

Three Shakespeare Sonnets

for chamber choir and ensemble, opus 62

1. Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck
2. Music to hear
3. Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

commissioned

by the Dutch Performing Arts Fund

composed

between 31st May and 10th August 2010

duration

ca. 15 min.

première

on 30th June 2012 at the Parkstad Limburg Theater in Heerlen (The Netherlands) by Studium Chorale, Ensemble 88 & Hans Leenders (conductor)

published

by Donemus

scoring

Mixed Choir (SATB, at least 4 of each)

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Percussion (1 player): Tam-tam, Suspended Cymbal, Vibraphone

Violin

Violoncello

Three Shakespeare Sonnets

*1. Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck**

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck
And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality,
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well,
By oft predict that I in heaven find.
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert:
 Or else of thee this I prognosticate,
 Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

2. Music to hear

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy,
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing,
 Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
 Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

3. Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

*Titles by the composer.