

Aloys Fleischmann

The Poet's Circuits

(Padraic Colum)

Soprano and Irish Harp

IMPRESSUM

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The manuscript score was presented to Gráinne Yeats by the composer

NOTE

Fleischmann set these poems by Padraic Colum in 1972, the year of the poet's death, for the singer and harpist Gráinne Yeats. Three of the four songs were performed at the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music in June of that year, Yeats accompanying herself on the Irish harp. The premiere of the whole work was given in Cork on 7 May 2015 by Janina Staub (soprano) and Clare McCague (Irish harp) at a recital at the Crane Lane Theatre organised by the Goethe Institute of Dublin and the Cork Orchestral Society.

Colum was born in County Longford, in the work house (a municipal institution for the destitute) where his father was employed. The family later moved to Dublin, where he went to school and got a job as a clerk. He became involved in the Irish cultural renaissance, joined the Gaelic League and learnt Irish, started writing plays and poetry and became friends with the leading figures of the movement, including James Joyce. His friendship with Yeats came to an end in 1907 when he vociferously campaigned against Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*. He and his wife lived in the USA from 1914–1922; a wealthy American later financed his studies in University College Dublin.

The Poet's Circuits: Collected Poems of Ireland was first published in 1960. The title refers to the travels of the mediaeval Irish poets who presented their poetry to colleagues and benefactors, visited the poetic schools, called on chieftains to present tributes and collect appropriate rewards. Colum, now approaching 80, selected poems from his life's work ordered in eight thematic groups, presenting a wide range of characters from 19th century rural Ireland. Whereas the mediaeval poets were honoured members of the learned guild who lived well from their profession, the situation of their counterparts after the colonial conquest was closer to that of the multitudes of beggars who wandered the roads, since wealthy Irish-speaking patrons of poetry had long since disappeared. But the itinerant poets of the 18th and 19th centuries enjoyed the respect and affection of the impoverished people of the Irish countryside.

(There are some language notes at the end which may be of use to non-Irish viewers.)

Ruth Fleischmann

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The Crane

I know you, Crane:
I, too, have waited,
Waited until my heart
Melted to little pools around my feet!

Comer in the morning ere the crows,
Shunner,
Searcher
Something find for me!
The pennies that were laid upon the eyes
Of old, wise men I knew.

blades from bass:
 ABCE/ AB/ GACE/ FGA/E
 E1 and 2 tune to E \sharp then blade to E \sharp

The Poet's Circuits

The Crane

Padraic Colum
 (1881-1972)

Aloys Fleischmann
 (1910-1992)

Moderato

Soprano

Irish Harp

4

p

I know you, Crane: _____ I, _____ too, _____

8

_____ have wait - ed, _____ Wait - ed _____ un - til my heart

12

melt - ed _____ to lit - tle pools a - round my feet!

16 rit.

rit.

p *dim.*

sf

20 Subito allegro e agitato

p

Co-mer in the mor-ning

ppp F3#
G3b *mp*

23 *f*

mp *f*

ere the crows, Shun- ner,

mf *cresc.* *molto* *f*

5 6 6 7

25 *mf*

f *mp* *mf*

search-er some-thing find for me!

sf *sf* *p* *mf*

6

28

cresc.

ff F2 ♯ *ff*

gliss.

31 **Tempo primo**

p *mf*

The pen - nies — that were laid u - pon the eyes of old, wise

p *mf*

35

p *pp*

men — I knew.

p G# *pp*

40

ppp

Black Tassels

Black tassels, black tassels, upon the green tree
The high tree, the ash tree that tops the round hill.
Black tassels, black tassels, and they are the crows.
Red streamers, red streamers along the hedgeways,
Where roadways are claubered and stubbles are brown
Red streamers, red streamers, and they are the haws
A lone song, a high song that comes from the hedge,
That tries for a round and that falls on the turn.
A short song, the red-breast's and Samhain's at hand.

Black Tassels

Allegro moderato

mp

Soprano

Black tas - sels, _____ black tas - sels, _____

Irish Harp

p

3

f

u - pon the green tree, _____

the

cresc. *f*

5

high tree, _____ the ash tree _____ that tops the round hill.

f *f* *mf* *mp*

8

mp

Black tas - sels, _____ black tas - sels, _____

10 *f* and they are

cresc. *f*

12 *mp* the crows. Red

mf *mp*

14 strea - mers, red strea - mers a - long the

mf

16 *mf* hedge - ways, where road - ways are clau - bered and

cresc.

