

Longitude:
Two Operatic Arias
(2016)

Text by Carol Ann Johnston | Music by Robert Pound

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These arias were created as part of an opera that was to be based on the book *Longitude* by Dava Sobel.

The book chronicles the story of John Harrison's creation of the Marine Chronometer, making measurement of longitude possible at sea, dramatically transforming navigation.

They were premiered at the Philips Museum of Art at Franklin and Marshall College,

April 5, 2016 by baritone Jonathan Hays and pianist Craig Ketter.

- I. Admiral Cloudesley Shovell, Washed Ashore on St. Mary's Isle (7 minutes)
- II. John Harrison Goes to Town (6 minutes)

I. ADMIRAL CLOUDESLEY SHOVELL WASHED ASHORE
ON ST. MARY'S ISLAND

(Cloudesley Shovell beached in a cove, Port Hellick Bay, on the island of St. Mary in the Scilly Archipelago. The islands lie off the coast of Cornwall, 49 degrees 56'10"N. Shirt and breeches tattered, Shovell rests 2/3 of his person on the beach. Beside him his two Stepsons (probably dead), Sir John Narborough the younger and Mr. James Narborough. His incrispated Italian Greyhound also is near. Shovell sports a black mole under his left ear, a broken left fore finger with a deformed first joint, bullet scars on his right arm and left thigh. His nose, bloodied. A scratch lies above one eye as if it were etched with a pin. He still wears a large emerald ring.)

SHOVELL

A boy, up and down
the River Yare, past Brundall,
Reedham--Surlingham and Rockland Broads.
Norwich to Great Yarmouth, I knew every veer
and warp, its fathorage and profundity.

O! To study the sea so well would save
us! Soundings, dead reckoning! To forsake
the stars and fateful heavens!

Grievous tempests fell upon the fleet
at the Bay of Biscay. So
unmerciful a stream of rain, such
diverse, contrary motions work

on the whole of body and soul:
the unquiet mind, absent of judgment
and empire. The words
of the Sabine bard, my refrain:
Hostium uxores puerique caecos
Sentiant motus orientis Austri et
Aequoris nigri fremitum et trementis
*Verbere ripas.*¹

The storm ceased.

My boatswain began his soundings--sailing
masters from the fleet boarded my ship. All
but one reckoned we were nigh
unto the Ushants, all but Jumpers of the *Lennox*. He
swore we headed for the rocks at Scilly--
Never shall I see the Ushants--Never
the coast of France.

Listening to the rabble--O! horrible foppery!--I
hung Jumpers from the yardarm. His final words. . . O!
The last of all terribles,
death itself!

(An island woman appears on the beach, spies the emerald ring, pulls a knife
and surprises Shovell with a blade in the ribs. He cries out. She grabs for the
ring and they wrestle. He falls to the ground, mortally wounded, clutching
the ring. Shovell dies. She runs away, clutching the ring to her breast.)

¹ "May the wives and children of our foes be the ones to feel the blind onset of
rising Auster and the roaring of the darkling sea, and the shores quivering with
the shock." Horace, Odes III.27, 21-24.

II. JOHN HARRISON GOES TO TOWN

(Harrison, in London for the first time to present his theory of time and navigation to the Royal Society. Offended by urbanity, he has found a small square of grass on which to plant himself before meeting the Society)

HARRISON (Looking around:)

London: a sty.

London, a gem drawn
from the earth's maw,

wracked on the jeweler's bench, no foil
to restore her unrefined splendor. Men
suffer with arrogance and signority
the slight tasks they set for themselves.

London, ignorant walls, horse dung
creeping up the heels of silk mules,
words spittled into the air denser
than sap oozing from young timber.

Swallowed up in a gulf of wretched talk,
London, a waste covered in idle fantasies,
fashions, tinsel vanities. Hurried rush of desires,
baubles, gew-gaws. *They put grubs and worms
in men's heads that are enemies to all pure
apprehensions. They eat out all their happiness.*
My wig, forever affixed for country
pleasures, justles in the streets.

I told *The Royal Society*:

"Earth swings from the heavens — an eternal,
perpetual watch. Arctic ices, the boiling equator,
tropical spritz, roiling Pacific volcanoes —
no matter — spiraling through the orbits of Mars,
Saturnus, Jupiter's moons — Io, Europa,
Ganymede, Callisto — Earth keeps good time."

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I. Admiral Cloudsley, Washed Ashore on St. Mary's Island

Carol Ann Johnston

Robert Pound

Despondent $\text{♩} = 120$

poco accel.

poco rit.

poco accel.

