My Last Summer

the poem Canoe by Keith Douglas, 1920–1944

set for choir TBB

by

F L Dunkin Wedd

© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd

Canoe (1940)

Well, I am thinking this may be my last summer, but cannot lose even a part of pleasure in the old-fashioned art of idleness. I cannot stand aghast

at whatever doom hovers in the background: while grass and buildings and the somnolent river, who know they are allowed to last forever, exchange between them the whole subdued sound

of this hot time. What sudden fearful fate can deter my shade wandering next year from a return? Whistle and I will hear and come again another evening, when this boat

travels with you alone toward Iffley: as you lie looking up for thunder again, this cool touch does not betoken rain; it is my spirit that kisses your mouth lightly.

Keith Castellain Douglas born Tunbridge Wells 1920, died Normandy 9 June 1944

My Last Summer



Keith Douglas's poem 'Cano' is notable for its duality of mood. It contrasts the languorous progress of of Keith and Antoinette's canoe though Oxford, and the coming world war - in which Douglas was himself to die.

Reflecting this, my piece was conceived with two main motifs. The first is a folk tune, worthy of Vaughan Williams, composed not found: this stands for the Oxfordshire countryside, with its rich tradition of folk song and dance, a tune which opens with a rising fourth.

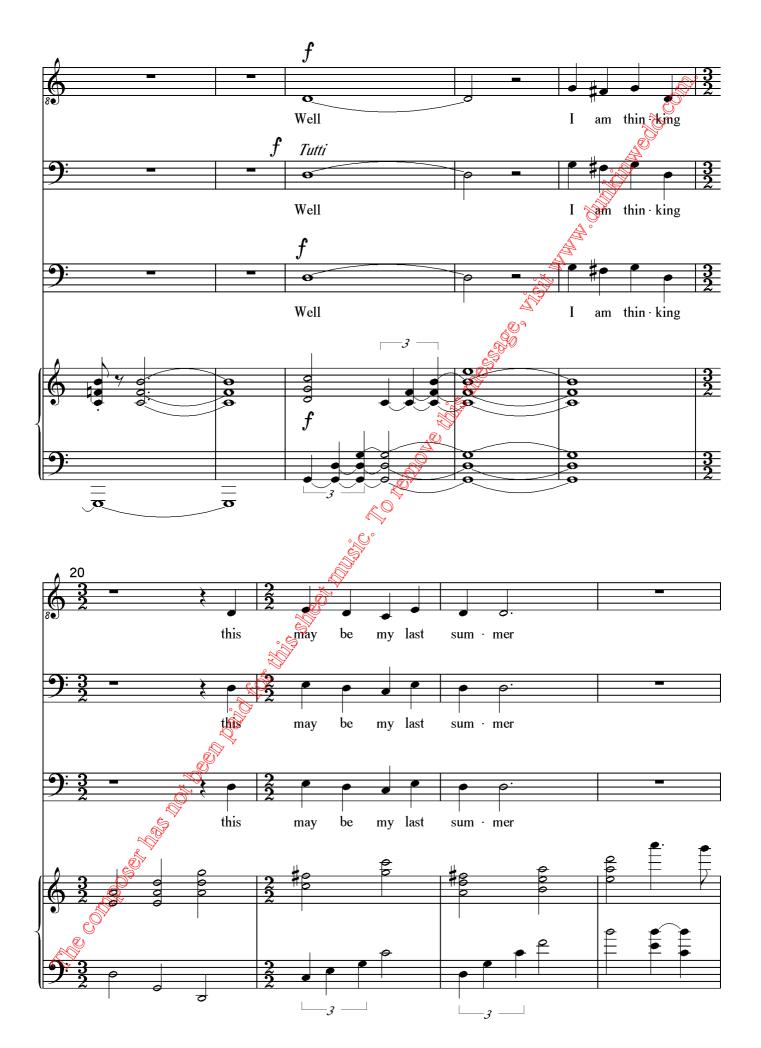
The second is series of stacked chords made of that same fourth interval, C to F, F to B, B to E, and so forth, an unstable harmony that reflects the stormclouds of war.

