

Narrator

The Nightingale

Words by Kenneth Hodgkinson
after Hans Christian Andersen

Music composed by
David Sumbler

The Nightingale

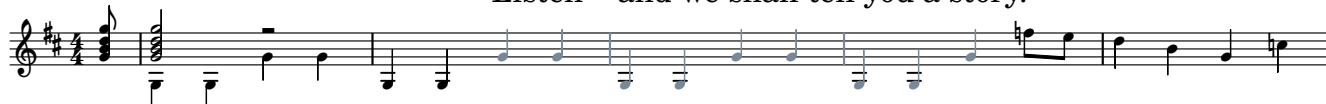
David Sumbler

Narrator

No. 1

Andantino (♩ = 108)

Listen – and we shall tell you a story.



Long ago and far away, there was an old city in an Eastern land.

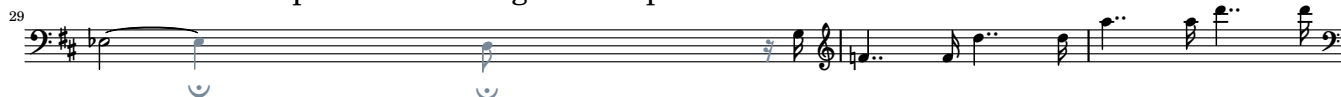


In that city lived a great emperor.

Poco maestoso (♩ = 80)



The emperor had a magnificent palace.

In the gardens of the palace, every flower was hung
with a silver bell, to draw attention to its beauty.

Andante (♩ = 72)



The garden was so immense that neither the Emperor nor his court had ever been to the end of it. But beyond it was a lake, where small fishing boats went to and fro.



Round the lake was a wood. In the daytime birds flitted among the branches.



As the day faded, one by one the birds went to their nests.



But one bird did not sleep. As the moon arose, the song of a nightingale was heard across the lake.



No-one in the great palace knew about it. They were far away, and fast asleep.



But poor fishermen, who had to work long into the night, listened to the nightingale, and *they* spread the story of its enchanting melodies.

Travellers began to arrive from all over the world, to see the Emperor's treasures.

No. 2

They came to see the city –



– to see the palace –



– to see the garden –



– but especially to hear the nightingale.

They wrote books about their travels.

At last, one of these books reached the Emperor.

No. 3



The Chamberlain hurried in. He was very self-important, and, to every question from an inferior, his only answer was: – which does not mean anything in particular. But he did not dare to say – – to the Emperor, or even to say – – which he sometimes used instead. The Emperor was so excited, that every time the Chamberlain tried to insert a question, the Emperor cut him short.

No. 4

Emperor:
Ends: 

It must sing here this evening, so off you must go. Get the bird! *ff*

“Get the bird?” said the Chamberlain. “But you haven’t told me what it is called.”

Emperor (baritone):

Do I have to tell you everything? It’s called the Nightingale, you fool!

Narrator:

So the Chamberlain went through the palace, asking everybody if they knew of a bird called “The Nightingale-You-Fool”. It did not make him very popular.

He asked the cook.

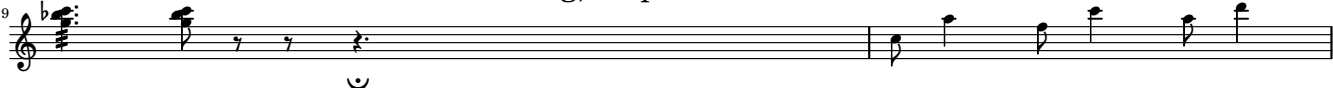
No. 5

Poco andante (♩. = 84) 

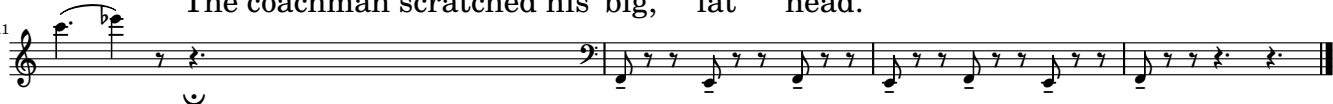
The cook shook his head.

He asked the maids. 

The maids just giggled.

He asked the big, stupid coachman. 

*(These three words should be spoken
with the first 3 double bass notes.)*

The coachman scratched his big, fat head. 

He even asked the Conductor of the Palace Band if *he* knew the talented little musician.

[Conductor turns to face audience, and gives an exaggerated Gallic shrug. Holds this position while Narrator continues.]

Narrator:

But, of course, the Conductor had never come across any talented musicians.

[Conductor nods agreement vigorously to audience, and turns to face orchestra. They make protesting noises with voices and instruments. Conductor raps stand. Order is restored.]

Narrator:

So the Chamberlain returned to the Emperor and told him not to believe all he read in books. The Emperor was furious.

No. 6

Ends: 

Water dripping on your head, Till you wish that you were dead!

These threats confused the Chamberlain so much that, before he could stop himself, he burst

out with –  – and also –  – and even –  Then he ran off.

No. 7

All the servants joined in, one by one; the cook...

Presto (♩. = 168) 

the maids...  even the big coachman... 

and they all ran through the palace. 



Suddenly they stopped. They had reached the garden, and they heard a fiddle playing.

