

— **CHERRYBLOSSOM ELEGY** —

SATB divisi a cappella

Kenneth Tay (b. 1992)

TEXT

Petals drifting off into the starless night
I wonder where they are headed in their flight
One by one, and yet too many at once
Against the foggy glow of lamplight.

It is said beneath a cherry tree there lay
A sleeper who has departed from his days
Dreaming within the gnarling roots' dark embrace
Of the bole trees branching into blooms of pink.

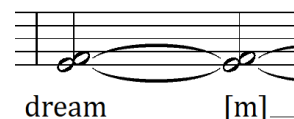
Driven free-falling through the wind in spring
Whilst the tree that blossomed stands as it has been
For what reason can there be to such haste
In their leaving before they have stayed?

How long to return to that hallowed embrace
Keeping safe from waking moments between icy rains
Lost not in night to the snowing flowers
Never stirring, bound to thy dreams.

Toh Hong Jin (b. 1998)

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Voiced consonants marked in square brackets, i.e. [m] should be sung on the ending syllable of the consonant – dreamm.



PROGRAMME NOTES

This composition is the second in my collaboration with Toh Hong Jin, where his reflections on the cherryblossom serve as a meditation on death and the uncertainty brought about by the unsettling line it draws separating the living from the departed. My interpretation of this solemnness is inflected by the use of the Kumoi Joshi scale, also referred to as the “Sakura scale”. The melody passes between voices, perhaps creating a “half-heard” effect as it moves between the tessitura of the choir. Lydian and contemporary chord clusters are also used in this setting. The piece is dedicated to friends who have experienced loss, and those who may, from time to time, stir in anxiety of it.

7 October 2022
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commissioned by EVOKX, directed by Terrence Toh

CHERRYBLOSSOM ELEGY

SATB div.

Toh Hong Jin (b. 1998)

Kenneth Tay (b. 1992)

Gently flowing (♩ = 66-72)

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-4. The score is for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano (rehearsal). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked "Gently flowing" with a quarter note equal to 66-72 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked *p* (piano). The lyrics are "Fall - ing" and "Oh". The Soprano part has a melodic line with a slur over the "Oh" syllable. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts have a simple harmonic accompaniment. The Piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Musical score for the second system, starting at measure 5. The score is for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Piano. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The dynamics are marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The lyrics are "Oo" and "Oh". The Soprano part has a melodic line with a slur over the "Oo" syllable. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts have a simple harmonic accompaniment. The Piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The word "perdendosi" is written above the Soprano part, indicating a gradual fading or softening of the sound.

9

S. *p*
Oh _____ Oh _____ I

A. *mp*
Pet - als drift - ing off _____ in - to the star - less night, _____ I

T. *p*
Pet - als drift - ing off _____ in - to the star - less night, _____ I

B. *p*
Pet - als drift - ing off _____ in - to the star - less night, _____ I

13

S. won - der where they are head-ed in their flight _____

A. won - der where _____ they are head-ed in their flight _____

T. won - der where _____ flight, _____ their flight _____

B. won - der where _____ flight, _____ their flight _____

18

mf

S. One by one, and yet too man-y at once A -

mf

A. One by one, and yet too man-y at once A -

mp

T. One by one, One by one, One by one, One by one, A -

mp

B. One by one, One by one, One by one, One by one, A -

22

p *mp*

S. gainst the fog - gy glow of lamp - light glow, Oh

p

A. gainst the fog - gy glow of lamp - light, glow,

p

T. gainst the fog - gy glow of lamp - light glow,

p

B. gainst the fog - gy glow of lamp - light glow,

27

S. glow, *mp* One by one, One by one,

A. glow, *mp* One by one, One by one,

T. glow,

B. glow, *mf* It is

mp

mf

31

S. One by one, One by one, cher-ry tree there lay

A. One by one, One by one, cher-ry tree there lay a

T. *mp* It is said cher - ry tree there lay a

B. said be - neath a cher - ry tree there lay a

mp

35

S. de - part - ed from his days,
A. sleep - er who has de - part - ed from his days,
T. sleep - er who de - part - ed from his days,
B. sleep - er who has de - part - ed from his days,

38

S. *mp* Dream-ing with - in the gnarl - ing roots' dark em - *mf*
A. *mp* Dream-ing with - in the gnarl - ing roots' dark em - *mf*
T. *mp* Dream [m] - ing em -
B. *mp* Dream [m] - ing em -

42

S. *f*
brace Of the trees branch-ing in - to blooms of pink Driv-en

A. *f*
brace Of the trees branch-ing in - to blooms of pink Dri-ven

T. *mf* *f*
brace Of the trees branch-ing in - to blooms of pink Dri-ven

B. *mf* *f*
brace Of the trees branch-ing in - to blooms of pink Dri-ven

47 **Moving forward**

S. free - fall-ing through the wind in spring Whilst the tree that blos-somed stands as

A. free - fall - ing wind tree that blos - -

T. free - fall - ing wind tree that blos - -

B. free - fall - ing wind tree that blos - -

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56 *mp* they have stayed? Oh Oh

S. they have stayed? Oh Oh

A. they have stayed? Oh Oh

T. they have stayed? Oh Oh

B. they have stayed? Oh Oh

60 **With pastoral calm** *p* Oh Oh Keep-ing

A. *mp* How I long to re - turn to that hal - lowed em - brace Keep-ing

T. *p* How I long to re - turn to that hal - lowed em - brace Keep-ing

B. *p* How I long to re - turn to that hal - lowed em - brace Keep-ing

64

S. safe from mo - ments be tween i - cy rains

A. safe from wak-ing mo-ments be tween i - cy rains

T. safe from mo - ments 'tween rains i - cy rains,

B. safe from mo - ments 'tween rains i - cy rains

69

S. *mp* One by one, One by one, One by one, One by one,

A. *mp* One by one, One by one, One by one, One by one,

T. *mp* not in night snow-ing

B. *mf* Lost not in night to the snow - ing

73 *mp*

S. snow-ing flowers bound, bound to thy dreams

A. snow-ing flowers bound, bound to thy dreams

T. flowers Ne - ver stir - ring, bound to thy dreams

B. flowers Ne - ver stir - ring, bound to thy dreams

77 **rit. al fine.**

S. dreams dreams dream [m]

A. dreams dreams dream [m]

T. dreams dreams dream [m]

B. dreams dreams dream [m]