

May Rain

for mezzo-soprano and ten instruments

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb
Bassoon
Horn

Mezzo-soprano solo

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

The string parts may be played by a larger group of strings, if desired.

Duration: 5'30"

Score notated in C

Programme note:

May Rain was commissioned by the conductor Cayenna Ponchione for her project "Water-Culture: Women's Works". My song, for mezzo-soprano and chamber ensemble, lasts about five minutes.

Rather than dwelling on the extremes of drought and flood that humans are exacerbating, I chose to celebrate the sweet rain of spring. The poet, Kerry Hardie, is rejoicing in the showers that bring her Irish garden to life. When we share her delight, we are reminded of all that is precious about water.

The text by Kerry Hardie is used by kind permission of the author and of Bloodaxe Books

NL 2017

May Rain

It is May, and the rain is falling.
It's warm. Everything's swelling and drinking,
the birds have gone in, they cheep deep
in the walls of the white-thorn
that make of the garden a kingdom.

The whitethorn is flowering, it holds out its arms
to the rain. When the rain stops the perfume will rise,
a silence inside the green wall
that is splashed and dripping with blossom.
When the rain stops the birds will burst out,
will shout like the newly-arisen, up into the sky,
and the snails will go carrying their whorled shells about,
they'll vanish the shoots,
they'll pattern the new leaves with cut-work.

Me, too. I will come from the darkness
inside the green door, will walk the lost garden,
sniffing and touching,
sleeves wet, and the cuffs of my trousers,
hair wet from the pour of round drops
from the brushed-against leaves,
life wet from the green soak
of birdsong and roundness and rain.