

Simon Beattie

The Angel and the Unicorn

anthem for unaccompanied mixed voices

This work was first performed by the Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge,
conducted by Sarah MacDonald, on Advent Sunday 2020.

The Annunciation

It was not the entrance of an angel, mark you,
that startled her. Any more than others start
when sun's rays or moon by night
intrude into a room,
she maintained to be affronted by
the form angels take;
she hardly guessed how onerous
that sojourn is. (O, if we knew
how pure she was. Had not a resting hind
once glimpsed her in the woods,
and lost itself in her such that,
unmated, it begat a unicorn,
the beast of purity and light?)
It was not the angel's entrance, but the closeness
of the youngling's face
as he bowed: her upward gaze and his
fused together as if outside
all at once was void
and what millions had seen and done and borne
compressed in her: just her and him;
beholder and beheld, eye and eye's delight
no otherwhere but here. Look:
it is startling. And it startled them both.

Then the angel sang his song.

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926),
translated by Simon Beattie (b. 1975)

The Angel and the Unicorn

Words: Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926),
translated by Simon Beattie

Music: Simon Beattie (b. 1975)

Moderato *mp*

SOPRANO
It was not the en - trance

ALTO

TENOR *p*
nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

BASS *p*
nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

for rehearsal only **Moderato** *p* *mp*

5

— of an an - - gel that start-led her. —

mp 2 *p*
mark you, that start-led her. —

nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

p

9 *mp* *cresc.*

A - ny more_ than oth - ers start when sun's rays _____ 2 in -

mp *cresc.*

start when sun's rays or moon by night in -

nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

mp *cresc.* *sempre p*

13 *mf* *mp*

- trude in - to a room, she main-

mf *mp*

- trude in - to a room, she main-tained to be af -

nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

mf *mp*

17 *mf*

- tained to be af - front - ed by the form an²gels take;

mf

- front - ed, be af - front - ed by the form an - gels take;

mf

mf

mf

mf

22 *mp* **Lento**

she hard - ly guessed how_ o - ner - ous_ that so - journ is.

mp

guessed how_ o - ner - ous_ that so - journ is.

Lento

mp

27

a tempo ♩. = ♩

mp warmly
O, if we knew how pure she was. Had not a rest - ing hind once

mp warmly
O, if we knew how pure she was. Had not a rest - ing hind once

a tempo ♩. = ♩
mp

31

f mp
glimpsed her in the woods, and lost it - self in her such that, un-

f mp
glimpsed her in the woods, and lost it - self in her such that, un-

f mp