

BEAUTY IN TEARS

T. O Carolan (1660-1738)

Andante (~ 100)

Musical notation for measures 1-3. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Measure 1 starts with a treble clef and a whole note chord. Measure 2 begins with a repeat sign and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. The bass line consists of quarter notes in the first two measures, followed by eighth notes in the third.

Musical notation for measures 4-7. Measure 4 is marked with a '4' above the treble staff. The melody continues with eighth notes in the treble and quarter notes in the bass. Measure 7 ends with a repeat sign.

Musical notation for measures 8-11. Measure 8 is marked with an '8' above the treble staff. Measure 9 features a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots in measure 11.

Musical notation for measures 12-15. Measure 12 is marked with a '12' above the treble staff. Measure 13 begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic marking. The melody is primarily in the treble, while the bass line provides harmonic support with quarter notes.

Musical notation for measures 16-19. Measure 16 is marked with a '16' above the treble staff. Measure 17 has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic, and measure 18 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots in measure 19.

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20

poco rit.

mf

23

1

2

p

p

A composition attributed to the best-known of Irish harpers, Turloch O'Carolan (1660-1738), many of whose works - still played and loved today - share characteristics with those of the continental Baroque musicians of the day.

O'Carolan is often referred to as the "last of the Irish bards", those poet/musicians whose importance to their society is attested in the earliest histories of Ireland. Like so many other harpers of his age, he was blind, although not born so; his living as an itinerant musician - which he began after attempts to live the settled life of a farmer ended ingloriously - was made less burdensome through the kindness of various patrons of the nobility and landed gentry who, in the true bardic tradition, welcomed the harper into their houses for as long as he wished to remain. This laudable practice, certainly appreciated by O'Carolan, was lovingly commemorated by him in his compositions. The titles of many of these works include the names of patrons, often preceded by the word "Planxty", a term whose origin is obscure but whose general meaning implies "pleasant celebration," "revels," or in a more 21st Century jargon, a "fun time". Such cheerful pieces are certainly among the most popular of O'Carolan's works, but his versatility as composer is clearly manifest in pieces such as "Beauty in Tears" or "O'Carolan's Lament", or certainly his valedictory "Farewell to Music", compositions whose musical feel is altogether different from that of the lighter-hearted Planxties.

"Beauty in Tears" shares many characteristics with the popular Welsh tune "The Ash Grove", which dates from the early 18th century and was widely known in Carolan's day, but which tune is the "original" - or if both are based on an even more remote common ancestor - is probably impossible to say at this point.