GRAHAM LACK

FOUR LULLABIES

For SATB Choir a cappella
Ed. Wilbur Skeels

Cantus Quercus Press
CQ2319

Foreword by the composer

These four short choral settings are in strict four-part style without any *divisi* passages. Direct in expression, they are designed to be sung *a cappella* by chamber choir and may even be performed by an SATB vocal quartet. The *Four Lullabies* should make effective additions to a church service during the Christmas season but are intended as concert repertoire too. They may be given either singly or rendered as a cycle in the order published here. The musical language remains within an extended tonality, but admits some modal elements and contains a few unexpected harmonic shifts. Competent singers will cope easily with this challenge, and bring out accordingly the slight acerbity or sweetness of the harmonies whilst remaining attentive to the overall level of dissonance. Dynamics should be subtly graded and tempi encouraged that flow but are never hurried.

The first complete performance of the *Four Lullabies* was conducted by the composer and given on 7th July, 1991 by the English ensemble Cantores Illuminati in the Church of St. Hedwig, Schwäbisch Gemünd, Germany during the annual European Festival of Church Music. The Carl-Orff-Chor Marktoberdorf also included the works in a concert held in the Church of St. Martin in October, 1999 under the direction of Andreas Hermann. Earlier that year, the cycle was performed by the Choir of Queens's College, Cambridge in the Philharmonic Hall in Munich's Gasteig as part of the 10th International Concert of Choral Music. The *Four Lullabies* have been recorded for West German Radio (WDR) and Bavarian Radio (BR) by various choirs, as well as for BBC Radio 3 by the chamber choir Polyphony.

/st

—Graham Lack (October, 2000).

About the composer

Born August 18, 1954 in Epsom, England, Graham Lack showed early talent in writing for solo instruments and small ensembles. He first studied composition at Bishop Otter College (Chichester) under Michael Waite. From 1976 to 1981 he continued his training at Goldsmiths' College and Kings's College in the University of London, studying composition with Anthony Milner before completing an M.Mus. degree in historical musicology with Brian Trowell, Reinhard Strohm and Pierluigi Petrobelli. In 1981 he moved to Germany and took up a lectureship in music at the University of Maryland's overseas campus in Munich. The university closed its program in 1992, by which time he was active as a freelance composer and essayist for music journals. His doctoral dissertation at the Technische Universität in Berlin is on the influences of scientific thought in the orchestral works of George Benjamin. Still living and working in Munich, Graham Lack is a frequent speaker at musical symposiums, and he continues to compose instrumental, chamber and choral music. His *Nine Moons Dark*, a secular cantata for soprano, ensemble and speaking chorus, with a German libretto freely based on the Finnish Kalevala epic, was premiered in Munich in 2000. Other recent choral works include *Two Madrigals for High Summer* for 5-voice mixed choir (soon to be published), a 12-voice *Sanctus*, and *Petersiliensommer (Parsley Summer)*, for high voices and harp commissioned by the Chorus of the Munich Philharmonic, to be premiered in December, 2003.

This edition

A number of minor corrections of the original German edition have been included, and changes have been made in the bass and tenor parts (mm. 27-44) of *I sing of a maiden*. Supplementary notes supplied by the editor are shown in [square brackets].

—W.S. (August, 2003)

1. Jesu, swete sone dere

Anon. 14th Century

Graham Lack

Sopr.
Je-su, swe-te so-ne dere on por-ful bed list thou here, and that me

Alto
Je-su, swe-te so-ne dere on por-ful bed list thou here, and that me

Tenor
Je-su, swe-te so-ne dere on por-ful bed list thou here, and that me

Bass
Je-su, swe-te so-ne dere on por-ful bed list thou here, and that me

gre-veth sore; For thy cra-del is a bere, ox and as-se be thy fere.

gre-veth sore; For thy cra-del is a bere, ox and as-se be thy fere.

gre-veth sore; For thy cra-del is a bere,_ ox and as-se be thy fere.

gre-veth sore; For thy cra-del is a bere, ox and as-se be thy fere.

Weep I____ may_____ ther - fore.

Weep I____ may_____ ther - fore.

Weep I____ may ther - fore.

Weep I____ may_ ther - fore.

