

The Undeniable Sadness of Whale Evolution

(from the opera 'Indus')

Mezzo-Soprano/Piano

**music by Cameron Dodds
text by Ruth Mariner**

The piece should be played almost entirely without humour, the humour is in the music and the music should be played with a straight face. The music is a fictional imagining of prehistoric, bonkers, whale music viewed through the lens of both Western Art Music history and 'pataphysical musing. The juxtapositional sections should be seen as quick, manic micro-evolutions of the character of Indus.
-C.D

Indus walks along the bottom of the river for hours and hours. It widens and widens, until it becomes the large, watery mouth that she first saw in her dream. Sunlight floods the water turning it an aquamarine blue. Warm currents filter past her flowing down into the blackness. Just then, a collection of stones fall through the water and hits her across the back. Then another set. Then another. She turns, and wades to shallower waters, and onto the bank. It is her friend. He asks her not to leave. He talks about the times they had when they were young, when she would push him deep underneath the water to see the small fish and translate their tiny songs to him. When she would tell them the stories about the fish that she met as she explored the river. Back then it was fun, the river was fun. He asks her: why couldn't she just have stayed like that. Why did she have to take this obsession so far? The aria is her response.
-R.M

This piece was commissioned in 2018 for the Mezzo-Soprano Bethan Langford by The National Opera Studio.

5'00"

'The Undeniable Loneliness of Whale Evolution'

from the Opera 'Indus'

for Bethan Langford and The National Opera Studio

Libretto by Ruth Mariner

Music by Cameron Dodds

$\text{♩} = 146$ **Boisterous, agitated.**

Indus

Piano

4/4 3/4 4/4 5/4

mp

fff

3

Indus

Pno.

molto rit.

Every note the same, with ped.

5/4 4/4 3/4

f

mp

8^{va}

Indus

Pno.

3/4 4/4 9/8 4/4

8^{va}

♩=126 To be played in the style and mannerism as a primary school hymn

Indus 9 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

ff

As a child I was free. Free to chase the fast fish down the ri - ver, down the ri - ver.

Every note the same, with ped.

Pno. $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{7}{16}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

ff

Indus 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

p *ff*

mm mm mm mm mm mm mm mm mm Ti - ny fish, ti - ny fish dart through

Pno. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

sfz *sfz* *sfz*

Reliving her memories

Indus 19 $\frac{4}{4}$

the fast, through the fast wa-ters.

Pno. $\frac{4}{4}$

mp

bouncy

molto rall.
♩=100 **Grand**

23

Indus

one bo-dy, tur-ning, swer-ving, mo - ving as one.

Pno.

8^{vb} **ff**

Nasal, quasi-dolphin
like sound
♩=80 **Primal**

4/4 **With a sudden interruption**

A still chorale
p non vib

28

Indus

Ee ee ee ee ee Free to lie with mud - fish on the

Pno.

p ped

5 accel.
with increasing intensity, to almost shouting

♩=126
4 ff HUGE

33

Indus

bot-tom of the lake wal-low-ing on top of one a - no - ther. Free to tell sto-

Pno.

ff

38 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ beautiful $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Indus
ries of sto-ries of life in the wa-ter, of fast fish, mud - fish

Pno.

As low as possible,
oscillate mouth
shape from
pursed lips to
'ah' shape.

43 $\frac{3}{4}$ Big dramatic waltz $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ *ff* $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

Indus
womp womp womp of ev-'ry-thing that I saw. Ti - ny fish, ti - ny fish

Pno.

49 $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ molto rit.

Indus
dart through the fast, through the fast wa - ters.

Pno.

54

Indus

Pno.

ff no ped

pppp

59

Indus

Yet as I grew _____ my sto - ries

Pno.

ff

with ped

64

Indus

lost their power. Their ears closed _____

Pno.

68

Indus

they could no lon - ger un - der stand me I be

Pno.

sfz

no ped

8va

8vb

73

$\frac{4}{4}$ low as possible

$\frac{3}{4}$ $\text{♩} = 126$ honky tonk waltz, NOT CABERET! Extremely jaunty.

Indus

came bound to the land. now I un-der - stand!

Pno.

Indus

oscillate vowel sounds (medium tempi)

I was free(eeyeyeyee)

Pno.

Indus

83

was free on-ly to Ee on-ly to play - yayayayay

Nasally dolphin sound

oscillate vowel sounds (slow tempi)

Pno.

Indus

87

I was free on-ly to play in the wa - - - ter

gliss.

Pno.

suddenly clunky

sfz

91 **4/4** *molto rit.* **Indus increasingly starts to cry** **3/4** *ppppppp* **a tempo** *f*

Indus *wa wa wa wa wa wa wah wah wah wah wa - ter*

Pno. *8^{vb} pp*

96 **7/8** **4/4** *fff* **almost shouting, top notes should be full vib, bel canto. Really epic.**

Indus *I stand at the mouth of the_*

Pno. **7/8** **4/4** *fff* **fist cluster**

101 **3/4** **4/4** *gliss.* **even bolder, heavier, Rachmaninov-esque**

Indus *o - cean, I stand at the mouth of the_ o - - cean.*

Pno. *twinkling* **3/4** **4/4** *p* **fff**

4
105 4

Indus

Pno.

She steps into the ocean

110

all white notes.

dramatic pedalling

molto rit. increasingly dissonant

Pno.

114

full on atonal clusters

Pno.

The whale sounds should sound almost desperate, like a nervous tic. They become more beautiful and confident every time they are sung, even though the music should become increasingly more lonely.

118

Indus

whale sounds, rubato

p

mm mm

Pno.

fffffz

She tenderly lets the water run through her hooves.
mouth clicks

$3/4 = 90$ **Celestial**
4 no vibrato

2
4

125

Indus

nngg

I sing to

Pno.

$3/4$

$2/4$

mp

134

Indus

you my kin nngg I sing through wa - ter, through

Nuzzling...

$\text{♩} = 80$

Pno.

$2/4$ $4/4$ $3/4$ $2/4$ $4/4$ $3/4$

$4/4$ $4/4$ $3/4$ $2/4$ $4/4$ $3/4$

pp *mp*

145

Indus

time nngg I sing through ge - ne - ra -

mouth clicks

$\text{♩} = 70$

Pno.

$3/4$ $2/4$ $4/4$

$3/4$ $4/4$ $4/4$

pp *mp*

154 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\text{♩} = 60$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Indus
tions of bo-dies . mm My strong bones be - come stron - ger still__

Pno.
pp *mp* *pp*

163 $\text{♩} = 50$ with vib again $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Indus
They broa-den they arch. Fur slips down my back and falls in flakes to the

Pno.
mp

169 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Indus
o - cean floor__ My peeled blue bo - dy shines forth.

Pno.