

Drop, Drop Slow Tears

for SSATB choir, organ and obligato trumpet

Mark Gotham
2015

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For the King's 500 Contemporary Music Festival and the first performers (10.10.2015): Ben Parry, conductor; Concanenda (dir. Alexandra Schwinn); Katie Lodge, trumpet; and Tom Etheridge, organ.

A note on the piece

Drop, drop slow tears dwells on the opening line of a Lenten hymn by Phineas Fletcher (1582–1650) which is best known to musicians in the setting by his contemporary, Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625).

My setting is a study of lamenting descent within a kind of trapped stasis: the piece traces a continually descending chromatic line, but keeps returning to the same chord (an augmented chord which divides the octave equally, and so is without apparent root). This is enhanced by auditory effects such as the ‘Shepard tones’ in b.48 (fig.F) and following.

Drop, drop slow tears has a companion piece in my other 2015 hymn paraphrase: ‘Thou Art a Sea Without A Shore’ after John Mason.

To the performer

- This piece can be performed alone (c.5’) is particularly effective when prefaced or bookended by verses of Gibbons’ hymn on either side (in F major, adding c.2’). For instance, verses 1 and 2 could go before at *mp*, with v.3 afterwards, *pp*.
- For performance without trumpet, the organ plays the trumpet line on a solo manual (the given organ manual part in these sections can be played on one hand to accommodate). As explained in the score, this trumpet (or organ) cadenza from b.48 should be free, and not coordinated with the choir (generally slightly faster).
- The opening soprano parts (to fig. A) may be given to solo voices.
- Full note lengths should be used throughout. For instance, the quaver (eighth note) rest in b.21 is a written-out break for gathering and clearing the sound. Performers may vary the length of these rests according to the acoustic (a reasonably resonant space is assumed).
- Equally, in very resonant acoustics, it may be preferable to punctuate the passage from b.28 (fig. C), clearing each note in the choir parts before changing.
- ‘Performing’ dynamics are used, so the *ff* in b. 42 will be considerably less than that of b. 48 (fig.F), for instance due to the register. Do not attempt to compensate.
- The ‘p’s from bar 75 (tenor, bass) are to be lightly voiced and pitched.

Commissioned by the King's 500 Festival, 2015
First performance: 10.10.2015; Concanenda Choir; Ben Parry, conductor

Drop, Drop Slow Tears

a passacaglia for SSATB choir, organ and obbligato trumpet

Phineas Fletcher

Mark Gotham

Meditative, ♩ = c.72 *pp* *semplice*

SOPRANO

Drop, drop

pp *semplice*

Drop, drop drop

Meditative, ♩ = c.72

Organ

pp (like an echo)

9

(*pp*)

A

più

S. Drop, drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow tears,

(*pp*)

Drop, drop drop drop drop

O.

16

più

S. Drop, drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow tears, Drop,

p

A. Drop, drop slow tears, Drop, slow tears, Drop,

p *pp* *p*

Drop Drop,

O.

B

22

più *pp*

S. drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow tears, Dro(p)

A. drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow tears,

T. Drop, drop drop drop

O. Swell (descending chromatic cluster f-c#)
p cresc.

C

28

Slight accents on all changes of note (pitch).

pp *sim.*

S. Drop drop Drop drop Drop drop

A. Drop drop Drop drop Drop drop

T. Drop drop Drop drop Drop drop

B. *mf*

Tpt. Drop harmon mute (lontano)
pp p mp p

O. *(pp)*
mf

36 **D**

S. *p* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf*
Drop drop Drop drop Drop drop Drop

A. *p* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf*
Drop drop Drop drop Drop drop Drop

T. *p* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf*
Drop drop Drop drop Drop drop Drop

Tpt. *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *mf*
senza sord.

O.

42 **E** *molto rall.* *Meno mosso* (♩ = c.54) *accel.*

S. *ff* *p* *mf* *ff*
Drop Drop Drop Drop Dro -

A. *ff* *p* *mf* *ff*
Drop Drop Drop Drop Drop

T. *ff* *p cresc. molto*
Drop Drop Drop Drop, drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow tears, Drop,

B. *p cresc. molto*
Drop, drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow tears, Drop,

Tpt. *f* *f* *mp* *mf*
molto rall. *Meno mosso* (♩ = c.54) *accel.*

O. *p* *mf*

* High note (siren)

** Quasi 'Shepard tones'

F A tempo (♩ = 72)

48

S. *molto* (ah) *mp* (ah)

A. *molto* (ah) *pp* *mp* (ah)

T. *ff* *molto* dro - - (ah) (ah)

B. *ff* *molto* dro - (ah) (ah)

Cadenza, slightly faster the choir (♩ c.80) but freely.

Tpt. *f* *ff* *f* *f* *f*

A tempo (♩ = 72)

O. *ff* *dim. molto (keep 4')* *f* *mp* *p (4' only)*

(*ff* manual - ped.) (*f*) (*mp*)

53

S. *mp* *mp* *ppp*

A. *mp* *mp* *pp*

T. *mp* *mp* *pp*

B. *mp*

Tpt. *mf* *f* *ff* *fff* *f*

O. (4' only)



58

G NB: do not dim too early

S. *mp* *pp* *p* *mp* *p*

A. *mp* *pp* *p* *mp* *p*

T. *mp* *p*

Tpt. *mf* *mp* *p*

O. *mf* *mp* *p*

64

S.

A.

O.



69

S. drop drop drop drop drop

A. drop drop drop drop drop drop drop drop

O.



74 **H** (S.2)

S. *ppp*

A. *ppp, cover mouth*
p p p p

T. *ppp, cover mouth*
p p p p

B. *ppp, cover mouth*
p p

Tpt. con sord.
p pp p pp

O.

Poco meno mosso

(♩ = c.66)

I

S. *p espress.*
Drop, slow

A. *p espress.*
Drop, drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow

T. *p espress.*
Drop, drop slow tears, Drop, drop slow

B. *p*

Tpt.

O. *pp (with 16')*

Poco meno mosso
(♩ = c.66)



Ancora meno

(♩ = c.54)

rall.

S. *rall.*
tears, —

A. *p semplice*
tears, Drop, drop

T. *p semplice*
tears, Drop, drop slow tears Drop, drop slow tears,

B. *p semplice*
Drop, drop slow tears Drop, drop slow tears,

O. *rall.*
Ancora meno
(♩ = c.54)

(still with 16')



rall.

(NB: re-sound the F)

O. *rall.*