



Commissioned by The Australian Voices, 2020.

For SATB Choir

Meditations (On Being)

Melody Eötvös

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Programme Notes

This piece is inspired by the premise of Closeness and Distance. In order to capture this theme I turned to Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in which he examines, through a lens of doubt, the three faculties of reason in determining what actually exists. One of the main features of this text is that Descartes is doing all of this 'out of body' thinking and rebuilding of all of his beliefs from an armchair in his study. Descartes began this experiment with the belief that he didn't need any connection with the world and environment outside of his own mind in order to attain the truth about existence. To me this demonstrates a fascinating example of both closeness and distance – closeness to one's own mind and assurance in its ability to internally discover absolute truth; and distance for the measure you have to push your mental capacity to in order to strip away all of your own beliefs in order to rebuild them within a framework of that absolute truth. This second point, of course, also creates a distance between the meditator and the rest of the world.

- Melody Eötvös (2020)

Text (the text actually used is in italics/bold):

I shall now close my eyes, I shall stop my ears, I shall call away all my senses, I shall efface even from my thoughts *all the images of corporeal things*, or at least (for that is hardly possible) I *shall esteem them as vain and false*; and thus *holding converse* only *with myself* and considering my own nature, I shall try little by little to reach a better knowledge of and a more familiar acquaintanceship with myself.

I am a thing that thinks, that is to say, that doubts, affirms, denies, that knows a few things, that is ignorant of many [that loves, that hates], that wills, that desires, that also imagines and perceives; for as I remarked before, although the things which I perceive and imagine are perhaps nothing at all apart from me and in themselves, I am nevertheless assured that these modes of thought that I call perceptions and imaginations, in as much only as they are modes of thought, certainly reside [and are met with] in me.

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Meditations (on being)

♩ = 72

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Soprano

p *f* *pp* *ppp*

Now *slight glissandi up to the E* Now

Alto

p *f* *pp* *ppp*

Now *Overlap breathing where possible* [w] Now

Tenor

p *f* *pp* *ppp*

Now *Overlap breathing where possible* [w] *mf* Now [ow] [w]

Bass

p *f* *pp* *mp*

Now *Overlap breathing where possible* [w] Now

Score Details:

- Tempo: ♩ = 72
- Time Signature: 5/4 (initially), 6/4, 3/4, 4/4
- Key Signature: Two flats (B-flat and E-flat)
- Dynamic Markings: *p* (piano), *f* (forte), *pp* (pianissimo), *ppp* (pianississimo), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano)
- Performance Instructions: *slight glissandi up to the E*, *Overlap breathing where possible*
- Vocal Parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass
- Lyrics: "Now" (repeated in each part)
- Rehearsal Mark: A

20 **D**

S. *mf* I shall *mp* my sen -

A. *mp* Call a - - way *f* *mp* my sen -

p Call *mf* I *p* *mp* A - - way sense

T. *ppp*

B. *ppp*

The musical score is for a four-part vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The Soprano part begins with a melodic line in 2/4 time, followed by a rest in 3/4 time. The Alto part has a similar melodic line. The Tenor part has a lower melodic line. The Bass part has a lower melodic line. The lyrics are: 'I shall my sen -', 'Call a - - way my sen -', 'Call I A - - way sense', and 'ppp'. The dynamics are: *mf*, *mp*, *f*, *p*, and *ppp*. The time signatures are 2/4 and 3/4. A large 'Sample Only' watermark is visible across the page.

30

mp *mf* *f*

Cor - - - po - re - - - al

mp *mf* *f*

Of - Cor - - po - re - - - al

mp *mf* *f*

Of cor - - - po - re - - - al

mp *mf* *f*

Of cor - - - po - re - - - al

mp *mf* *f*

ges - ma - - - ges

mp *mf* *f*

I - - - ma - - - ges

mf *f*

mf *ppp*

7

all things All

Of po re al

Of cor po re al

ges ma ges

I ma ges

ges

F Più mosso

34

S.

A.

T.

B.

pp *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Now I Shall

pp *mf* *p* *mf*

Now I Shall

pp *mf* *p* *mf* *f*

Now I Shall

pp *mf* *p* *mf*

Now I Shall

pp *mf* *p* *mf*

Now I shall Now

f *mp* *f*

Shall Now [w] I

10 43 **G** **Meno mosso** poco accel.

S. *mp* *f* *mp* *mp*
And as False and as Ho - lding

mp *tr* *f* *mp*
As Vain and False Ho - lding

A. *mp* *f* *mp* *p* *mp*
Them as vain and false Ho - lding

mp *f* *mp* *f* *p*
them as vain and

T. *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *f*
steem them as vain Ho - lding

mp *f* *mp* *f* *f*
E steem them as Ho - lding

I shall as Ho - lding

mp *f* *mp* *f* *mp*
Shall E - - - lding

B. *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*
Shall steem Ho - lding