18

stubs are brown.

mf *cresc.*

20

Red streamers, red streamers, and they are the

mf *cresc.* *f*

22

haws.

f

24 **Meno mosso**

A lone song,

pp

F2 #
C2 #

27 *mp* **animando**
 A high song that

30
 comes from the hedge, that tries for a round and that falls.

32 **Tempo primo**
 on the turn A short song,

34
 the red breast's, and Samh - ain,

36

Musical score for measures 36-37. The vocal line (top staff) features a melody with lyrics "Samh - ain's" and "at hand." The piano accompaniment (bottom staves) includes complex chords and arpeggiated figures with fingerings 5, 9, 6, 7, and 7. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*.

38

Musical score for measures 38-41. The vocal line (top staff) has a long melisma. The piano accompaniment (bottom staves) features a melodic line with an *8va* marking and a bass line with chords. Dynamics include *mf* and *pp*.

Caoine

Nor right, nor left, nor any road I see a comrade face,
Nor word to lift the heart in me I hear in any place;
They leave me, who pass by me, to my loneliness and care,
Without a house to draw my step nor a fire that I might share!

Ochone, before our people knew the scatt'ring of the dearth,
Before they saw potatoes rot and melt black in the earth,
I might have stood in Connacht, on the top of Cruchmaelinn,
And all around me I would see the hundreds of my kin.

Caoine

Tempo di marcia funebre

p

Soprano

Irish Harp

p sempre

Nor right, nor left, nor a - ny road

5

mp

I see a com - rade's face, nor word_

9

to lift the heart in me I hear in a - ny place;

13

mp

They leave me, who pass

mp

sons près de la table

17 *mf*

by me, to my lone - - - - li - ness

20 *p*

and care, With - out a house to draw my step nor a

24

fire that I might share.

28 *ff*

O

32 *mf*

O

33 *mp*

O - chone,

37 (half spoken)

be-fore our peo-ple knew the scat-te-ring of the dearth, be-fore they saw po-ta-toes

40 *f*

rot and melt black in the earth, I might have

43

stood in Con-nacht, on the top of Cruch-

46

-mae - linn, and all around me I would see

49

the hun - dreds of my

51

kin.

ff

ff

53

con *tutta forza* *strepitoso*

SPRING

Now, coming on Spring, the days will be growing,
And after Saint Bride's Day my sail I will throw;
Since the thought has come to me I fain would be going,
Till I stand in the middle of the County Mayo!

The first of my days will be spent in Claremorris,
And in Balla, beside it, I'll have drinking and sport,
To Kiltimagh, then, I will go on a visit,
And there, I can tell you, a month will be short.

I solemnly swear that the heart in me rises,
As the wind rises up and the mists break below,
When I think upon Carra, and on Gallen down from it,
The Bush of the Mile, and the Plains of Mayo!

Killeadean's my village, and every good's in it;
The rasp and blackberry to set to one's tooth;
And if Raftery stood in the midst of his people,
Old age would go from him, and he'd step to his youth!

Spring

Allegro molto

mp

Soprano

Irish Harp

Now, com-ing on

6

Spring, the days___ will be grow-ing,___ and af-ter Saint

10

Bride's Day___ my sail___ I will throw;___

14

Since the thought has come to me I fain___ would be going,___ till I stand in the mid-dle of the

mp

A2 1/2

19 *mf*

Coun-ty Ma yo!

f *gliss.* *f* *gliss.* *f* *gliss.* *mf*

23 *mf sempre*

mf *gliss.* *mf* *mp* *gliss.*

27 *p*

The first of my days will be spent in Clare-mor-ris

sfz *A3 ♯* *p*

32 *mp*

and in Bal-la, be-side it, there'll be drin-

gliss. *p*

36

mf

king and sport; To Kil - ti - magh, then, I will go on a

f *sfz* *mp*

40

vis - it, and there, I can tell you, a month will be short.

cresc.

44

mf

I so - lemn - ly swear that the heart in me ri - ses,

sfz *mp*

48

as the wind ri - ses up and the mists break be - low, when I

cresc. *mf*

52

think u - pon Car - ra, and on Gal - len down from it, the bush of the

sempre mf

This system contains measures 52 through 55. The vocal line features a melodic phrase starting with a half note, followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and eighth-note patterns. A dynamic marking of *sempre mf* is present in the piano part.

56

mile, and the plains of Ma - yo!

f

This system contains measures 56 through 59. The vocal line has a long melodic line with a dynamic marking of *f* at the beginning. The piano accompaniment includes chords and eighth-note patterns, with a dynamic marking of *f* in the bass line.

60

f *f sempre*

This system contains measures 60 through 63. The vocal line continues with a long melodic line. The piano accompaniment features chords and eighth-note patterns, with dynamic markings of *f* and *f sempre*.

