



# THE THREE RAVENS

VOICE & KEYBOARD

English Folk Ballad

Published in "Melismata" by Thomas Ravenscroft (1611)

ARRANGED BY

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

1896



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#### COVER IMAGE

“The Three Ravens” by Edward Frederick Brewtnall, 1885



The “renaissance” in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus.

Although a number of those works were engraved, printed and are regularly performed today, performance scores for a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works were either never engraved or were engraved and printed but are no longer available in the publishers’ catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws, coupled with changing musical tastes, played a pivotal role in creating this void. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. In 1964, holograph and copyist scores from both Novello and from publishers it represented were offered to the British Library and the Royal College of Music Library (see The RCM Novello Library – The Musical Times, Feb. 1983 by Jeremy Dibble ).

These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of engraved vocal scores, widely available through various online library sources, are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source non-engraved/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers’ autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

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### Source Information

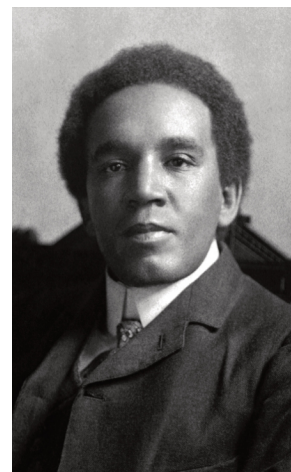
*Manuscript*  
*Vocal Score*  
*Manuscript Transcription & Score Preparation*

Royal College of Music Library,, MS 4963  
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### Reference Material and Software

*Notation Software:* Finale v. 27.2 *Audio Software:* Garritan Personal Orchestra 5 *Graphic Software:* Adobe Photoshop CS5  
*Document Software:* Affinity Serif Publisher *Music Notation Reference:* [Behind Bars](#) by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in 1875 in London, England to Alice Hare Martin (1856–1953), an English woman, and Dr. Daniel Peter Hughes Taylor, a Krio from Sierra Leone who had studied medicine in the capital. He became a prominent administrator in West Africa. The couple never married.



Alice Martin named her son Samuel Coleridge Taylor after the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. They lived with her father Benjamin Holmans and his family after she had her son. Her father was a skilled farrier and was married to a woman other than her mother; they had four daughters and at least one son. Alice and her father called her son Coleridge. The family lived in Croydon, Surrey. In 1887 Alice Martin married George Evans, a railway worker.

Taylor was brought up in Croydon. There were numerous musicians on his mother's side and her father played the violin. He started teaching it to Coleridge when he was young. His ability was obvious when young, and his grandfather paid for the boy to have violin lessons. The extended family arranged for Taylor to study at the Royal College of Music, beginning at the age of 15. He changed from violin to composition, working under professor Charles Villiers Stanford. After completing his degree, Taylor became a professional musician, soon being appointed a professor at the Crystal Palace School of Music; and conducting the orchestra at the Croydon Conservatoire.

The young man later used the name "Samuel Coleridge-Taylor", with a hyphen, said to be following a printer's typographical error. In 1894, his father Dr. Daniel Taylor was appointed coroner for the British Empire in the Province of Senegambia.

In 1899 Coleridge-Taylor married Jessie Walmisley, whom he had met as a fellow student at the Royal College of Music. Six years older than him, Jessie had left the college in 1893. The couple had a son, named Hiawatha (1900–1980) after a Native American immortalized in poetry, and a daughter Gwendolyn Avril (1903–1998). Both had careers in music: Hiawatha adapted his father's works. Gwendolyn started composing music early in life, and became a conductor-composer in her own right; she used the professional name of Avril Coleridge-Taylor.

By 1896, Coleridge-Taylor was already earning a reputation as a composer. He was later helped by Edward Elgar, who recommended him to the Three Choirs Festival. His "Ballade in A minor" was premiered there. His early work was also guided by the influential music editor and critic August Jaeger of music publisher Novello; he told Elgar that Taylor was "a genius".

