

Creatures in Place

for

Soprano & Piano

John Newell

ABIERTO MUSIC

Boulder

Sidney Wade

John Newell

$\text{♩} = 76$ *p*

this world is full of beau-ti-ful sur-

3 *mp*

pris - - - es. here's one: one bright blue

5

noon on Loon Lake I sat on the porch eat-ing

With pedal

7 $\text{♩} = 84$

lunch and watched a chip - munk on the

9 *poco ritard.*

com - post pile nib - ble a strand of spa - ghet - ti un - til he'd con -

12 $\text{♩} = 84$ *f*

sumed it all and then I heard a tre - men - dous flus - ter on the

15 *mp* $\text{♩} = 69$ *ff* *p*

lake a moose had qui - et - ly been

17

munch - ing on un - der - wat - er plants fine de - li - ca - cies _____ to

19

ritard. $\text{♩} = 66$

north - ern ru - mi - nate types and what I had tak - en to be a

22

f

boul - der turned out to have been a shoul - der _____ as her sub - merged mouth hoo - vered up

25

$\text{♩} = 78 - 80$

all the jui - cy stems of my wa - ter li - lies un - til her

27

hun - gry lungs ached for air and she reared her head in a great

29

splen - dor of bright wa - ter a slash - ing slurp - ing slur - ry of

32

mud and stems pro - fuse and drip - ping from her stream - ing

34 *ritard.* $\text{♩} = 63$ *mp* *poco ritard.*

maw _____ as she ob - served me cool - ly be -

37 ♩ = 56

fore head - ing down for more

Leg.

*

12-1-22

Gulls In the Wind

Betsy Sholl

John Newell

$\text{♩} = 72$ in a somewhat refined rap style

mf

Gulls In the Wind

3

Gulls In the Wind

5

Be-drag-gled fea - thers like bon-nets that would fly off if they weren't strapped,

7

ka - zoo voiced, a cho - rus of cry - ing dol - phins or rus - ty si -

9

rens a speck of dust could set off these rau - cous glean - ers mill - ing a - round,

11

mill - ing a - round pick up and dis - card, now — a Q - tip, now

13

— a shred of let - tuce or cel - lo - phane, a ci - ga - rette butt one

15

holds a se-cond as if he real-ly might smoke. One drags an

17

old con-dom, one spots a good crumb and walk-runs, squawks

19

ev-ry-one else a-way. But it's just a dried scrap of weed he'll toss

21

back, grist for the next fool's ex-pect-ta-tion.

23

Still, a loud al - pha _____ catch-es wind, scoots o - ver _____

25

to check it out. Shove _____ off, he screech - es,

27

this is my _____ no good, bar - ren, mo-tel - in - fes - ted spit of sand

29

on which he nei-ther toils _____ or spins but

31

grubs all day on webbed feet and cle-ver back - hinged knees,

33

now skit-tish-ly side-step-ping a gust-y piece of plas-tic blown a-gainst his legs,

35

hop-ping to get it off, now shak-ing it once or twice to make sure it's

37

worth-less be-fore he turns his face to the wind, let-ting it smooth

39

those fine fractious feathers.

41 *poco ritard.*

poco ritard.

Some Clear Night

Gary Lawless

John Newell

$\text{♩} = 60$ *p*

Some clear night like this, — when the

p simile

stars are all out and shin - ing, our old dogs will come back to us, —

5 3

8

out of the woods, and lead us a - long the stone wall to the

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10

cove. _____ There will be fox-es, and loons, and a

13

house - boat float-ing on the lake. The trees will lean in, a

16

lan - tern swing-ing ov-er the wa-ter _____ the creak - ing of oars.

19

ritard. *a tempo*

ff Now we will learn the true names of the

21

stars. Now we will know what the trees are say-ing.

24

simile

27

There is wood in the stove. We left the front door

30

o-pen. Does the farm - house know that

33

we are ne - ver com - ing back? _____

ritard.

