

Composer's note

The idea for this piece of varied monotony arose from a quotation of a poem by W. H. Davies:

A rainbow and a cuckoo's song
May never come together again;
May never come
This side the tomb

The cuckoo's relentless repetition (in all tessituras) is embedded into the symmetrical patterns and colours of the rainbow arc – the 12-note motif is used backwards, upside down, backwards and upside down; in reverse (where the cuckoo's minor 3rd becomes a major 6th), and in combined forms.

The meteorological changes range from mere raindrops to a fleeting squall – there is much mist and haze with only occasional bursts of sun. A country dance (in silhouette) emerges, and this, plus intermingling church bells, is woven into the fabric before a return and extension of the opening mood, which gradually subsides into the tomb, but with the cuckoo faintly persistent to the bitter end.

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Duration 18 minutes

The first performance of this work was given by Sarah Francis and the Cummings String Trio at the Purcell Room on 2 November 1975.

Sets of parts may be purchased through the OUP Hire Library,
44 Conduit Street, London W1R 0DE

THE RAINBOW AND THE CUCKOO

PHYLLIS TATE

Moderato con moto e serenità (♩ = 84)

Handwritten annotations in the score include: "gliss: without finger pressure. sul pont:" written above the Oboe, Violin, and Viola staves.

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I

L.H. p133

Naturale p133

2

p senza vibrato al 131

ARCO p. senza vib: al. 8.

3

mp

Phyllis Tate
The Rainbow and the Cuckoo

For oboe and string trio

Oxford University Press

Music Department
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