

for my dear Cath,
on the occasions of her birthdays
2003–2006

At the Fishing Hole

Three Inuit Songs

Oliver Barton

1. *I Stood Jigging*

I wonder why
My song-to-be that I wish to use,
My song-to-be that I wish to put together,
I wonder why it will not come to me.
At Sioraq it was at a fishing hole on the ice,
I could feel a little trout on the line,
And then it was gone.
I stood jigging.
But why is it so difficult, I wonder?
When summer came and the waters opened,
It was then that catching became so hard:
I am not good at hunting!

2. *A Bit of a Song*

It is lovely to put together
A bit of a song,
Avaya!
But I often do it badly, avaya!
It is lovely to hunt,
But I seldom shine like a burning wick
On the ice, avaya!
It is lovely to have wishes fulfilled,
But they all slip past me!
It is all so difficult, avayaya!

3. *An Awkward Song*

Avayaja,
I know what I want to put into words,
But it does not become orderly,
It does not become worth listening to;
Something that is well arranged.
Avayaja,
Something well worth hearing,
Hastily to put that together
Is often difficult.
An awkward song, maybe, I have put together.
Avayaja.

Piuvkaq (from Rasmussen's "The Netsilik Eskimos", 1931)

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I Stood Jigging

Irregularly pulsing (♩ = 100)

mp press a little on strong syllables

The first system of music consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The lyrics "I won - der why My" are placed below the notes. The piano accompaniment is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a grand staff brace. It features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed at the beginning of the piano part. A *Leg.* (legato) marking is located below the piano part.

I won - der why My

The second system of music continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains the lyrics "song-to - be that I wish to use, My song-to - be that I wish to put to - ge - ther,". The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note bass line and chords.

song-to - be that I wish to use, My song-to - be that I wish to put to - ge - ther,

The third system of music continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains the lyrics "I won - der why it will not come to me.". The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note bass line and chords.

I won - der why it will not come to me.

The fourth system of music continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains the lyrics "I won - der why My song-to - be that I". The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note bass line and chords.

I won - der why My song-to - be that I

21
wish to use, My song-to - be that I wish to put to - ge-ther, I

25
won - der why it will not come to me.

30
mf At Sio-raq

36
it was at a fish-ing hole _____ on the ice, _____ I could

41

feel a lit-tle trout on the line,

p

46

And then it was gone,— then it was gone.—

And.

51

mf

I stood jig-ging, I stood jig-ging, jig-ging, jig-ging. But

mf

56

why, but why, ———— but why is it so

mp a little slower

p

And.

62 *mf*
 dif - fi - cult, I won - der? When — sum - mer came — and the wa - ters

Ped. ————— Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

67
 o - pened, It was then that catch - ing be - came so hard:

Ped. ————— Ped.

73
 I am not good at

Ped. Ped. ————— Ped.

78
 hunt - ing!

Ped. —————

Maytree, 5 July 2003

A Bit of a Song

Plaintive $\bullet = 80$

mf *p*

mf *p*

It is love - ly to put to - ge - ther A

mf *p*

bit of a song, A - va - ya, a - va - ya! But I

mf *p*

oft - en do it bad - ly, a - va - ya, a - va - ya!

mf *p*

It is love - ly to hunt, love - ly to hunt,

27 *mp*
But I sel - dom, I sel - dom shine like a

pesante

31 *p*
burn-ing wick On the ice, a - va - ya, a - va - ya!

p

35 *mp*
It is love - ly to have wish - es ful-filled, But they

mp

39 *mf* *p*
all slip past me! It is all so dif-fi-cult, a -

p *pp*

44 *pp*
- va - ya - ya, a - va - ya - ya!

pp

An Awkward Song

ff
A - va - ya - ja, a - va - ya - ja,
f
Reo -----

a - va - ya - ja, I know, I know what I
mp
mf *p*
Reo -----

want to put in - to words, But it
mf *mf* *p*

does not be-come or-der-ly, or - der-ly, or-der-ly, It does not be-come worth
mf *f*
mf *f*

17

list-'ning to, list-'ning to, list-'ning to; Some-thing that is well ar-ranged.

