

# Alec Roth – SONGS IN TIME OF WAR – words by Vikram Seth after Du Fu

for tenor, violin, harp and guitar

commissioned jointly by the Salisbury, Chelsea and Lichfield Festivals

first performed by Mark Padmore (tenor), Philippe Honoré (violin), Alison Nicholls (harp) and Morgan Szymanski (guitar),  
at Wilton Church (Salisbury Festival), 8 June; St Luke's Church, Chelsea, 19 June; and Lichfield Cathedral, 6 July 2006

1. Thoughts while Travelling at Night
2. Grieving for the Young Prince
3. The Visitor
4. A Fine Lady
5. Dreaming of Li Bai
6. Moonlit Night
7. An Autumn Meditation
8. The Old Cypress Tree at the Temple of Zhu-ge Liang
9. Spring Scene in Time of War
10. To Wei Ba who has Lived Away from the Court
11. Ballad of the Army Carts
12. Thoughts while Travelling at Night

Du Fu (712-770) was born into a noble family which had fallen into relative poverty. His great ambition to serve his country was frustrated by repeated failure in the civil service examinations. He finally attained a minor administrative post but almost immediately the country was plunged into civil war. The Emperor ("The Dragon", "Son of Heaven") was forced to flee the capital (Chang'an) and abdicate. Du Fu managed to get his family to safety but was himself captured by the rebels. He later escaped and joined the court in exile. The war dragged on for years and ruined the country – millions were killed or displaced. Du Fu's precarious itinerant existence throughout the turmoil of these times provided the inspiration for some of his finest poetry. He wrote about what he saw and heard around him – the lives of his family, friends, neighbours and strangers – with great honesty and deep compassion. He is now regarded as one of China's finest poets, but received no recognition in his own lifetime. In 765 Du Fu began a long journey down the Yangtze (the "Great River") towards his birthplace, which had recently been recaptured by Government forces. Progress was slow and he died before reaching his final destination.

## DURATION

ca. 42 minutes

Individual songs or selections may be performed separately

## FORCES REQUIRED

Tenor with Violin, Harp and Guitar

## PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

Vocal Score

Full Score

Parts for the Violin, Harp and Guitar

## SCORE SAMPLES

Click here for sample pages of the [Full Score](#); [Vocal Score](#); [Violin Part](#); [Harp Part](#); [Guitar Part](#)

## RECORDING

*Songs in Time of War* is recorded by the original performers on the Signum label ([SIGCD124](#))

Individual tracks may be sampled and downloaded at [iTunes](#)

## REVIEWS

"... there's a transparent, haunting beauty about it" (The Times)

"Composer and poet are perfectly united . . ." (Gramophone)

Click here to read a selection of [reviews](#)