64

This system contains measures 64 through 67. The vocal line continues with a long melodic line. The piano accompaniment features chords and eighth-note patterns.

68

ff

73

mp

Kil - lea-den's my vil-lage and ev'-ry good's in it; The rasp

mp

78

— and the black - ber - ry to set to one's tooth; — and if Raf - te - ry

82

f

stood — in the midst of his peo - ple,

f

sfz

mf

86

Old age would go from him,

cresc.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 86 through 89. The vocal line starts with a two-measure rest, followed by a melodic phrase with a slur and a fermata over the final note. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A *cresc.* marking is placed above the piano part in measure 87.

90

and he'd step to his

Detailed description: This system contains measures 90 through 93. The vocal line continues with a melodic phrase, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 90. The piano accompaniment maintains the eighth-note accompaniment pattern.

94

youth!

ff

gliss.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 94 through 96. The vocal line has a two-measure rest for the word "youth!". The piano part features a *ff* dynamic marking and a series of glissando passages in both hands, indicated by the *gliss.* markings and slurs over the notes.

97

ff sempre

Detailed description: This system contains measures 97 through 99. The vocal line has a two-measure rest. The piano part continues with the *ff sempre* dynamic and features more glissando passages in both hands, marked with *gliss.* and slurs.

Alternative ending

Soprano

Old age would go from him,

Irish Harp

cresc.

90

and he'd step to his

94

youth!

ff

gliss.

gliss.

97

ff sempre

gliss.

gliss.

SOME LANGUAGE NOTES

The Crane

- According to ancient Gaelic lore, the cranes were sacred birds that in flight inscribed messages in the skies for the wise to interpret.
- To shun: to avoid, to dislike the company of somebody; the first lines mean: You come in the morning before the crows, you avoider of company, you searcher – can you find something for me?
- In the old days penny pieces, which were quite large and heavy as made of copper, were laid on the eyes of the dead until rigor mortis had set in. Here it is hinted that this could be a temptation for the destitute.

Black Tassels

- This poem is reminiscent of the popular verse-riddle, providing answers to enigmatic questions.
- Claubered: muddied, deriving from the Irish word for mud.
- Haws: the red fruit of the hawthorn tree, a tree widely believed in Irish folklore to be sacred to the spirits or ‘little people’.
- Samhain: (pron. sou-wen, accent on the first syllable – sou as in ‘south’) the Irish for November, the month of the spirits and the dead.

Caoine

- Caoine: the Irish for lament, and a genre of Irish poetry. At funerals laments were recited with dramatic expressions of sorrow as a tribute to the dead person.
- Ochone: (pron. ach-own, accent on 2nd syllable) the anglicised version of the Irish word for ‘alas’.
- The scattering: mass emigration of the people caused by dearth, or scarcity. During the famine of 1845-9, blight destroyed the potato crop on which a large section of the peasantry depended for survival. The population of the country was halved within a decade.
- Cruchmaelinn: (pron. Croohmaylin, accent on 2nd syllable) a mountain in Connemara.
- Kin: relatives

Spring

- This poem is a tribute to the poet Antóine Ó Raiftéirí or Anthony Raftery (1779-1835), the lyric subject claiming to come from the area in which Raftery lived, mentioning places of significance in his life and poetry. Raftery was a blind Irish-speaking itinerant poet who was born in the west of Ireland in County Mayo and died in County Galway. His father was a weaver whose nine children contracted smallpox, which killed eight of them and blinded the surviving boy. Antóine wandered the roads, getting hospitality in return for his fiddle-playing and poetry in big houses and small. None of his poems were written down during his lifetime. In the 1890s, during the revival of interest in the Irish language and literature, they were re-discovered by the scholars and writers Douglas Hyde and Lady Gregory, who collected the oral heritage of poetry and stories from the Irish-speaking peasantry of the west; they were translated into English and published in both languages. In 1900 Lady Gregory heard from an old man who had attended Raftery's funeral where his grave was, and she, W. B. Yeats and others put a monument on it to his memory. There is now an annual Raftery festival there, in Loughrea, County Galway.
- St Bride: also St Brigid, one of the patron saints of Ireland (ca. 450-523), an abbess and healer, whose feast day is celebrated on 1 February. Her persona may have derived from the figure of Brighid, the ancient goddess of fire, light and healing.
- My sail I will throw: I will set sail; this is meant metaphorically for: I will set out.
- I fain would be ... : I would like to go.
- Kiltighma: pronounced Kil-ty-ma, accent on 2nd syllable (ty like tie, cravat).
- Killeadean: pronounced Kill-a-deen, accent on 3rd syllable.

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