

Lines to Fanny Brawne

for soprano and piano

Malcolm Forsyth

Piano/Vocal Score
B minor

Lines to Fanny Brawne
(1991)
for soprano and piano

Malcolm Forsyth
Text: John Keats

The composer's fascination with the poetry of Keats began whilst he was still in high school, when he was required to recite passages from the Ode to a Nightingale. It was this famous romantic work which later inspired him in the composition of his piano trio, *Six Episodes after Keats*, in 1979.

In the collected edition of Keats' poems there appears a short, untitled piece under the name, "Lines" supposed to have been written to Fanny Brawne. Miss Brawne was the object of Keats' devotion for several of the last years of his tragically short life, and this poem is a passionate plea for her understanding of this devotion. The prophetic message of the poem in consideration of Keats' untimely death within less than two years and the fact that his engagement to Fanny had not yet culminated in marriage, makes it especially poignant.

This song was written as the imposed work for the final round of the Canadian Music Competition in Montreal, in 1991

Duration: ca 5 minutes.

This living hand, now warm and capable
Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
And in the icy silence of the tomb,
So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
That thou would[st] wish thine own heart dry of blood
So in my veins red life might stream again,
And though be conscience calm's see here it is
I hold it towards you.

Cover picture is a miniature watercolour of Fanny Brawne, 1833

Composer Biography:

Canadian composer Malcolm Forsyth enjoyed a distinguished international career as one of Canada's major composers, having written a wide variety of works including three symphonies, as well as much other orchestral music, chamber music (especially for brass and strings), vocal, instrumental and choral music.

He was named "Canadian Composer of the Year" by the Canadian Music Council in 1989, and received many other awards, including three JUNOs for "Best Classical Composition" -- 1987, 1994 and 1998, and several JUNO nominations. Since his arrival in Canada from his native South Africa in 1968 to take up his post as Professor at the University of Alberta, his career included creating works for many distinguished performers. Those performers included contralto Maureen Forrester, conductor Charles Dutoit, mezzo-soprano Judith Forst and orchestras such as the Edmonton Symphony who premiered many of his works, the National Arts Centre, the Montreal Symphony and Calgary Philharmonic. His 1995 work, *Electra Rising*, a cello concerto written for his daughter Amanda Forsyth, a gifted and distinguished cellist, was premiered with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Mario Bernardi. This piece went on to win a JUNO award. A 60th birthday celebratory CD of *Electra Rising*, his saxophone concerto, *Tre Vie*, and *Valley of a Thousand Hills*, for chamber orchestra, released in 1997, was his last JUNO award-winning disc. His *Concerto for Eight* (2003) received rave reviews after its many performances in March 2003. *Double Concerto*, for viola, cello & orchestra was commissioned for violist Rivka Golani and cellist Tanya Prochaska, received its world première in October 2004.

Dr. Forsyth's last major work was *A Ballad of Canada*, for mixed chorus and orchestra, a joint commission by the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Edmonton Symphony, Orchestra received its premiere June 9, 2011 to much acclaim, a month before his death. His work was influenced by both the country of his birth and the country he adopted. Since his death, his works continue to be appreciated and performed across Canada and around the world. Many of his former students have made distinguished careers for themselves in orchestras and as performers around the world.

Lines to Fanny Brawne

for Soprano and Piano

Malcolm Forsyth (1991)
Poem: John Keats (1820)

Slow, desolate ♩ = 60

Soprano

Piano

mf

con. ped.

8^{va}

6

mp

This liv - ing hand now warm — and ca - pa - ble, of earn - est grasp - ing —

dim. mp

13

mf

17 *mf* *f*

Would _____ if it were

f *mf*

21 *mf* *p*

cold _____ And _____ in the ic - y si - lence _____ of the tomb _____

mp *p*

26 *mf* *f* *mf*

so haunt thy days _____ and chill thy dream - - - - ing nights _____

mf *f*

31

mp *mf*

36 *p*
 That thou _____ would'st wish _____ dry _____
p smorz.

41 _____ of blood so in my veins red
mf
pp *mp* *mf*
 8^{va} 8^{vb} Leo. 1

44 *f* life _____ might stream a - gain (n) *sost.*
f *f*
 8^{va} 8^{va}

49 _____ And _____ be con - science calm'd _____
mf *mp*