The restless switching between F natural and F sharp accentuates this instability. In the poem's carefree sections, as befits a folk tune, the music is chorale-like, only beginning to break up when war's horror is superposed.

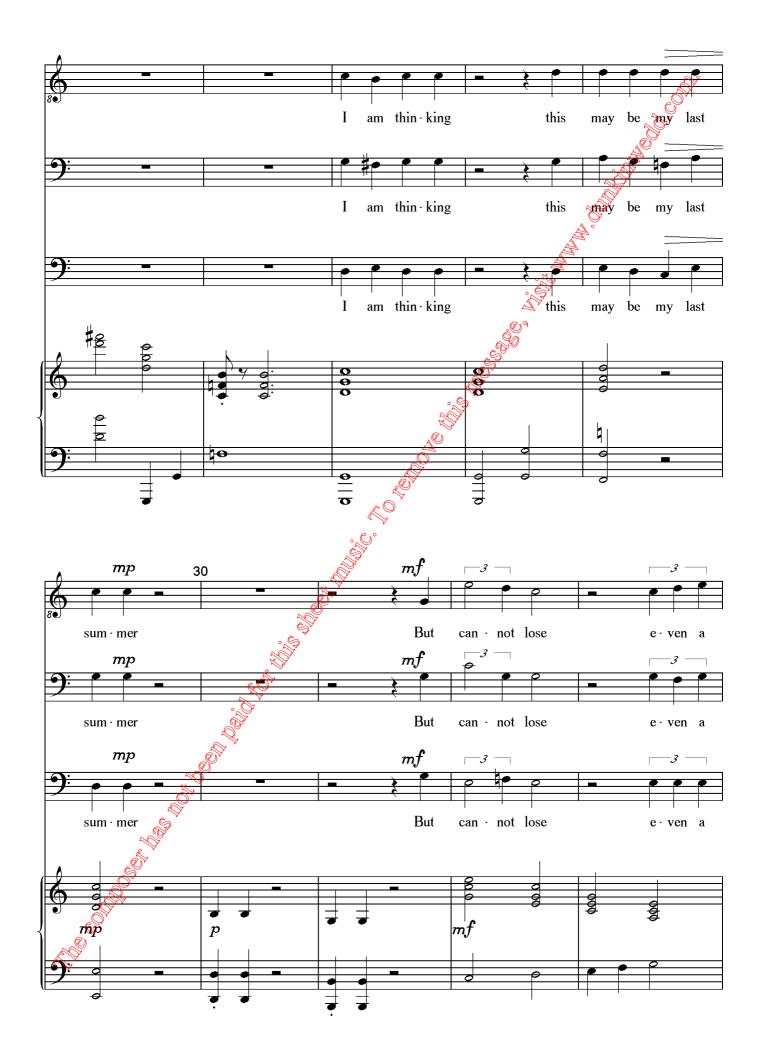
The piano provides a simple accompaniment, as well as filling in melody when the voices fall silent.



