

Barron, Richard (2021) From text to music: a Scots portfolio. PhD thesis.

(2. (b) In to thir dirk and drublie dayis)

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In to thir dirk and drublie dayis

A setting of William Dunbar's poem

for

Soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto and cello

Richard Barron

April 2021

In to thir dirk and drublie dayis is a setting, for soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto and cello, of part of the poem of the same name by the Scots makar William Dunbar (c.1460 – c.1520). The text used is shown on the following page.

The poet is here represented by the mezzo-soprano part (though it could be taken, an octave lower, by a baritone), while the other voices represent the personifications that beset him. The soprano part represents Despair and then Age, the contralto represents Patience and Deid (Death).

The sections marked Sprechgesang should be closer to singing than speaking, and those marked Sprechstimme should be closer to speaking than singing. It is intended throughout that diction should be very clear and emphatic, and that performance should be highly expressive, even melodramatic.

Performance time is about eight minutes.

The text of the poem (text not used in the piece is shown in italics):

In to thir dirk and drublie dayis, Quhone sabill all the hevin arrayis With mystie vapouris, cluddis and skyis, Nature all curage me denyis Of sangs, ballattis and of playis.

Quhone that the nycht dois lenth in houris, With wind, with haill and havy schouris, My dule spreit dois lurk for schoir; My hairt for langour dois forloir, For laik of symmer with his flouris.

I walk, I turne, sleip may I nocht; I vexit am with havie thocht; This warld all ovir I cast about, And ay the mair I am in dout, The mair that I remeid have socht.

I am assayit on everie syde. Despair sayis ay, 'In tyme provyde, And get sum thing quhairon to leif, Or with grit trouble and mischeif Thow sall in to this court abyd.'

Than Patience sayis, 'Be not agast, Hald hoip and treuthe within the fast, And lat Fortoun wirk furthe hir rage, *Quhone that no rasoun may assuage, Quhill that hir glas be run and past.*' And Prudence in my eir sayis ay, 'Quhy wald thow hald that will away, Or craif that thow may have no space, Thow tending to ane uther place, A journay going everie day?'

And than sayis Age, 'My friend, cum neir, And be not strange, I the requeir. Cum, brodir, by the hand me tak. Remember thow hes compt to mak Of all thi tyme thow spendit heir.'

Syne deid castis upe his yettis wyd, Saying, 'Thir oppin sall the abyd; Albeid that thow wer never sa stout, Undir this lyntall sall thow lowt. Thair is nane uther way besyde.

For feir of this all day I drowp: No gold in kist nor wyne in cowp, No ladies bewtie nor luiffis blys May lat me to remember this, How glaid that ever I dyne or sowp.

Yit quhone the nycht begynnis to schort It dois my spreit sum pairt confort, Of thocht oppressit with the schowris. Cum, lustie symmer, with thi flowris, That I may leif in sum disport.

Into thir dirk and drublie dayis

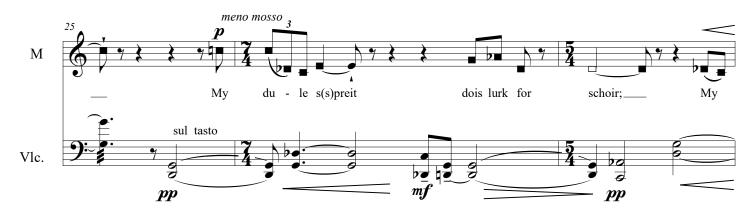


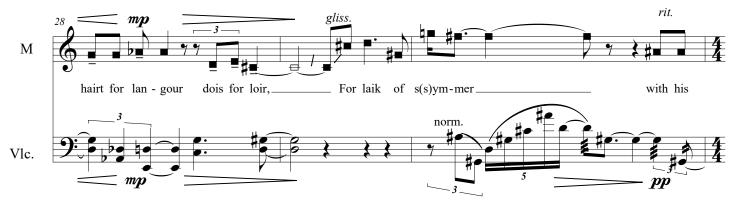
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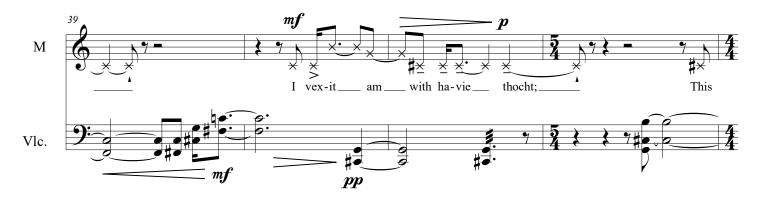
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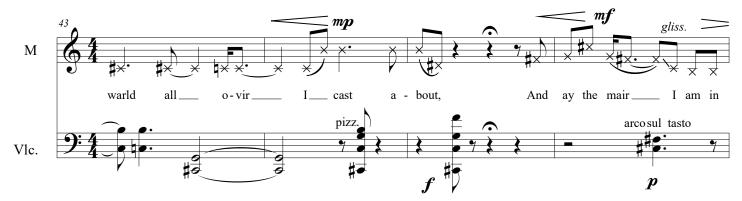