No. 8



It was a gipsy fiddler, who came to the palace to mend the pots and pans. “Ah, yes,” he said. “The nightingale is down by the lake, where I keep my caravan. I speak to her, sometimes, on my fiddle, and I can understand what she says.” So down they went to the woodland.

No. 9

Poco Andante (as in No. 1) They heard a noise.



“That’s it,” they cried. “No,” said the gipsy. “That’s a cow.”



“That’s it!” cried the coachman. “Just like little bells.”

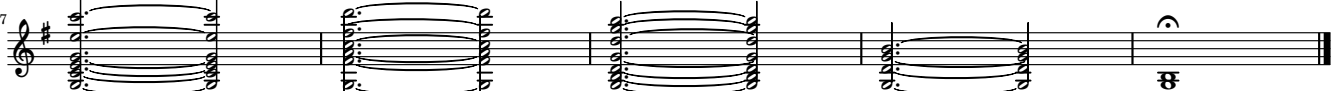


“No,” said the fiddler. “Only frogs in the rushes.”



“That’s her,” said the gipsy, and pointed to a little, brown bird, up in the branches.

(Flute begins)

“Speak to her in the language of music,” they said. “Tell her that the Emperor wishes her to sing to him.”

No. 10



“The fiddler turned, and spoke to the courtiers. “She says it is a great honour, and she has agreed to come.”

No. 11

That evening the palace glittered with thousands of gold lamps. There were flowers everywhere, each with its tiny silver bell. Into all this splendour came the nightingale, and quietly settled on a golden perch.



The palace orchestra tuned up.

(Orchestra tunes up.)

They played a minuet.

No. 12



Then a gavotte.



Then a waltz.



And even...



Then the Emperor gave a signal for the Nightingale to begin.

No 13: tacet

(After end of No 13:)

The Nightingale was a complete success. She was to stay at court; she had her own cage; she was allowed to fly out twice a day and once at night. She had twelve attendants, who held a silken cord fastened to her feet. She did not seem very happy about all these arrangements to improve her standard of living.

In company, however, she still sang splendidly. All the city talked of her. Her fame spread abroad.

Then, one day, messengers arrived with an unusual present from the Emperor of the South.

No 14: begins

(Over music:) They brought it in to the sound of their own strange music.

(Tacet for remainder of No 14.)

(After end of No 14:)

The present was a mechanical nightingale, covered in rubies and diamonds. When it was wound up, it could sing one of the real nightingale's songs, and its tail went up and down in time. "Wind it up," they said. "We'll have a duet."

No. 15

(strings) *(harpsichord)* It was hopeless. So the mechanical bird had to perform alone.

(strings) *(harpsichord)* He was a great success, and they made him sing over and over again.

Orchestra calls:
15 *(strings)* *(harpsichord)* "Encore!" etc. "Encore!"

25 "Encore!" "Encore!" "Encore!" "Encore!"

41 "Encore!" "Encore!" "Encore!" "Encore!" "Encore!"

After the thirty-third encore, the Emperor arose.

48 *(strings)* *(harpsichord)* **tacet**

No 15A: tacet

No 15B: tacet

Five years went by. The Emperor, whom all the people loved, fell gravely ill. He was not expected to live through the night.

No. 16

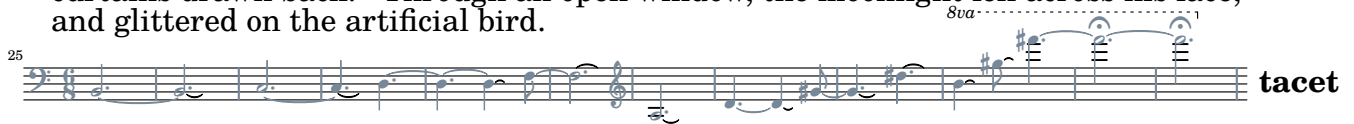
The first system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains the melody: a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains the accompaniment: a quarter note G2, a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, a quarter note A2, a quarter note G2, a quarter note F#2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

The first system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is shown. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, then a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. This is followed by a half note D5, then a half note E5. The melody continues with a quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The system ends with a double bar line.

[illegible]

19

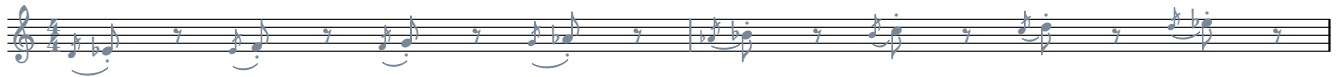
All alone, wasted and pale, the dying Emperor lay in his great bed, with the velvet curtains drawn back. Through an open window, the moonlight fell across his face, and glittered on the artificial bird.



So the Emperor slept peacefully. When all his rich resources had failed him, only the Nightingale had come to his aid, and she had charmed away Death himself. Next morning, the Emperor awoke, restored and refreshed. He dressed himself in his royal robes. Down in the palace, the courtiers were sure that he must have passed away in the night.

No. 17

One by one they crept upstairs, to look at their dead Emperor. They entered the bedroom —



— and stopped, astounded.



The bed was empty. Over by the window stood their Emperor. He turned, and smiling at their astonished faces, he said to them:

Emperor (spoken):
Good morning!