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



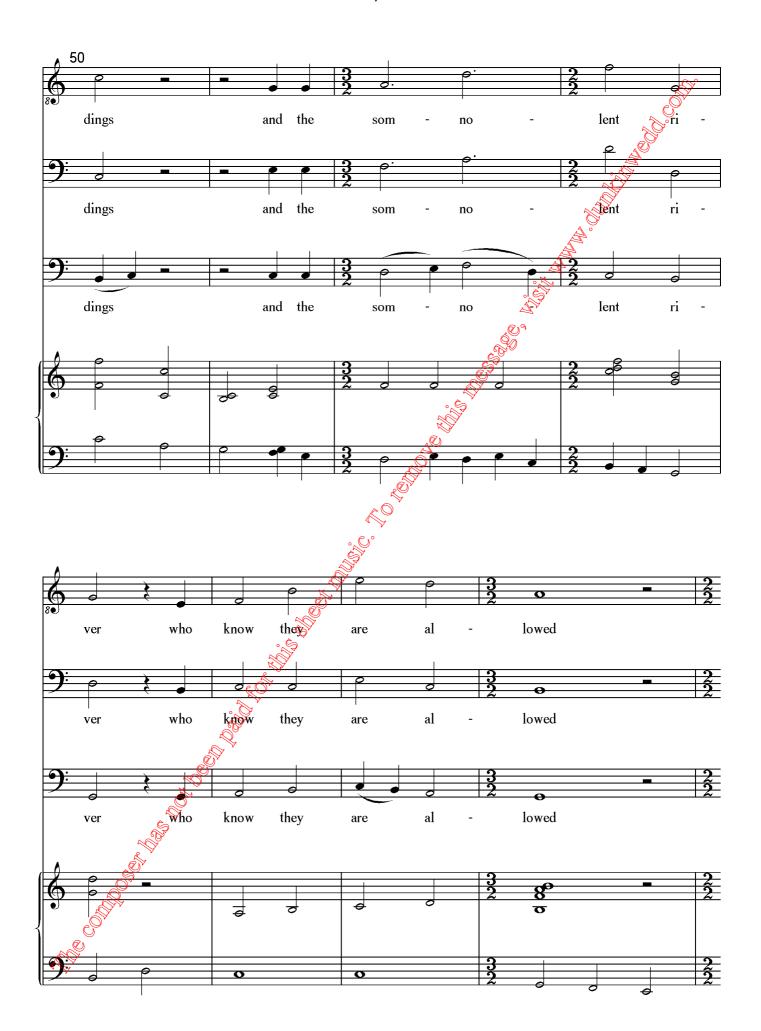
© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



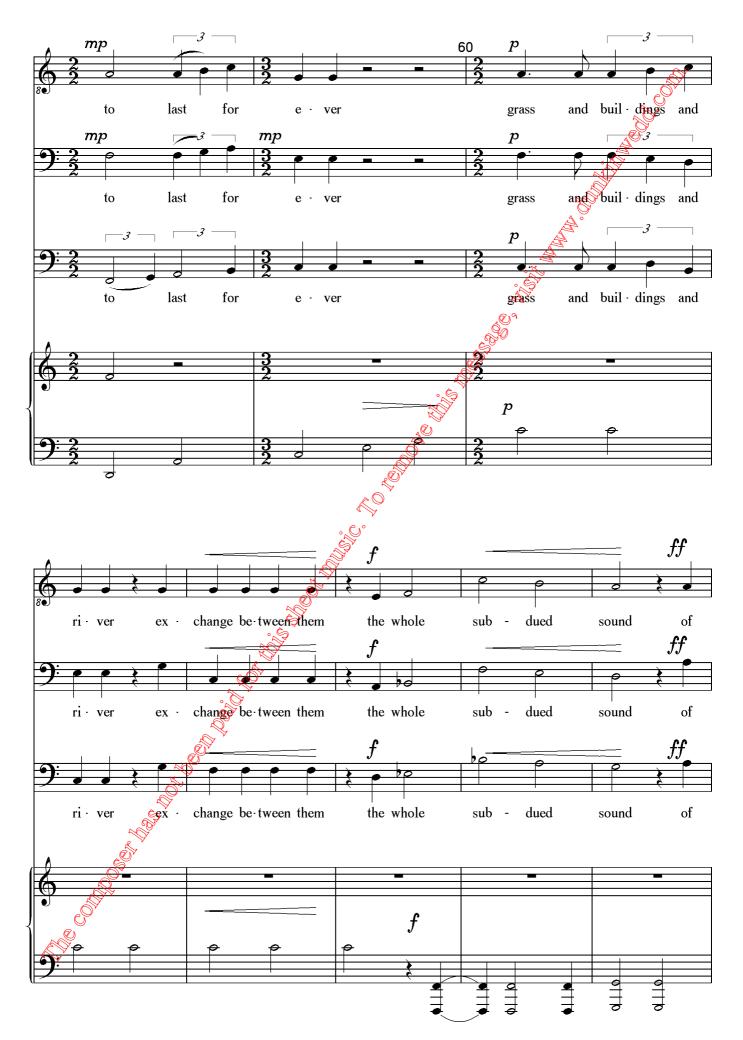
© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance



© 2017 F L Dunkin Wedd If this work is to be performed, please inform the composer in advance