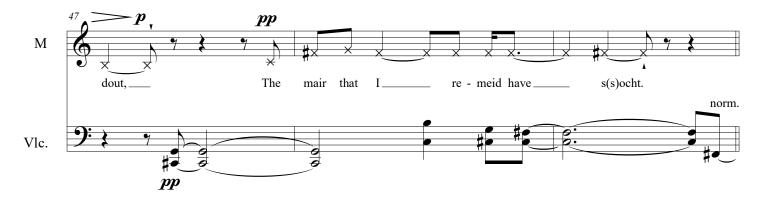


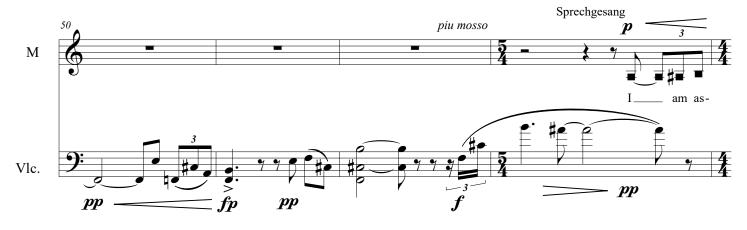




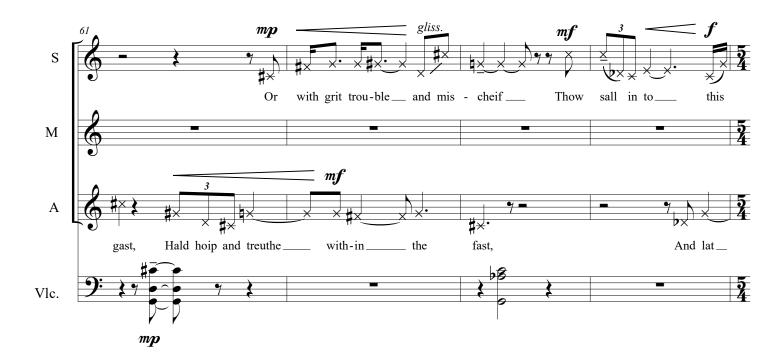


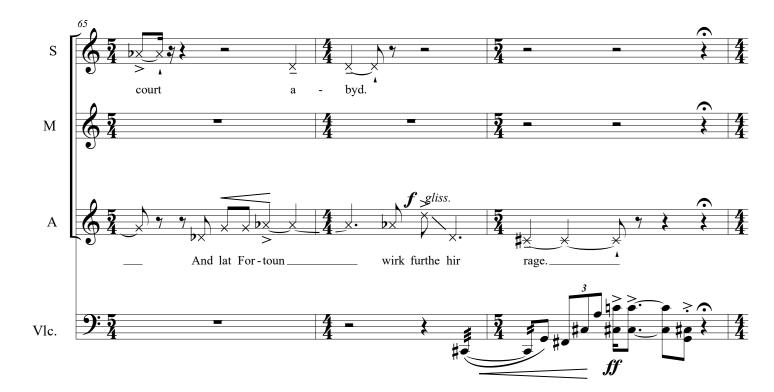


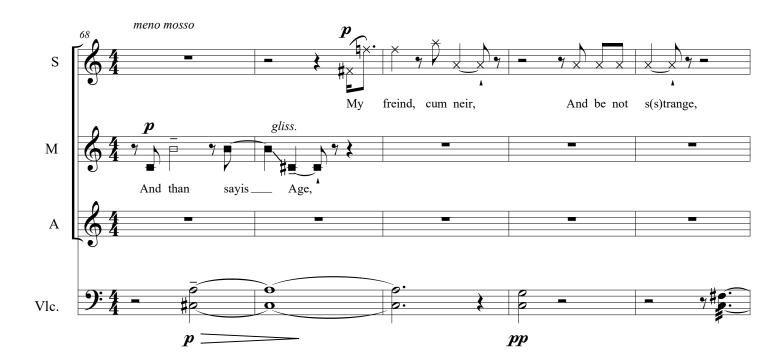


