

FOUR PORTUGUESE SONGS

For unison voices & piano duet

PROGRAMME NOTES

American pianist, Nancy Lee Harper, while acting as Piano Professor at Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal was also the Artistic Director of a vibrant International Piano Festival. In the Festival's fifth year, she invited both myself and Roy Howat to perform and expressed interest in repertoire that would involve the local community. My response was to request Portuguese folk song material that I could set for childrens' choir with piano duet accompaniment.

The songs selected for ***Four Portuguese Songs*** were chosen from the music Nancy posted to me in London. Only one rehearsal was possible with the Coro Infantil de Santa Joana before the premiere on 26 June 2004. At the concert, which took place in the park setting of the Teatro Estaleiro, the songs were paired with Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals* with Roy and myself performing in my self-made respective lion and cat costumes!

An English version followed when I was invited to be Composer-in-Residence at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in 2010. The Festival's Director, Piers Lane, had devised a morning family concert and requested an English version of the text. On this occasion, the Australian premiere was performed by the Belgian Gardens State School Choir conducted by Malcolm Cook with Piers Lane and the composer at the piano on 31 July 2010 in the Townsville Civic Theatre.