

Program Note for Four Poems of Wallace Stevens

Four Poems of Wallace Stevens was composed in 1985 and revised in 1996, although the first song dates back much earlier. The work is a dramatic evocation of its text, moving from an anguished search for the singer's origin—"who is my father, my father's father, his father's father?" to an evocation of the peace as we contemplate "Mere Being": "The wind moves slowly in the branches. The birds fire fangled feathers dangle down." Angular, expressionistic vocal alternate with the spoken word, while a prism of instrumental fragments lines embody the singer's changing emotions. The songs flow into one another, connected by brief instrumental interludes. They were written for the soprano Patrice Pastore and the Sati Ensemble of Ithaca, New York.