Why Do You Ask?

Kate Barnes

John Newell

$\text{♩} = 69$

f *with frustration*

I can't make a-ny sto-ry a-bout my life _ to-night.

3

The house _____ is like an o - ver-turned

5

waste-bas-ket; the ra - di-o _____ is pre-dict-ing more

p

8

rain. I ask my dog to tell me a

8va

p

9

3

Leg.

10

sto-ry, and she ne-ver he-si-tates —

poco ritard. ♩ = 63

legato sempre

p sempre

with Ped.

13

"Once up - on a time," she says, "a wo - man lived with a

p

15

sim - ply won-der-ful dog..." and she stops talk - ing.

p

3

3

Ped. off

17

Musical score for measures 17-18. The vocal line starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. Measure 17 contains a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note (C5), and another quarter rest. Measure 18 starts with a 4/4 time signature, containing a quarter note (C5), a quarter rest, a quarter note (B4), and a quarter rest. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with whole rests in both measures. The lyrics are: "Is that all?" I ask her. "Yes," she says.

19

$\text{♩} = 60$

ritard.

Musical score for measure 19. The vocal line starts with a treble clef and a 6/4 time signature. It features a long melisma over the phrase "Is - n't that e - nough?". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs). The bass line is highly active, playing a continuous eighth-note pattern. The lyrics are: "Why do you ask? Is - n't that e - nough?"

with Ped.

In the Pasture

Kate Barnes

John Newell

At ease throughout ♩ = 63

It would be im - pos - si - ble — to

draw these three work-hor-ses — with-out a pen-cil of light — as they stand broad-side to the af-ter-noon

sun out-lined with nar-row lines of fire a - round their vast chest-nut forms, al-most

*Spoken, approximating the indicated rhythm

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7

black a-gainst the daz-zle. The young mare swings her long

9

tail from hip to hip, and her Ti-tian-blond mane hangs o-ver her

11

shoul-der like the ring-let-ted che-ve-lure of a Vic-to-ri-an belle,

13

in-no-cent and al-lur-ing. Be-yond her the two big gel-dings,

15

bro-thers and team mates, scratch each o-ther's wide red backs with care-ful in -

17

molto ritard.

ci - sors. _____

19

a tempo

a little faster ♩ = 69

Swal-lows fly _____ o - ver the

21

grass, cloud sha - dows cross the lake and

23

dar - ken the blue of the hills on the op - po - site shore

25

but in the pas - ture the sun is

27

shin - ing, the af - ter-noon wind has dri - ven off the

29

flies, and the three big hor - ses are all at their

39

ritard.

diminuendo

Everything Has a Heart

Deborah Cummins

John Newell

$\text{♩} = 80 - 84$ *sempre espressivo* *p*

This bulb's hid - den

p *simile* *ped.*

4

tu - lip with its sin - gle throb of co - lor. Wild

ped. *ped.* *simile*

7

plum spill - ing a wind - fall of crim - son fruit. A

ped.

10

crow, odd - ly qui - et, ruff - ling its i - ri -

13

des-cence from a branch of the oak. The oak it-self, its

16

gash where a wood - y knot boils out.

19

In my gar - den, lean - ing in - to my

22

sho - vel, trust - ing in rain, roots and time, I re -

25

mind my-self ev' - ry-thing has a heart, e - ven

28

crescendo *f*

God, I'm told, who holds the match to a new sea-son's light,

31

rat - chets up the wind as though it car - ries un - fi-nished

34

dreams, un - told sto - ries, and

37

who, I'm to be - lieve, is di - rect - ing the wild

40 *crescendo*

geese in their fa - mi - liar ruc - kus as they write a - cross the

43

sky in a bro - ken line, turn - ing south, east,

46

south a - gain, _____ their on - ly in -

49 *crescendo*

ten - tion to catch a good ther - mal, to

52 *f*

sing hard, high a - bove the

54

earth. _____ *p* l.h.

