

John Hails

Pied Beauty (2001/08)

soprano and two scordatura violas

or

soprano and fixed media (sine tones)

duration: 3'30"

words by Gerard Manley Hopkins

dedicated to Clara Dawson

Alternative version

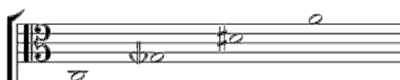
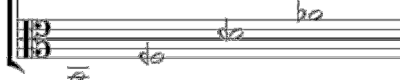
This piece can be performed either with two scordatura violas (see below for tuning), or with pre-recorded fixed media (stereo playback). Essentially, the pitches of the accompaniment are unchanged and so no alternative score is currently offered, although this may be updated in the future.

Setup

The soprano should have a pair of single sided headphones (mono), into which is fed a pre-recorded track, giving her the pitches that she should sing. These are notated in the score to the nearest quartertone, with fine-tuning (to the nearest five cents) written above. The exact pitch heard on the pre-recorded track is notated as a frequency in Hertz, to the nearest three decimal places, above the fine-tuning indication. It is intended that the singer should rehearse with this pre-recorded track to improve her intonation. Each bar is assigned a different track on a CD (or alternatively as a separate mp3 file) so each track/file can be set to repeat.

The precision with which the pitch is notated is intended as an ideal for which to strive, not a stick with which to beat yourself.

The two violas are tuned to the following pitches:

	130.000	182.000	312.000	442.000
	-10	+20	+5	+10
va 1				
	123.500	169.000	286.000	415.000
	+0	-5	+5	+0
va 2				

A track with each pitch sustained for 60 seconds (which can be set to repeat) is provided on a CD.

Performance

This piece should not be conducted. The most challenging bar to coordinate is bar 6, with all other bars providing a clear minim pulse in one or other part. The soprano is given a pulsed introduction over the headphones, and she should lead the first few notes. Dynamics are quiet throughout and very little vibrato should be used.

Theoretical underpinning

The violas are tuned to play frequencies in just ratios from 10:11:12:13:14:16:17¹. This produces a scale of sorts:

520.000 572.000 624.000 676.000 728.000 832.000 884.000
-10 +5 +5 -5 +20 +0 +10
10 11 12 13 14 16 17

The setting can be split into three groups of three lines, followed by two lines. The rhyme scheme of the poem is ABCABCABCAC, and so my setting treats line 4 as a variation on line 1, line 5 as a variation on line 2, and line 6 as a variation on line 3. Lines 7, 8, and 9, are variations on lines 4, 5, and 6 respectively, and while line 10 is a variation on line 7, line 11 is treated as a coda with new material.

The viola parts, which form the 'spine' of this piece are all derived from variations on the initial line in bar 1 (itself constructed in an ABA form), with added variations caused by the physical setup of the instrument itself.

The soprano part in lines 1, 4, 7, and 10 reverses the ratios present in the viola line to create utonal harmonies, decontextualising the just ratios of the viola part.

The soprano part in lines 2, 5, and 8 harmonises the viola line at a (changing) rational harmony.

The soprano part in lines 3, 6, 9, and 11 uses pitches from the viola's scale.

¹ The C string of viola 2 is tuned to a pitch that would correspond to a ratio of 19:20 against that of viola 1, and is included to create friction, and to imply a leading note to the 'tonic' on which the piece ends.

To Clara

Pied Beauty

Gerard Manley Hopkins

soprano and two scordatura violas

John Hails
2001-08

$\text{♩} = 36$

629.200 +20 572.000 +5 449.429 -15 484.000 +15 370.118 +0 393.250 +5 524.333 +0 629.200 +20 572.000 +5 449.429 -15

sop
Glo - ry be to God for dapp - led things-

sounding pitch (va1)

va 1

sounding pitch (va2)

va 2

614.545 -20 694.571 -10 772.571 +25 477.176 -10 489.412 -20 429.000 +5 600.000 -15 610.909 -30 694.571 -10 772.571 +25 636.235 -10 477.176 -10

②

sop
For skies as coup - le - col - oured as a brin - dled cow;

sounding pitch (va1)

va 1

sounding pitch (va2)

va 2

③

624.000 676.000 720.000 572.000 520.000 624.000 572.000 624.000 676.000 720.000 572.000 520.000