Despondent $\text{♩} = 120$
poco accel.
poco rit.
poco accel.
pp
mp
poco accel.
* $\text{♩} = 120$

7 A tempo $\text{♩} = 120$

poco accel.

poco rit.

rall.

poco accel.

A tempo $\text{♩} = 120$

poco rit.

rall.

A tempo $\text{♩} = 120$
poco accel.
poco rit.
rall.
poco accel.
A tempo $\text{♩} = 120$
poco rit.
rall.
pp
mf
poco rit.
ppp
* $\text{♩} = 120$

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15 *p* - weakly, wistfully

Recitative $\text{♩} = 40$

A boy _____

16 *loco* *ppp* (4:3)
ppp - somberly, nearby bells toll

Recitative $\text{♩} = 40$ (4:3)

* *ppp*

19 *lilting*

up and down the Ri-ver Yare _____

past Brun-dall, Reed - ham, Sur - ling - ham and Rock - land Broad's,

ppp *pp* *pp* *pp*

* *ppp* * *pp* * *pp* * *pp*

rit. A tempo ♩. = 40

24

8^{va}

loco 9

ppp

mf

p

Nor - wick to Great Yar - mouth,

rit. A tempo ♩. = 40

* Red.

* Red.

poco rit.

28

f

port.

I knew e - ve - ry veer and warp its fa - tho - mage and pro - fun - di - ty.

poco rit.

9

p

* Red.

* Red.

A tempo $\text{♩} = 40$

4 accel.

$\text{♩} = 60$

f - *anguished*

32

Musical score for measures 32-34. The piano part consists of a series of chords in the left hand, with some triplets and slurs. The vocal line enters at measure 32 with the lyrics "O! To stu - dy the". The tempo is marked "A tempo $\text{♩} = 40$ " and "accel.". Dynamics include *ppp* and *ff*. There are asterisks (*) above the piano part in measures 33 and 34.

34

Musical score for measures 34-36. The piano part continues with chords and triplets. The vocal line has lyrics "sea SO well would save". The tempo is marked "A tempo $\text{♩} = 40$ ". Dynamics include *ppp* and *ff*. There are asterisks (*) above the piano part in measures 35 and 36.

36

us! *ff* *ppp* *f* *fp* *Ped.* *Ped. ad lib.*

Soun - - - - - dings,

38

dead *pp* *Ped.* *Ped. ad lib.*

reck - - - - - on - ing! To for

40 *sake* _____ *the* _____ *stars* _____ *and* *fat* *-* *ful* *hea* *-* *vens!*

ff *fp*

Arioso
p - feverishly

Grie *-* *vous* *grie* *-* *vous* *tem* *-* *pestis*

Arioso
pp

45

fell u - pon the fleet at the Bay of Bis - cay.

47

So un - mer - ci - ful un - mer - ci - ful a stream

II. John Harrison Goes to Town

Recitative ♩ = 60
 127 *f* Lon- don: *fp - with disdain* *mf* *f* *port.*
 a sty. A gem drawn from the earth's maw, a

Recitative ♩ = 60
ff *p - oozy* *f*
 130 *fp* *f* *Freely p - as if muttered*
 gem wracked on the jeweler's bench no foil to re store. her un - re - fined splen- dor. Men suf- fer with ar- ro- gance and se- nio- ri- ty the slight

f *pp* *colla parte* *f* *Freely*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features two recitative sections with a tempo of ♩ = 60. The piece is in 4/4 time. The vocal line includes various dynamics such as *f*, *mf*, *fp*, *ff*, *p*, and *pp*, along with performance instructions like 'Freely' and 'colla parte'. The piano accompaniment includes triplets, sextuplets, and other rhythmic patterns. The lyrics are: 'Lon- don: a sty. A gem drawn from the earth's maw, a gem wracked on the jeweler's bench no foil to re store. her un - re - fined splen- dor. Men suf- fer with ar- ro- gance and se- nio- ri- ty the slight'.

A tempo

135

tasks they set for them-selves. Lon-don, ig-no-rant walls, horse dung cree - ping cree-

139

ping cree - ping up the heels of silk mules, spit-tled in-to the air den-ser than sap oo-zing from

Arioso

143 *ff* tim-ber. *A tempo fp* Swal-lowed up in a gulf of wret-ched talks, Lon - don a waste.

A tempo *Arioso* *fp sempre leggiero*

146 *ff* co - vered in i - dle fan - ta - sies, tin - seled va - mi - ties. Hur-ried

A tempo *Arioso* *fp sempre leggiero*