Je-su, swe-te be not wroth though ich n'ab-be clout ne cloth thee on

for to folde, Thee on to fol-de ne to wrappe

For ich n'ab-be clout ne lappe but lay thou thy feet to my pappe,

Notes

The earliest manuscripts of this text (part of a longer poem) date from the 1370s, and are in a pre-Chaucerian dialect from South-East England. The original text has been lightly modernized by the composer. John Stevens, Professor Emeritus of Medieval and Renaissance English at the University of Cambridge, comments as follows.

"In pronunciation terms, the Great Vowel Shift does not apply here. Generally speaking, one might add, a great deal of the old so-called historical phonology seems to be based on dubious psuedo-scientific premises. There must have been in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a huge amount of local variation, to say no more. These guidelines should serve: *sone* — with only one *n*, so, a long, slightly closed *o*, but no emphatic *nn*, as in the modernized form 'sonne'; *list* — lacking a diphthong it is equivalent to Modern English 'least', being rendered 'liest' in the modernized form; *greveth* — as in Mod. Eng. 'gray'; *bere, fere* — these rhyme, and in Mod. Eng. sound respectively as 'bare' and 'fair'; *weep* — a long vowel, as the one in *greveth*, and sounding like the Mod. Eng. 'way'; *n'abbe* — denotes 'I have neither,' or 'I ne have but,' and should be pronounced 'n'ave' ['nav-ve' with two syllables, Ed.]; *wite* — in Mod. Eng. somewhere between the sound produced by 'weet' and the word 'wit'; *clout* — also spelled *clut* in the MS, and equivalent to Mod. Eng. 'hoot'. [Also, *swete* — with a long vowel in the first syllable, approximately 'sway-tuh'; *ich* — pronounced 'ish', betraying the Saxon origins of our personal pronoun, 'I'.] A brief gloss of some words: *porful* — very poor; *bere* — the two basic meanings in Middle English run into one another, (i) a 'litter' for an animal [? manger], (ii) a 'bier' in the sense of a lying out place for a dead body, (NB no feeling of a 'pun' or wit here); *fere* — companion; *wroth* — angry; *on for to folde* — here, 'in' must be taken for 'on'; *lappe* — fold of a garment, the modernized form 'lap' is distinctly misleading; *wite* — preserve, keep, guard; *pappe* — breast." [Also, *clout* — a piece of cloth.]

2. At the manger Mary sings

W. H. Auden (1907-1973)

Graham Lack

Sopr.
O shut your bright eyes, *O shut*

Alto
O shut your bright eyes,___ O shut your bright eyes,___

Tenor
O shut your bright eyes, O

Bass
O shut your bright eyes,___

your bright eyes,___ O shut your bright eyes___ that

your bright___ eyes, O shut___ your___ bright eyes___ that___

shut your bright___ eyes, O shut your bright___ eyes___

your bright eyes that mine must en-

mine must en - dan - ger with their watch - ful-ness; pro - tec - ted

mine___ must en - dan - ger with their watch - ful-ness, pro - tec - ted

that mine must en - dan - ger with their watch - ful-ness, pro - tect-ted

dan - ger, must en - dan - ger with their watch - ful-ness, pro - tec - ted

by its shade es - cape from my care.

by its shade es - cape from my care. What

by its shade es - cape from my care.

by its shade es - cape from my care.

What can you dis - cov - er, what can

can you dis - cov - er, what can you dis - cov - er,

what can you dis - cov - er, what

what can you dis - cov - er,

you dis - cov - er, what can you dis - cov - er from

you dis - cov - er, whnat can you dis - cov - er from

can you dis - cov - er, what can you dis - cov - er

- dis - cov - er from my ten - der

my ten - der look but how to be a - fraid? Love can___

my___ ten - der look but how to be a - fraid? Love can___

from my ten - der look but how to be a - fraid? Love can___

look,___ ten - der look but how to be a - fraid? Love can___

but con - firm the more___ it would___ de - ny.

but con - firm the more___ it___ would___ de - ny.

but con - firm___ the more___ it would___ de - ny.

but con - firm___ the more it___ would___ de - ny.

freely (molto meno mosso)

Close___ your bright___ eye.___ non decresc.

Close___ your bright___ eye.___ non decresc.

Close___ your bright___ eye.___ non decresc.

Close___ your bright___ eye.___ non decresc.

