



Janet Oates

2021

Humming Suite

Four short pieces for clavichord (with vocalising)

- 1: absent-mindedly
- 2: wondering
- 3: listening
- 4: self-soothing

Total duration c.4 minutes

Written for and premiered by Francis Knights in Cambridge 2021, this tiny suite explores the different functions of humming (a favourite activity of mine!). This relates to the intimacy of the clavichord – it's as if we're privy to a series of free-floating thoughts, and fleeting moods, expressed musically, rather than hearing an external and formal performance.

Humming suite 1: absent-mindedly

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♩ = max. 60 freely *mp*

Clavichord

p

5

hum

Cl.

knock on wood
(any part of instrument or stool; dynamic to match humming)

p

10

hum

Cl.

piu mosso; a tempo *f* *p* *f* *f*

p *p* *p*

14 *tempo primo, freely* ✓ rit.

hum

Cl.

(knock)

gliss. rit.

Humming suite 2: wondering

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♩ = c.60

hum

Clavichord

mp

6

hum

p

Cl.

p

11

hum

fast and freely: flourishes. Over-hold ad.lib.

Cl.

15

hum

Cl.

p

19

slower, contemplative

(+ 8va if available)

p

(leave the A hanging)

Cl.

Humming suite

3: listening

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$\text{♩} = 100$ (any comfortable pitch-range)

hum

$\text{♩} = 100$ *mf*

Cl.

mp *p* *mf*

4

hum

mp *mf*

7

hum

mf

Cl.

3

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Humming suite 4: self-soothing

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♩. = c.60 *quite freely*

hum *unvoiced*

sssss— ch t t ss - t sshh.....

♩. = c.60

lyrically

Clavichord

(distribution between hands ad lib. throughout)

mf

Detailed description: This system contains the first three measures of the piece. The humming line is in 12/8 time, marked 'unvoiced', with lyrics 'sssss— ch t t ss - t sshh.....'. The clavichord accompaniment is also in 12/8 time, with a tempo of '♩. = c.60'. The first two measures are mostly rests for the clavichord, with the instruction '(distribution between hands ad lib. throughout)'. The third measure features a melodic line in the right hand, marked 'lyrically' and 'mf'.

4

hum

mm d sss— t

Cl.

mf

p

mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 4 through 6. The humming line has lyrics 'mm d sss— t'. The clavichord accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand, marked 'mf' and 'p', and a more active line in the left hand, marked 'mf'. Measure 6 ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

7

hum

t t t mm

Cl.

mp

(take time with grace notes)

mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 7 through 9. The humming line has lyrics 't t t mm'. The clavichord accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand, marked 'mp', and a more active line in the left hand, marked 'mp'. Measure 9 ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

10

hum

Cl.

p

mf

mm

12

hum

Cl.

p

f

ssh...

14

hum

Cl.

mp

rit.

mm

rit.

t t t t