

# Problems Arising from Sympathy

for bass flute,  
mezzo-soprano and cello

Richard Whalley

# Problems Arising from Sympathy

for Trio Atem

## Programme note

*Why is it that when one yawns others yawn in sympathy?*

*Is it because if we are reminded of a desire, we put it into action - especially with easily promoted action such as the passing of water?*

*Now yawning is breath and the movement of moisture. So it is always available, if only a person thinks of it; for it is near at hand.*

*Why is it that when we see a man cut or burned or tortured or suffering pain from any other cause, we also suffer in mind?*

*Is it because nature is common to all of us? So when we see anything of the kind we feel pain in sympathy with the sufferer, because of our kinship.*

*Or is it that, just as the nose and the ears receive certain emanations according to their particular capacities, so also does the sight from seeing both what is pleasant and is painful?*

*Why do we desire to make water when we stand near fire, and if we stand near water, for instance a river, we do make water?*

*Is it because all water reminds us of the moisture in the body, and calls out to it?*

*Also fire of itself melts what is congealed in our very bodies, just as the sun melts the snow.*

There are few greater testaments to the ancient Greek's belief in the power of the mind than the fact that Aristotle's views on the sciences - obtained through rigorous logic and reasoning - dominated scholarship for almost 2,000 years. Aristotle's 38 books of Problems (not actually written by him, but known to be derived from his writings), cover a kaleidoscopic range, and give a fascinating insight into his world and thinking. Subjects of these books range from the earthy to the philosophical, and include *On Wine-drinking and Drunkenness*, *Problems connected with Temperament*, *Problems concerning Sexual Intercourse* and *Problems connected with Harmony* (which give fascinating insights into the music theory of the time). All follow the same format: a question on why something that has been observed is as it is, followed by a series of sentences which attempt to answer this question through reason. The intellectual energy of these questions is quite breathtaking: there are over 1,000 questions in all, and their language and content is intensely vivid and

thought-provoking despite the fact the world – and scientific knowledge – has changed so much since Aristotle's time.

This work was composed in 2010, and is dedicated to Trio Atem, for whom it was written.

## **Performance instructions**

Most of the notation should be self-explanatory, but the following points may be helpful:

1. Unmetred sections employ proportional notation, and whereby the parts should coincide vertically as shown in the score. Rests are not included in the flute part bars 157-166, but should be self-evident. In Bars 186 and 197, short rests are indicated by commas, whereby a two-comma rest is longer than one comma, but shorter than a crotchet (at the main tempo).
2. For the repeated music in the flute and cello parts, bars 186 and 197, the instrumentalists should aim to align vertically as shown in the score first time around, before continuing into the repeat as written. They should stop in time for the upbeat to the next bar, but avoid stopping in the middle of a motif (a motif defined here as the music between two commas or rests).
3. Where the rhythm is relatively straightforward, barlines indicate metrical stress in the conventional sense. However the performers should be aware that there are several passages of music where counterpoint between parts has resulted in more complicated rhythmic writing, in which case it makes more musical sense to treat barlines simply as markers of time, and to articulate metrical stress according to taste, but influenced by tenuto markings, or in the vocal part by textual stress. It is likely that in places the performers will each articulate metrical stress at different points in the bar.
4. This piece may also be performed in a shorter version lasting approximately 5 minutes, by ending in bar 90, and omitting the vocal entry in bar 86.

**Total duration: c. 12 mins**

# Problems Arising from Sympathy

Text adapted from Aristotle

for Trio Atem

Richard Whalley

**Freely** *haunting* **Slow; quietly breathing, with flexibility; ♩ = 50**

Bass Flute *ppp* *p* *p* *p*

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello *con sord.* *pp* *p*

4 (senza vib.) *p* *ppp*

Vc. *p* *p* *ppp* *poco espress.* *senza vib.* *ppp*

9 **A**

B. Fl. *ppp* *ppp* *pp* *ppp*

M-S. *ppp* *pp* *ppp*

Why \_\_\_\_\_ is it that when \_\_\_\_\_ one yawns \_\_\_\_\_

Vc. *poco espress.* *pp*

16

B. Fl. *ppp*

M-S. *ppp*

o - - - thers yawn in sym - - -

Vc. *senza vib.* *ppp* *pp*

**B**

22

B. Fl. *mfp* *ppp*

M-S. *p* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *mfp* *ppp*

-pa - thy? Is it be - cause if we are re - mind ed

*poco vib.* *senza vib.*

28

B. Fl. *Freely; haunting* *In tempo* *pp* *pp*

M-S. *(take time)* *ppp* *p* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *poch. vib.* *pp*

of a de - sire we put it

*Pushing forwards*

33

B. Fl. *cresc.* *Easing back* *A tempo* *mf*

M-S. *cresc.* *(v)* *mf*

Vc. *cresc.* *mf*

in - to a - ction e - spe - cial - ly with ea - si - ly pro - mo - ted a - ction such

**C**

38

B. Fl. *pp* *ppp*

M-S. *pp (espress.)* *8:6* *3* *p*

Vc. *pp* *espress.* *p*

as the pass - ing of wa - ter?

*senza vib.*

**D**

43

warmly

intense

B. Fl. *mf* *p* *mfp* *mfp*

M-S. warmly *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* intense

Now yawn - ing is breath and the

Vc. *mf* *p* *mfp* *mfp*

**E**

49

Pushing forwards

suddenly more relaxed

B. Fl. *mfp* *f* *p*

M-S. *f* *p* suddenly more relaxed

— move - ment of moist - ure. So it is al-ways

Vc. *mfp* *f* *mfp* suddenly more relaxed

54

A tempo

B. Fl. *poco cresc.* *mfp*

M-S. *poco cresc.* *mf* *p* *pp*

a - vail - a - ble, if on - ly a per - son thinks of it; for

Vc. *poco cresc.* *mfp* *ppp*

senza vib.

**F**

60

Freely

more confident than before

B. Fl. *ppp* *pp* *mf* *pp*

M-S. *pp*

it is near at hand.

Vc. *pp*

**A tempo** (senza vib.) **Somewhat faster** (♩ = 60); pushing forwards

65

B. Fl. *p*

Vc. *pp* *espress.* *mf* *lilting; confident*

**G** **Freely** (not too slow)

71

B. Fl. *pp* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *mf* *rich, dark* *pp*

**Tempo I** *tense; hushed*

73

B. Fl. *cresc.* *p*

Vc. *tense; hushed* *p*

**Take time** *expansive* **Pushing forwards** **Easing back** (senza vib.) **A tempo**

77

B. Fl. *f* *p* *pp*

Vc. *f* *p* *pp* (senza vib.)

**H** *hollow sound* *espress.* (senza vib.)

83

B. Fl. *pp*

M.S. *pp* Why? Why is it

Vc. *ppp* *pp*



91 (poco sfz)

B. Fl.

M-S. 

Vc.

97 I

B. Fl.

M-S.

Vc.

100

B. Fl.

M-S.

Vc.

103

B. Fl.

M-S.

Vc.