

BEAUTIFUL

MORT

BACKGROUND

Terry Pratchett is one of the most prolific and successful novelists in the world, with global sales of over 65 million books in 37 languages. The first of his comic fantasy Discworld novels was published in 1983 and this musical adaptation of *Mort*— the fourth book in the series – was produced by Youth Music Theatre UK[†] in 2007.

Librettist Jenifer Toksvig writes about this song: ‘Mort grew up on the farm, just him and his Dad, and he’s never really had much to do with girls. Then he gets a job as Death’s apprentice, and falls in love at first sight with Princess Keli (as you do). Being a very logical sort of fifteen-year-old, this is a very Mort sort of song.’

PERFORMANCE NOTES

It’s important that you don’t play Mort as a caricature ‘geek’ or send him up in any way. Of course he’s inarticulate and unsophisticated and lives in a parallel universe to our own, but that doesn’t mean his emotions are any less heartfelt or his pain and anguish are any less real than anyone else’s.

Mort is experimenting with language and melody. He longs to sing the most beautiful, eloquent love song in the world, but no sooner has he begun than he starts qualifying and modifying what he has said, his thoughts spinning off in all directions.

The composer’s comments on the score are particularly helpful for the performer, showing how changes of tempo and delivery reflect Mort’s thought processes. Mark the stages of his journey with care, precision and honesty. Then don’t be afraid to really sing out ‘with wild abandon’ as you repeat Keli’s name over and over again. It’s a wonderful moment of clarity and release. But, Mort being Mort, he has to worry about things just one more time before the song ends.

SINGING TIPS

There are some short phrases in this song which help to suggest someone working things out as they go along. Try speaking the words out loud in time to get a feel for the complex rhythms and the ebb and flow of the thoughts. Clap the pulse of the music as you speak but be prepared to change the underlying tempo a little to suggest the unfolding moods.

Let your voice open up as you repeat the name *Ke-li*. The *k* sound is called a *plosive* consonant. Exaggerate the *k* and feel the force of the air. The *l* sound lifts the tongue up to ridge of the gum. If you exaggerate this you will feel how it almost stops the sound. When you’re singing use the *k* to give you a strong start but then flip the tongue out of the way quickly so as to let the vowel on *i* carry the sound. Try holding your hands by the side of your head as you sing the quavers on *ke*, and then throw them forward on the *li*. Keep your hands forward as you sustain the *i* and feel the sound travelling forward from the ends of your fingers.

[†] Youth Music Theatre UK was founded in 2003 and is now Britain’s largest organisation providing participation in musical theatre projects and productions for young people. For more information about Youth Music Theatre UK, its Musical Theatre Library and how to perform this work, go to www.youthmusictheatreuk.org.

FEED THE BIRDS

TRACK

2

WORDS AND MUSIC BY RICHARD M SHERMAN AND ROBERT B SHERMAN

Slowly, with feeling ♩ = 86

Gm Cm/G Gm D Gm *mp*

Ear - ly each

6 Cm/G Gdim⁷ Cm/G Gm Cm/G

day to the steps of Saint Paul's the lit - tle old bird wo - man

11 Gm Cm/G Gdim⁷

comes. In her own spe - cial way to the peo - ple she

I LOVE PARIS

WORDS AND MUSIC BY COLE PORTER

TRACK

4

Moderately ♩ = 148

C Am F⁶ G⁷sus⁴ G⁷ *p*

Ev - 'ry

tranquilly

5 C F⁶

time I look down on this time - - less town, whe - ther

9 G⁷ C C⁶ Cmaj⁷ C

blue or grey be her skies, wheth - er