greed is represented by "Little George" who is a small boy who can't stop eating. His course is paralleled by "Big George" who builds a business empire with dodgy takeover bids. The theme of over-consumption and its perils occurs again in "Drinking Song". The cyclical nature of the food chain is illustrated in "The Apple Tree" and "On Ilkley Moor"; and "The Swan" presents the point of view of the about-to-be-eaten.

The longest, central song "From Conception to Birth" explores the balancing act set up between a pregnant woman and a growing foetus. The nourishment and survival of both follows a different agenda but is interdependent. In this case the nurture of the foetus plays a risky strategy against the depletion of the mother's resources. A further ironical strand is added by the (male) voices of brash medics.

This collection of songs was devised with The Song Company in mind - in particular, their unique combination of superb singing, which can range from total blend to completely individualistic solo style, and their ability to project the full drama or humour of a text.

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Song Cycle for 6 singers (Sop 1, Sop 2, Alto, Tenor, Baritone, Bass) and harp

1. **INTRODUCTION to ADAM LAY** (harp, with 6 singers)
2. Guilt: **ADAM LAY** (6 singers)
Beginning with the apple. Text taken from a medieval English lyric.
3. Greed: **LITTLE GEORGE** (6 singers)
A boy who can't stop eating. Text by the composer.
4. Life Cycle: **THE APPLE TREE** (6 singers)
A round, based on the life cycle. Text by the composer, based on traditional.
5. Nurture: **FROM CONCEPTION TO BIRTH** (6 singers and harp, with soprano solo)
Nourishment and survival of mother and foetus. Text by the composer.
6. Greed (2) **BIG GEORGE** (6 singers)
An uncontrollable appetite revisited. Text by the composer.
7. On being consumed: **THE SWAN** (Tenor solo and harp)
The point of view of the about-to-be-eaten. Text taken from the Carmina
Burana medieval collection of Latin verses, translated and adapted by the
composer.
8. Unwise indulgence: **DRINKING SONG** (Tenor, baritone & bass)
Text taken from a 13th century French/Flemish motet, translated & adapted by
the composer.
9. The food chain: **ON ILKLEY MOOR** (6 singers and optional harp)
The food chain reaches a surprising conclusion. Text is traditional (Yorkshire).
10. (Encore): **DRINKING SONG 2** (Baritone and bass)
Text from Amphis (4th century BC), translated by Tony Harrison.