

THE CUCKOO

from APPALACHIAN LOVE SONGS
WOMEN'S REFLECTIONS ON LOVE, LOSS, AND STRENGTH



SSA A CAPPELLA

with optional piano accompaniment

a traditional folk song adapted by

LINDA TUTAS HAUGEN

ebp

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APPALACHIAN LOVE SONGS

for

SSA a cappella

with optional piano accompaniment

adapted and arranged by

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Appalachian Love Songs was commissioned in 2017-18 by a Consortium of American Choral Programs, the Appalachian Folk Songs Women's Choir Commissioning Consortium, Nana Wolfe-Hill, Wingate University, coordinator.

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The Cuckoo

Performance notes: This piece can be performed a cappella or with an instrumental accompaniment such as a dulcimer, guitar, banjo, mandolin or piano or any combination of these instruments. It would also work well with three individual instruments – flutes, clarinets, violins each taking a vocal part, or any combination of the above, while preserving the clarity of individual lines. The melody ultimately should be felt in “one,” with the accompaniment having a floating nature similar to a Satie Gymnopédie – an *air/dance* or *chant* above which the “round” flows or soars.

Program Notes

Earliest mentions of *The Cuckoo* date at least back to 1796 and 1802 in Scotland, according to Jean Ritchie in her collection, *Southern Mountain Folksongs*. The text consists of “floating verses” that are found in and out of several other songs, often *The Unconstant Lover*, and *Old Smokey*, which result in the many versions that exist in the UK and Appalachia. The one verse that appears constant is the first verse in this text, which refers to the cuckoo bringing good tidings. The remainder “floating” verses usually contain sad warnings of “false true love.” This particular combination of verses also indicates resilience in the singer in the last two stanzas.

The cuckoo bird itself, has a rich association with folkelore and is used symbolically as the bringer of spring (or summer in Britain), is said to predict the number of years a marriage will last, how long a man will live (both based on the number of times it is heard in a season), and to be a good omen for lovers. With its seasonal relationship, it is often linked with both sexuality and unfaithfulness.

Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles collected 13 variants of *The Cuckoo* in KY, NC and VA from 1917-18. This setting incorporates elements of a variant from Knott Co., KY sung by Elsie Combs in 1917 and also a variant by Jean Ritchie, Knott Co., (*Folk Songs of Southern Appalachia*), and modified with changes in meters, note durations and text.

Text:

Oh, the cuckoo is a pretty bird,
She sings as she flies,
She brings us glad tidings,
And she tells us no lies.

She sips all the lovely flowers
To keep her voice clear,
And she never sings “cuckoo”
Till the spring of the year.

Come all you young women
And listen to me,
Never place your affections
On a green growing tree.

For the leaves they will wither
And the roots will run dry,
And you’ll be forsaken
And never know why.

My true love has forsaken me,
I’m sure he’s foresworn,
He’s badly mistaken
If he thinks I will mourn.

I’ll get myself up
In my best finery,
I will walk proudly by him
As he walks by me.



THE CUCKOO

TRADITIONAL AMERICAN

Arranged by LINDA TUTAS HAUGEN

Flying, Lifting, Swooping ♩ = 120

Oh, the cuck - oo

(optional)

p

sim.

7

10

is a pret - ty bird, she sings as she flies, She brings us glad

Pno.

14

20

ti - dings, And she tells us no lies. She sips

mp

sim.

21

V 1

all the love-ly flow - ers _____ To keep her voice clear, _____ And she

Pno.

27

V 1

ne - ver sings 'cuck - oo' _____ Till the spring of the year. _____ Come

Pno.

30

mp

33

V 1

all _____ you young wo - men _____ And lis - ten to me, _____

V 2

mp

Come all _____ you young wo - men _____ And lis - ten to

Pno.

40

V 1
Don't hang your af - fec - tions _____ On a green grow - ing tree. _____

V 2
me, _____ Don't hang your af - fec - tions _____ On a green grow - ing

Pno.

50

V 1
For the leaves _____ they will with - er _____ And the

V 2
tree. _____ For the leaves _____ they will with - er _____

Pno.

52

V 1
roots will run dry. _____ And you'll be for - sak - en _____ And ne - ver know

V 2
_____ And the roots will run dry. _____ And you'll be for - sak - en _____ And

Pno.

60

59

mp

V1 why. My true love has for - sak - en me, I'm

V2 ne - ver know why. My true love has for - sak - en me,

V3 My true love has for -

Pno.

70

66

V1 sure he's fore - sworn, He's bad - ly mis - tak - en If he thinks I will

V2 I'm sure he's fore - sworn, He's bad - ly mis - tak - en If he

V3 sak - en me, I'm sure he's fore - sworn, He's bad - ly mis - tak - en

Pno.

sim.

73 *mf*

V1 mourn. I'll get my-self up in my

V2 thinks I will mourn. I'll get my-self up

V3 If he thinks I will mourn. I'll get my-self

Pno. *mp* *mf*

80

V1 best fin - er - y, I will walk proud - ly by him As

V2 in my best fin - er - y, I will walk proud - ly by him

V3 up in my best fin - er - y, I will walk proud - ly

Pno.

86

V1 he walks by me. I will walk proud - ly by him as

V2 As he walks by me. I will walk proud - ly by him

V3 by him As he walks by me. I will walk proud - ly

Pno.

mf

92

V1 he walks by me.

V2 as he walks by me.

V3 by him as he walks by me.

Pno.

cresc. to end

poco rit.

cresc. to end

cresc. to end

cresc.

f

cresc. to end

ff



Linda Tutas Haugen

Performed on four continents, Linda Tutas Haugen's music has been critically acclaimed as "music of character and genuine beauty." [*Minneapolis Star Tribune*.] *Opera Today* praised her opera, *Pocahontas*, as "superbly crafted," "engaging," and "beautiful and powerful." She has written for instrumental and vocal chamber ensembles, symphony orchestra, wind ensemble, solo voice, chorus, and opera. She has received national awards, fellowships and commissions from ASCAP, American Composers Forum, American Guild of Organists, Meet The Composer, National Endowment for the Arts, National Kidney Foundation, San Francisco Girls Chorus, and Virginia Arts Festival and Virginia Opera. Her choral music has been performed by high school, university and adult choirs throughout the U.S., in Europe, Asia and Australia.

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