+5 -5 +20 +5 -10 +5 +5 +5 -5 +20 +5 -10

sop

For rose - moles all in stip - ple u - pon trout that swim;

sounding pitch (va1)

-10 +10 +20 -10 +5 +10 +20

3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

va 1

sounding pitch (va2)

+0 -5 +5 +0 -5 +5

3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

va 2

④

371.429 484.000 424.667 231.263 626.167 605.091 440.471 371.429 484.000 424.667

+5 +15 -10 -15 +10 +0 +0 +5 +15 -10

sop

Fresh - fire - coal chest - nut - falls; fin - ches' wings

sounding pitch (va1)

+20 -10 +5 +20 +10 +5 +10 +20 +5 +20

va 1

sounding pitch (va2)

+5 -5 -5 +0 +5 +5 -5

va 2

567.273 655.714 820.714 516.941 677.647 762.667 624.000 686.400 743.600 562.545 526.455 476.000 448.000 408.000 442.000

-10 -10 -20 -20 +0 +5 +5 +20 +10 -25 +10 -15 -20 +20 +10

⑤

sop
Land -scapes plot - ted and pieced - fold, ___ fal - low and plough;

sounding pitch (va1)
+5 +10 +5 +20 -10 +20 +5 +10 +5

va 1

sounding pitch (va2)
-5 +0 -5 +5 -5 +0 -5

va 2

720.000 572.000 520.000 624.000 676.000 780.000 884.000 720.000 572.000 520.000 624.000 676.000

+20 +5 -10 +5 -5 -10 +10 +20 +5 -10 +5 -5

⑥

sop
And all ___ trades, their ___ gear ___ and tack - le ___ and trim.

sounding pitch (va1)
-10 +10 +5 +20 -10 +5 -10 +10 +20 -10

va 1

sounding pitch (va2)
+0 -5 +5 +0 -5 +5

va 2

7

742.857	627.429	732.333	576.000	740.235	639.000	742.857	627.714	735.429
+10	+15	-20	+15	+0	-5	+10	+15	-10

sop
All things coun - ter, o - ri - gi - nal, spare, strange;

+20	+5	+5	+10	+20	+5
-10	b _s	b _s	b _s	-10	b _s

sounding pitch (va1)

4:3 4:3 4:3 4:3

va 1

-5	+5	-5	-5	+5	+0	+5	-5
b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s

sounding pitch (va2)

4:3 4:3 4:3 4:3

va 2

8

520.000	490.286	531.143	556.706	489.412	624.000	600.000	803.636	898.857	579.429	377.765
-10	-15	-25	+10	-20	+5	-15	-5	-15	-25	-10

sop
What - ev - er is fick - le, freck - led (who knows how?)

+5	+10	+5	+20	+20	+10	+5
b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s	b _s

sounding pitch (va1)

+5 +0 +5 -5 +0 +5 -5 +0 +5 -5

sounding pitch (va2)

va 1

va 2

676.000 0 780.000 936.000 780.000 624.000 720.000 676.000 780.000 936.000 780.000 624.000

-5 -10 +5 -10 +5 +20 -5 -10 +5 -10 +5

⑨

sop

With_ swift, slow; sweet, sour; a - daz - zle, dim; _

+20 +10 +20 +10 +20 +5 +10 +20 +10 +20 +10 +20

-10 +5 -10 +5 -10 +20 +5 -10 +5 -10 +5 -10

va 1

sounding pitch (va1)

va 2

sounding pitch (va2)

627.714 926.545 782.167 576.000 552.118 468.000 516.941 627.714 463.273 366.167

+5 -10 -5 +15 -10 +5 -20 +15 -10 -20

⑩

sop

He fath - ers forth whose beau - ty is past change:

+20 +5 +5 +10 +10 +10 +10 +20 +5 +5 +5

-10 +20 +20 +5 +5 +5 +5 -10 +20 +20 +20

va 1

sounding pitch (va1)


va 2

sounding pitch (va2)


	936.000 780.000 416.000 520.000
	+5 -10 +0 -10

11


sop




sounding pitch (va1)



va 1



sounding pitch (va2)



va 2

