

BRIDAL SONG

Seán Doherty

2016

Alto and Piano

SDM402

TEXT

Bridal Song

O come, soft rest of cares! come, Night!
Come, naked Virtue's only tire,
The reaped harvest of the light
Bound up in sheaves of sacred fire.
Love calls to war:
Sighs his alarms,
Lips his swords are,
The field his arms.

Come, Night, and lay thy velvet hand
On glorious Day's out-facing face;
And all thy crownèd flames command
For torches to our nuptial grace.
Love calls to war:
Sighs his alarms,
Lips his swords are,
The field his arms.

George Chapman (1560–1634)

PROGRAMME NOTE

From a twenty-first century perspective, the use of a war as a metaphor for the tender embrace of the wedding night is perplexing, if not shocking. Not so in Tudor times, when war was seen as a glorious act, and romantic love often compared, favourably, to conquest and colonization—pursuits that defined the age. The martial metaphor was a common trope in the work of the metaphysical poets, as seen in John Donne's *To His Mistress Going to Bed*:

O my America! my new-found-land,
My kingdom, safeliest when with one man mann'd,
My Mine of precious stones, My Empirie,
How blest am I in this discovering thee!

Anachronistic hand-wringing it may be, from our vantage point after centuries of the civilising process, but I cannot celebrate the idea of romantic love as domination, or of war as an uniquely honourable endeavour. Hence the song's sinister tone. The accompaniment contains figurations inspired by the keyboard piece 'The Battell' from *My Ladye Nevells Booke* by the Tudor composer William Byrd.

Performance Time: c. 3 mins

Seán Doherty Music

seandohertymusic.com

for Eoin Conway
Bridal Song

George Chapman (c.1559–1634)

Seán Doherty

Adagio ♩ = 74 → trem.

Piano *p* *ff*
pedale *ad lib.*

5 come sopra
Pno. *mp* *ff*

8
Pno. *mp*

11 *espress.*
A. *mp* 3

Pno. *ff* *p* *mf*

16 *p* 3 *f*
A. *p* *f*
Pno. *p* *f*
come!

21 *mp* *f* *mp*

A. *O* *Come* *Night!*

Pno. *mp* *ff* *trem.* *non trem.* *p*

Meno mosso
mp rubato *mf*

25 *O* *come, soft rest of cares!* *Come* *Night!* *Come, na-ked vir-tues on - ly*

Pno. *Meno mosso* *loco*

31 **A tempo**

A. *tire.* *The reap-èd har-vest* *of* *the* *light* *Bound up in*

Pno.

36 *f* *mp*

A. *sheaves of sa - cred* *fire.*

Pno. *mf*

40 *p* *f* *mp*

A. Love calls to war, Sighs

Pno. *mp* *f* *mp*

45 *ff* *mf* *mp*

A. his a - larms, Lips his swords are the

Pno. *ff* *mp* *loco*

50 *p* *mf* *Con moto* ♩ = 88

A. field his arms. Come, Night, and lay thy vel - vet hand

Pno. *p* *trem. (arpeggiate ad lib.)* *mp*

56

A. On glor'ous Day's out-fac - ing face, And all the crown-ed flames com-mand

Pno. *trem. (come sopra)* *mf* *trem.*

62 *f*

A. For tor-ches to our nup - tial grace.

Pno. *p* *f* *pedale ad lib.*

Più mosso *mf* *f*

66 Love calls to war,

Pno. *ff*

71 *f* *ff*

A. Sighs his a - larms,

Pno. *f* *ff*

Tempo primo *mp dolce* *rit.* *p*

75 Lips his swords are the field his arms.

Pno. *p* *rit.* *pp* *loco*