

A Song about Fish

Cambiata 1, Cambiata 2, Baritone, piano

Lyrics and music by Sheena Phillips

There's a long history of fishing in Cornwall as well as in much of the British Isles and many other countries worldwide. But over the past several decades it has become clear that many species of fish are endangered, from overfishing as well as from climate change. This song is all about fish: their wonderful variety, the dreadfully efficient ways we have of killing them, and how we need to take care if we are not to hunt them all to extinction.

The lists of fish and our ways of catching them came from an article about the Cornish fishing industry (<http://www.cornwallgoodseafoodguide.org.uk/cornish-fishing/the-cornish-fishing-industry-today.php>)

The Marine Conservation Society publishes excellent information on which fish are endangered and which can be eaten without damaging the marine environment (see for example <https://www.mcsuk.org/goodfishguide/search>)

This is not an anti-fishing anthem. Many fisheries have good fishing practices and a number of countries are taking steps to protect fish populations. But it is a song of sorrow for all that's lost or endangered by our rapacious quest for profit from the sea.

Duration 3:00

Commended in the Cornwall International Male Choral Festival Composing Competition 2018

Perusal score – not for rehearsal or performance

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A Song about Fish

We cast care aside
For the ocean was wide,
There were tonnes in the sea
To catch for our tea...

Pollack and pouting and pilchard and plaice,
Oyster and limpet and lobster and ling,
Mack'rel and whiting and scallops and skate,
Monkfish and marlin and haddock and hake,
Turbot and megrim and sea bass and crab,
Mussels and cuttlefish, anchovy, dab:

Our joy and our being,
Our whole way of seeing,
Our living, our pleasure,
Our hist'ry,
 our future?

We net 'em, we pot 'em, we dredge 'em, we trawl 'em,
We trap 'em, we slip 'em, we line 'em, we haul 'em,
We trick 'em, we bait 'em,
We chase 'em, we net 'em an' kill 'em, we box 'em, we ship 'em to market and sell 'em,
We eat them: we poach 'em, we fry 'em, we bake 'em, we grill 'em,
We know them, we love 'em, we want 'em, we need them!

We know them,
 and we know how to catch 'em,
We love them,
 and they're part of our hist'ry,
We need them!
 but we're taking too many and robbing the future and filling the oceans with plastic.

We cast care aside
For the ocean was wide,
There were tonnes in the sea
To catch for our tea...

But fishers, take care
To leave Gaia* her share,
Or those fish that we love
Will be finished and gone.

* Gaia is the name of the ancient Greek goddess who personified Earth. The environmentalist James Lovelock revived the name to describe the whole set of interlocking process maintaining life on earth.

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Allegro con brio (♩. = c. 76)

Cambiata 1

Cambiata 2

Baritone

Piano

f

con Ped.

8

f carefree

We cast care a - side for the o - cean was wide, There were

f carefree

We cast care a - side for the o - cean was wide, — There were

f carefree

We cast care a - side for the o - cean was wide, — There were

A **animato**

14

tonnes in the sea ___ to catch for our tea...

tonnes in the sea ___ to catch for our tea... Pol-lack and pout-ing and

tonnes in the sea ___ to catch for our tea... Pol-lack and pout-ing and

p

p

p

20

Mack-'rel and whit-ing and scal-lops and skate,

mf

pil-chard and plaice, Oy-ster and limp-et and lob-ster and ling, Mack-'rel and whit-ing and scal-lops and skate,

mf

pil-chard and plaice, Oy-ster and limp-et and lob-ster and ling,

mf

25

Monk-fish and mar - lin and had-dock and hake,

Monk-fish and mar - lin and had-dock and hake, Tur - bot and me - grim and sea-bass and crab,

Tur - bot and me - grim and sea-bass and crab,

29

f joyous
Our joy, — our be - ing, Our whole way of

Mus-sels and cut - tle - fish, an-cho-vy, dab: *f* joyous
Our joy, — our be - ing, Our whole way of

Mus-sels and cut - tle - fish, an-cho-vy, dab: *f* joyous
Our joy, — our be - ing, Our whole way of

34

p spoken (questioning)

see - ing, Our liv - ing, our plea - sure, Our hist - 'ry, Our fu - ture?

p spoken (questioning)

see - ing, Our liv - ing, our plea - sure, Our hist - 'ry, Our fu - ture?

p spoken (questioning)

see - ing, Our liv - ing, our plea - sure, Our hist - 'ry, Our fu - ture?