ped. -----

22

Thunder device A - va - ya - ja,

ped. ----- *ped.* -----

28

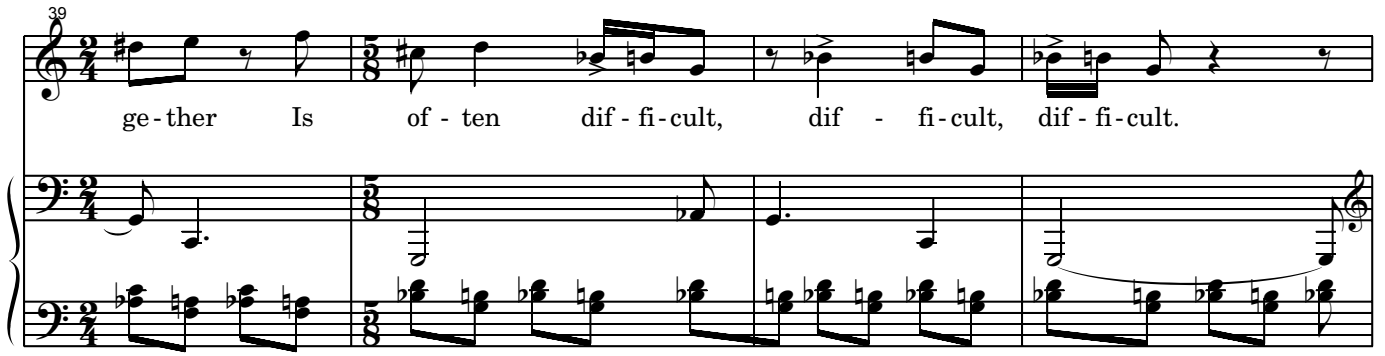
a - va - ya - ja, a - va - ya - ja,

35

mp Some-thing, some-thing well worth hear-ing, Hast-i - ly to put that to -


The thunder device is a cardboard tube with a sheet of thick plastic glued over the end, and a long length of spiral wire (such as is used to support net curtains) attached to middle of the plastic. Cheap and effective! You could use something else - perhaps a manly rattle or possibly a tambourine. Or omit it altogether.

39



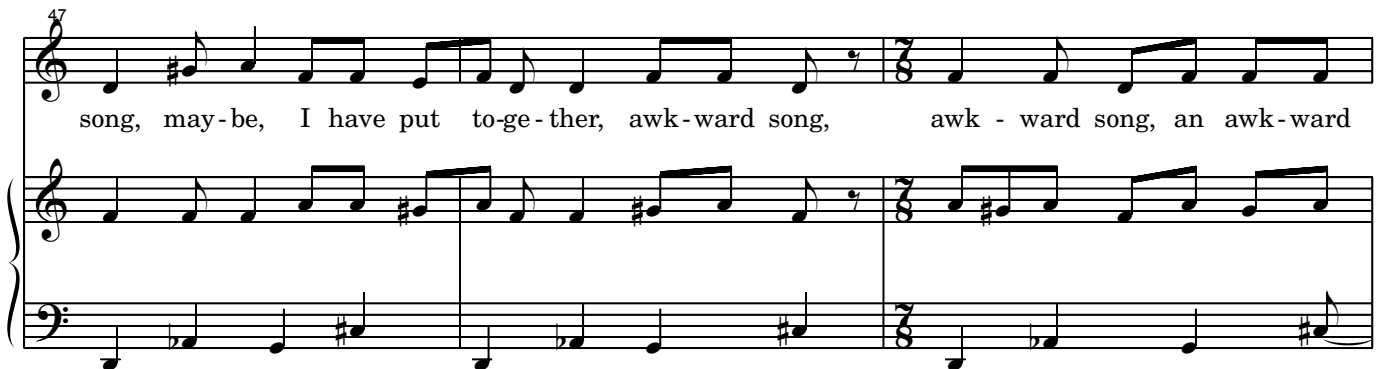
ge-ther Is of - ten dif - fi - cult, dif - fi - cult, dif - fi - cult.

43



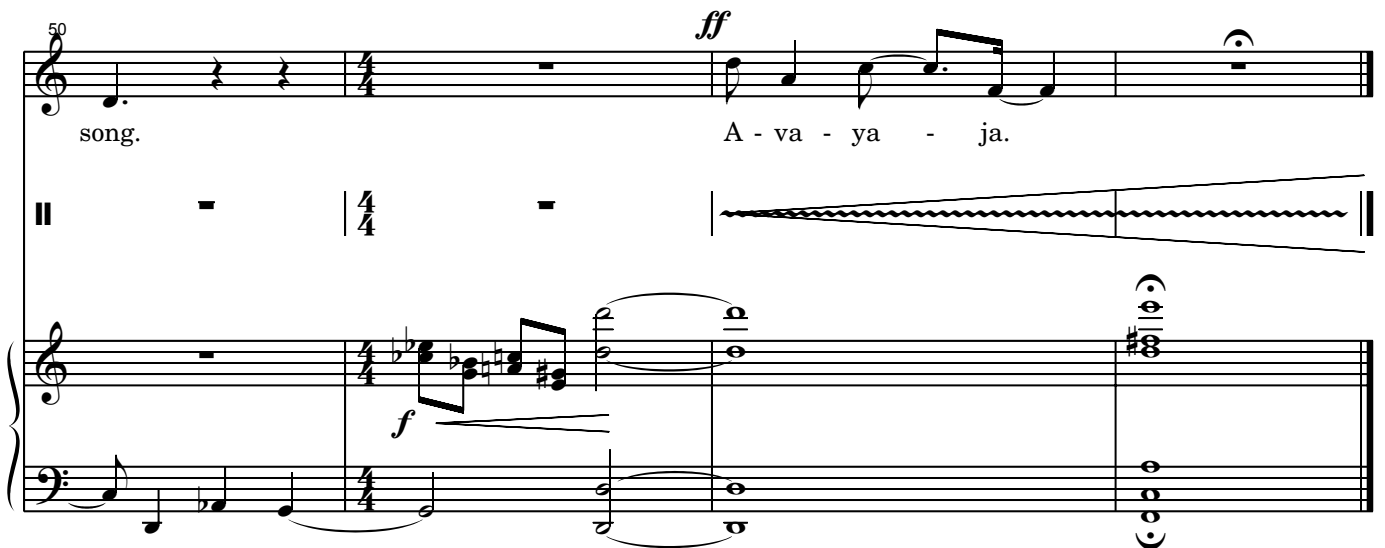
An awk - ward song, may - be, I have put to - ge - ther, an awk - ward

47



song, may - be, I have put to - ge - ther, awk - ward song, awk - ward song, an awk - ward

50



song. A - va - ya - ja.