

Compline

for solo mezzo-soprano voice

Thomas J. Dempster (BMI)

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Visit the composer's website at www.thomasdempster.com

Compline

for solo mezzo-soprano voice

Thomas J. Dempster

West Columbia, SC

May 2017

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Compline (2017) – duration: ca. 3:00

Program Notes

Composed as part of a consortium commission for Megan Ihnen, *Compline* is a brief, wordless lullaby that, I hope, captures some of what I call the “anxious-calm” of nightfall. This moment, between twilight and deep midnight, has always brought me odd sensations, and as an insomniac through most of my 20s, I would often try to sing myself to sleep. This “anxious-calm” always seemed to be the twilight chill that unfurled off the heat of the day and coiled up around my ankles; the suede midnight that embraces you, cool at first but immediately known; the weightlessness of the yearning for being sleep-drunk: the muted mumbles of speech, remembering only the shapes of words and sounds – as we remember the vaguest happenings at the end of a long, difficult day – arise as the vowels produced by the singer. In the middle of the piece, a naïve, folk-like melody appears, a small piece of coherence, perhaps a return to something simple.

-- May 2017, West Columbia, SC

Performance questions? Please contact me at tom@thomasdempster.com

Compline

a wordless lullaby for Megan Ihnen

Thomas J. Dempster

Far away $\text{♩} = c. 63$

The musical score for 'Compline' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with the tempo marking 'Far away' and a quarter note equal to approximately 63 beats per minute. The dynamics range from mezzo-piano (mp) to piano (p) and mezzo-forte (mf). Performance instructions include 'molto legato', 'pochiss.' (poco), and 'brief; extemporaneous; pausing to wonder'. The second staff includes the instruction 'as before'. The third staff features a piano (pp) section. The fourth staff includes 'portamento' and 'mf'. The fifth staff is marked 'Folklike; simple' with a tempo of approximately 72 beats per minute and a 'p dolce' dynamic. The sixth staff includes 'poco espress.' and 'mf'. The score uses various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic hairpins to guide the performer.

Returning... $\text{♩} = c. 63$

p

9 in time 9

mp *p*

3 3 9 3

mp *p* *mp*

9 9 3 3 3 Λ Λ γ γ 9 9 γ γ u

p gently; touchless *mp*

u m

Repeat ad lib. Eventually move through *ppp* dynamic, then to nothing.

brief; a lift;
a sigh

→ *) Arrow indicates a shift between vowels during a phrase.