The first system of the score consists of three vocal staves (treble, bass, and bass) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are in 3/8 time and feature a melodic line with lyrics. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

B

eager but also a little cold

mf

We net 'em, we

mp

Pol-lack and pout-ing and pil-chard and plaice,

mf

We net 'em, we

p *mf* *p*

The second system of the score includes a section labeled 'B'. It features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal lines have lyrics and dynamic markings. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings and a consistent rhythmic pattern.

44

pot 'em, Mack-'rel and whit-ing and scal-lops and skate,
 Oy-ster and limp-et and lob-ster and ling, we dredge 'em, we
 pot 'em, we dredge 'em, we

mf
mf
mf

48

Monk-fish and mar-lin and had-dock and hake, we trap 'em, slip 'em,
 trawl 'em, we trap 'em, slip 'em,
 trawl 'em, Tur-bot and me-grim and sea-bass and crab,

p
p
mf
p

52 *mf* C *p*

line 'em, haul 'em, We trick 'em, we bait 'em,

line 'em, haul 'em, We trick 'em, Skate: en - dan - gered,

Mus-sels and cut - tle - fish, an-cho-vy, dab. Bass: en - dan - gered, we bait 'em,
(rhymes with 'mass')

mf *f* *p*

unmeasured tremolo

58 *f* *p*

Monk - fish: en - dan - gered, Mar - lin: en - dan - gered, We chase 'em, we

en - dan - gered, en - dan - gered, We chase 'em, we

f *f*

en - dan - gered, en - dan - gered, Had - dock: en

63

f

net 'em an' kill 'em, we box 'em, we ship 'em to mar - ket an' sell 'em, We eat them:

f

net 'em an' kill 'em, we box 'em, we ship 'em to mar - ket an' sell 'em, We eat them:

f *mf*

dan - gered, Ray: en - dan - gered, We eat them: We

heartfelt

67

mf *f*

We know them, we love 'em, we want 'em, we need them!

mf *f*

We know them, we love 'em, we want 'em, we need them!

f

poach 'em, we fry 'em, we bake 'em, we grill 'em, we love 'em, we want 'em, we need them!

71 *mf* *f*

We know them, We love them, We

mf *f*

We know them, We love them, We

mf spoken

and we know how to catch em, and they're part of our hist-'ry,

76 *f* **despairing shout**

need them! _____ and fill-ing the o-ceans with plas-tic.

despairing shout

need them! _____ and fill-ing the o-ceans with plas-tic.

f

but we're ta-king too ma-ny and rob-bing the fu-ture and fill-ing the o-ceans with plas-tic.

D anguished

f

We cast care a - side for the o - cean was

f

We cast care a - side for the o - cean was

f

We cast care a - side for the o - cean was

87

wide, There were tonnes in the sea — to catch for our tea...

wide, — There were tonnes in the sea — to catch for our tea...

wide, — There were tonnes in the sea — to catch for our tea...

93

p *mf* *p*

But fish-ers, take care To leave Ga - ia her share, Or those

p *mf* *p*

But fish-ers, take care To leave Ga - ia her share, Or those

p *mf* *p*

But fish-ers, take care To leave Ga - ia her share, Or those

98

ppp

fish that we love Will be fin - ished and gone.

ppp

fish that we love Will be fin - ished and gone.

ppp

fish that we love Will be fin - ished and gone.

pp