

Two Auden Songs for high voice and piano (2007)

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2007, being WH Auden's centenary, saw plenty of Auden celebrations and projects. The soprano Eleanor Meynell led one such successful project, commissioning a number of composers; for Eleanor, I set Auden's perennial love poem, *Lullaby*.

Another fruitful collaboration for me that year was working with James Gilchrist on the premiere of my scena '*Alkman the Choirmaster*', to words by the poet John Fuller (who is also, a leading authority on Auden).

It followed naturally to make a companion setting for *Lullaby* and dedicate it to James. I chose Auden's sonnet honouring Edward Lear; it's a remarkable poem, capturing many of the elements of Lear's life. Loneliness, travels, painting and the surreal fantasy of Lear's poetic imagination are all there.