On the strength of Hiawatha's Wedding Feast, which was conducted by Professor Charles Villiers Stanford at its 1898 premiere and proved to be highly popular, Coleridge-Taylor made three tours of the United States. In the United States, he became increasingly interested in his paternal racial heritage. Coleridge-Taylor participated as the youngest delegate at the 1900 First Pan-African Conference held in London, and met leading Americans through this connection, including poet Paul Laurence Dunbar and scholar and activist W.E.B. Du Bois.

In 1904, on his first tour to the United States, Coleridge-Taylor was received by President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House. Coleridge-Taylor sought to draw from traditional African music and integrate it into the classical tradition, which he considered Johannes Brahms to have done with Hungarian music and Antonín Dvořák with Bohemian music. Having met the African-American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar in London, Taylor set some of his poems to music. A joint recital between Taylor and Dunbar was arranged in London, under the patronage of US Ambassador John Milton Hay. It was organized by Henry Francis Downing, an African-American playwright and London resident.

Composers were not handsomely paid for their music, and they often sold the rights to works outright in order to make immediate income. This caused them to lose the royalties earned by the publishers who had invested in the music distribution through publication. The popular Hiawatha's Wedding Feast sold hundreds of thousands of copies, but Coleridge-Taylor had sold the music outright for the sum of 15 guineas, so did not benefit directly. He learned to retain his rights and earned royalties for other compositions after achieving wide renown but always struggled financially.

Coleridge-Taylor was 37 when he died of pneumonia on September 1, 1912. His death is often attributed to the stress of his financial situation. He was survived by his wife Jessie (1869–1962), their daughter Avril and son Hiawatha.

# THE THREE RAVENS

SONG FOR VOICE & KEYBOARD

Anonymous

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

1896

*Andante con espressivo*

Voice

Keyboard

*mf* *sf* *cresc.* *ff*

Voice

6 *mf*

There were three Rav - vens sat on a tree, Downe a downe, hey

Keyboard

6 *mf*

Voice

11 *p*

downe, hey downe. They were as blacke as blacke could be, With a downe. \_\_\_\_\_ Then

Keyboard

11

16

Voice

one of them said to his mate: "Oh what shall we our breake-fast take?" With a downe der-rie, der ry,

Keyboard

*p*

21

Voice

der ry, downe, downe. Ah! well - a - day in

Keyboard

*f*

26

Voice

yon greene field, Downe a downe, hey downe, hey downe, There lies a Knight slain un-der his shield, With a

Keyboard

*p* *rall.*

*a tempo*

31

Voice

downe. His faith - ful hounds lie at his feete So well do they their

31

Keyboard

*a tempo*

*pp* *pp*

36

Voice

Mas - ter keepe, With a downe, der-rie, der-ry, der-ry, downe downe.

36

Keyboard

*f*

41

Voice

His ea - ger Hawkes a - bout him flie, Downe a downe, hey downe, hey downe. There's

41

Keyboard

*p*

*molto leggero*

46

Voice

not a fowle may come him nie, With a downe. But yon - der comes a

46

Keyboard

*Red.* *Red.*

51

Voice

fal - low Doe, And to the Knight she straight doth go, With a downe der-rie, der-ry,

51

Keyboard

*p* *rit.*

*Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

55

Voice

der-ry downe, downe. She lift-ed up his life-less head,

55

Keyboard

*a tempo* *p* *f* *pp* *mp*

*Red.* *Red.*



61

Voice

61

downe a downe, hey downe, hey downe, She kiss'd his wounds that were so red, With a downe.

Keyboard

*pp*

*Red.*

66

Voice

66

She bur-ied him be - fore the prime, She died her - self ere ev'n - song time, With a

Keyboard

*pp*

*Red.*

71

Voice

71

downe der - rie, der - ry, der - ry, downe, downe.

Keyboard

*rit.*



# ENGLISH HERITAGE

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