3. The world's Desire

G.K.Chesterton (1874-1936)

Graham Lack

Lyrics (Soprano/Alto):
1. The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap, His hair was like a light, like a light. O weary, weary were the world, But here is all a-right.
2. The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast, His hair was like a star, like a star. O stern and cunning are the kings, But here the true hearts —

Lyrics (Tenor/Bass):
1. The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap, His hair was like, his hair was like a light. O weary were the world, But here is all a-right.
2. The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast, His hair was like, his hair was like a star. O stern and cunning the kings, But here the true hearts —

System 1 (measures ~17–23):
- are. The Christ-child, the Christ-child, on Ma-ry's heart, his hair, his
- are. The Christ-child lay on Ma-ry's heart, on Ma-ry's heart, his
- are. The christ-child lay on Ma-ry's heart, his
- are. The Christ-child, the christ-child, on Ma-ry's heart, his

System 2:
- hair was like, his hair was like a fire. O wea-ry, wea-ry
- hair was like, his hair was like a fire. O wea-ry, wea-ry
- hair like a fire, like a fire. O wea-ry
- hair was like a fire, a fire. O wea-ry

System 3 (measure 24):
- is the world, but here the world's de - sire. The Christ - child
- is the world, but here the world's de - sire. The Christ - child
- is the world, but here the world's de - sire. The Christ - child
- is the world, but here the world's de - sire. The Christ - child

stood at Ma - ry's knee, His hair was like a crown, like

stood at Ma - ry's knee, His hair was like a crown, like

stood at Ma - ry's____ knee, His hair__ was__ like, His hair was like a

stood at Ma - ry's knee, His hair was like a crown, a

cresc . . . en . . . . do . . .

- a crown, And all the flowers, and all the flowers looked up,

- a crown, And all the flowers, and all the flowers looked

crown, And all____ the flowers, the flowers looked

crown. And all____ the flowers, the flowers looked

senza rallentando

looked up at him, And all the stars looked down, the stars looked down.

up at him, at him.__ And all the__ stars looked down, the stars looked down.

up at him,____ And all the stars looked down, looked down.

up at him,_____ And all the__ stars looked down,__ looked down.

4. I sing of a maiden

Anon. 15th c.

Graham Lack

Notes:

The manuscript which contains this poem (and numerous others) was completed during the first half of the fifteenth century, probably at the great Benedictine monastery at Bury St. Edmunds, England. The language is the East-Anglian dialect of Middle English. John Stevens, Professor Emeritus of Medieval and Renaissance English at the University of Cambridge, writes:

"Regarding pronunciation, vowels should be roughly as in modern Italian. Note the following: *maiden* - the diphthong produces ah-ee ['my-den']; *makeless* - as in Modern English 'mark' ['mahk,' no 'r']; *all* - closed slightly, but longish; *cam* - [with a short vowel as in 'camera']; *ther* - the *th* as in Mod. Eng. 'though' (not as in 'thought'), the vowel here is short; *falleth* - the first syllable is like *all* above; *also* - ditto; *moder* - the *d* indicates 'softness' of a *th*, as in *ther* above; *dew* - probably a slightly vocalic *w*, so, diphthongized [rhymes with 'yew', not 'do']; *flowr* - again, probably a slightly vocalic *w*, so diphthongized [as in 'float'], often spelled flour(e) in Middle English; *spray* - as in 'maiden' ['spry']; *none* - as in Mod. Eng. 'nonsense,'

"A gloss would include: *makeless* - without a 'mate', i.e. a husband [='virgin'], this is much more likely than 'spotless', and vrtually all good editors derive the latter sense from the earlier primary meaning; *ches* - choose; *still* - quietly, silently; *ther* - 'where' (in the relative sense); *spray* - branch, bough."

- 11 -

A - pril that fall - eth on the spray. 5. Mod - er and maid - en was

A - pril that fall - eth on the spray. 5. Mod - er and maid - en was

in A - pril that fall - eth on the spray. 5. Mod - er and maid - en was

in A - pril that fall - eth on the spray. 5. Mod - er and maid - en was

nev - er none but she. Well may such a

nev - er none but she. Well may such a

nev - er none but she. Well may such

nev - er none but she. Well may

la - dy God - es mod - er be.

la - dy God - es mod - er be.

a la - dy God - es mod - er be.

such a la - dy God - es mod - er be.