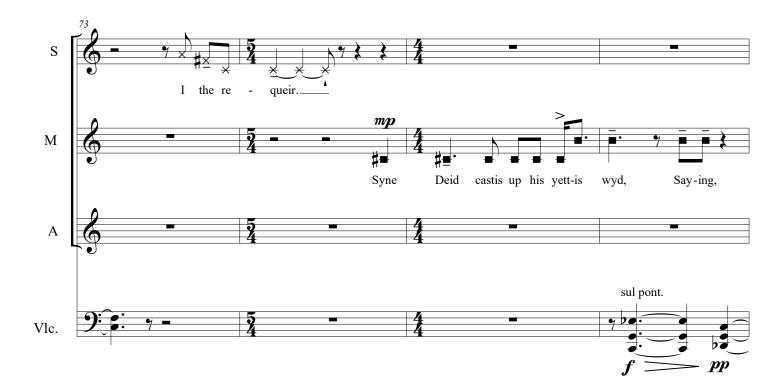


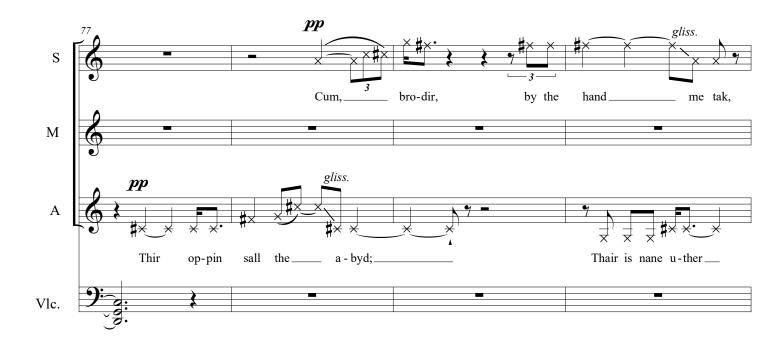


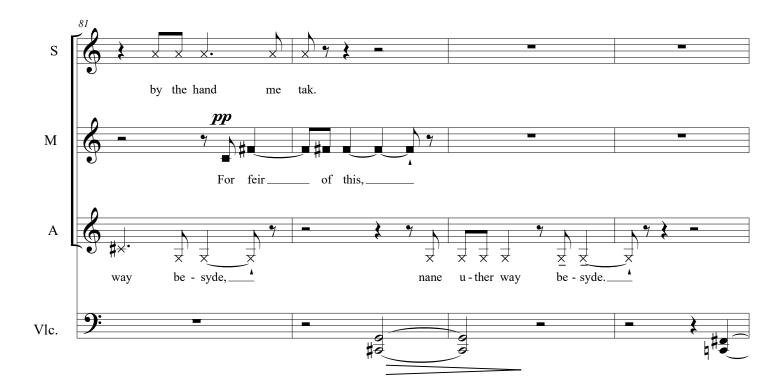


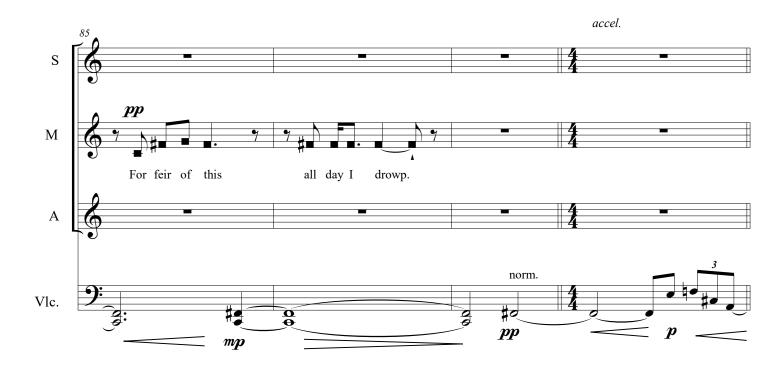












Andante, poco calmato