57 *relax the tempo*

Ped.

60 *poco ritard.*

diminuendo

*

Creatures in Place

In 2022 soprano Sarah Tuttle asked me to compose a set of songs for her project, *Songs From Here*. This is an initiative to cultivate and celebrate works written by Maine-based poets and composers. It was fun to collaborate with her on the extensive task of choosing texts. While the poems that we finally chose are quite different in tone and mood, each includes at least one non-human character; the sub-title of the set could be well be “critters of Maine.” The wonderful poems that I was privileged to use are:

Boulder by Sidney Wade

Gulls In the Wind by Betsy Sholl

Some Clear Night by Gary Lawless

Why Do You Ask? and *In the Pasture* by Kate Barnes

Everything Has a Heart by Deborah Cummins

I am very pleased to dedicate this work to Sarah Tuttle and Bridget Convey, the pianist with whom she collaborates in the *Songs From Here* project. The first performances took place in the autumn of 2023 at several venues in Maine.

– John Newell

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, John Newell graduated from Duke University, having pursued studies in composition, piano and conducting. He earned his M.F.A from California Institute of the Arts, where his primary teacher was Mel Powell. John completed his formal training at SUNY Buffalo, working with Morton Feldman as recipient of the first Edgard Varèse Fellowship. Since earning his Ph.D. in 1979 he has pursued an independent creative path.

John’s objective is to create works that reflect his personal sensibility, that are rewarding for performers and listeners alike. He is equally at home composing for orchestra, solo instruments, vocal ensembles and chamber groups.

John's works are self-published through Abierto Music and he is a member of Broadcast Music Inc. More information about his music is available at: www.johnnewellmusic.com.

An accomplished pianist, conductor and teacher, John teaches on the faculty of *SummerKeys* adult music program and was founding director of the choral ensemble *Quoddy Voices*. He and his wife Linda now make their home in Bozeman, Montana.

John Newell

Selected Vocal & Choral Works

- Night Songs** Mezzo-soprano, 'cello, piano. Advanced
Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace Soprano, piano. Intermediate
The Signature of All Things Baritone, oboe, piano. Advanced
Seven Antiphons for Advent Unison, optional chordal accompaniment. Easy
O Lord, You Have Searched Me Voice, organ. Intermediate/advanced
The Passionate Shepherd To His Love Tenor or soprano, piano. Intermediate
Four Sacred Songs Soprano or tenor, piano. Advanced
- The Lake Isle of Innisfree** SSATBB, a cappella. Advanced
In the Flowing Light of the Godhead SSAA, a cappella. Intermediate/advanced
Nada Te Turbe SSAA, a cappella. Intermediate
Lux Aeterna SSATB, *a cappella*. Easy/intermediate
Come Closer SSAA, *a cappella*. Intermediate/advanced
Ktaadn SATB div., piano. Intermediate
O Gladsome Light SATB div., *a cappella*. Intermediate
A Timbered Choir SATB div., piano. Eight movements. Intermediate/advanced
Children of the Light SATB, sop. & bar. solos, piano (4 hands). Intermediate
Deep River SATB, *a cappella*; arrangement. Easy/intermediate
Wexford Carol SATB, soprano solo, piano; arrangement. Easy/intermediate
Pleasure It Is SAB, *a cappella*. Easy/intermediate
God is Love SATB (some sop. div.), *a cappella*. Easy
Veni Creator Spiritus SATB div., *a cappella*. Advanced
Suite of English Lyrics SSATB *a cappella*, baritone solo. Advanced
Kyrie Eleison SATB div., *a cappella*. Advanced
Wake Up, Children! SATB *a cappella*, soprano solo. Intermediate
O Sabbath Rest of Galilee SATB *a cappella*, soprano solo. Intermediate
Noel SSATB, *a cappella*. Intermediate
Our Father, Who Art in Heaven SSATB *a cappella*. Easy