



JOHN CROFT  
LOST SONGS

Juliet Fraser  
*soprano*

# John Croft (1971-)

FHR114D

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## Lost Songs (2017)

*for soprano and live electronics*

- |   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | <b>I. kiss ... began... knowledge</b> (Alcaeus)  | [2:27] |
| 2 | <b>II. ... desire ... completely ... (if?) I can</b> (Sappho)                          | [2:34] |
| 3 | <b>III. ...(to the?) chamber</b> (Sappho)  | [2:29] |
| 4 | <b>IV. ... and lily ... about the ankles ... (On the daughters of Lycambes)</b> (Anon) | [3:32] |
| 5 | <b>V. ... all ... perishes</b> (Alcaeus)   | [1:37] |
| 6 | <b>VI. The moon has set, and the Pleiades</b> (Sappho)                                 | [2:15] |

Total Timing: [14:55]

Juliet Fraser *soprano*

The electronics for this piece were completed at Art Zoyd Studios, Valenciennes, France. Electronics design by **John Croft** and **Oudom Southammavong**

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# LOST SONGS

**John Croft** was born in 1971. He studied philosophy and music at the Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand), subsequently composition and music cognition at the University of Sheffield. He latterly studied with John Casken at the University of Manchester, where he completed his doctorate, and is currently Reader at Brunel University London. His music has been performed by numerous ensembles and soloists. He received First Prize from the 2001 International Jurgenson Competition for his *String Quartet* and the 2011 ICMC European Region Award for *...ne l'aura che tremo* for alto flute and live electronics, while *Intermedio III* for bass clarinet and live electronics won the Prix Ton Bruynèl in 2012. *Intermedio III*, along with other pieces for live electronics and for chamber ensemble, is featured on Croft's portrait CD *Seirēnes*, released on First Hand Records (FHR87). An interview with the composer can be accessed at <http://explore-ensemble.com/john-croft>

Croft has assembled a varied catalogue that takes in most of the main genres. Among the most impressive of his recent works is *Lost Songs* for soprano with live electronics, premièred by Juliet Fraser at Symphony Hall

in Birmingham during November 2017. The composer has noted that 'none of the electronic sounds are pre-recorded sound-files; they are all generated in real time from transformations of vocal sound and physically modelled instruments (Ircam Modalys) changing their characteristics in response to the vocal contour. The nature of these instruments was inspired by the traditional lyre and aulos that would have accompanied the original poems.' The six settings of Ancient Greek poets evoke a remote yet involving sound-world, the soprano becoming a focal-point of eloquence in this imaginative musical experience.

The initial setting of Alcaeus (c. 621 BC–c. 560 BC) merges into focus against a halo of resonance, its use of vibrato heightening the expressive vocal writing. Following this are two settings of Sappho (c. 630 BC–c. 570 BC): the first featuring a soulful vocal afforded perspective by the chant-like element, whereas the second emerges gradually with the voice heard undulating elegantly against gentle dissonance. The fourth and longest setting is of an anonymous text, the vocal line exuding myriad images of itself via electronics, while the fifth and shortest setting returns to Alcaeus for music whose contemplative aura



(Photo by Anneke Scott)

is reinforced by prominent use of decay. The final setting is once more of Sappho, the voice cushioned against a backdrop of electronics whose disembodied quality is apposite to music that seems to dissolve on perception before it ultimately fades into silence.

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Soprano **Juliet Fraser** has a repertoire dominated by the very old and the very new. She regularly appears as a guest soloist with contemporary music ensembles Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, Plus-Minus and Talea. She is also a core member of EXAUDI vocal ensemble, which she co-founded with composer/conductor James Weeks in 2002 and with whom she performs a repertoire ranging from *ars subtilior* and Renaissance madrigals to the most complex new works. Fraser is an active commissioner of new music, working particularly closely with composers Michael Finnissy, Cassandra Miller, Matthew Shlomowitz and Rebecca Saunders. Much of her commissioning has focused on creating a body of new work for voice and tape/live electronics or for voice and piano, with duo partner Mark Knoop. She is also recognised for breathing new life into existing works such as Babbitt's *Philomel*, Feldman's *Three Voices*, Vivier's *Bouchara* and Grisey's *Quatre chants*. She is the founder and artistic director of the eavesdropping series in London, and co-director of all that dust, a new label for new music.



(Photo by © Dimitri Djuric)

I.

κύνειε . [

ἄρξαν . [

φράδαι[

αιδηρετ[

θάσσει . [

πέλοντ' ἄ[

θνάτων[

Alcaeus, fragment from

Berlin papyrus 9569 (1st-c. AD)

kýneie

ârxan

phrádai

aidēret

thássei

pélont a

thnátōn

kiss ...

[they] began (they rule) ...

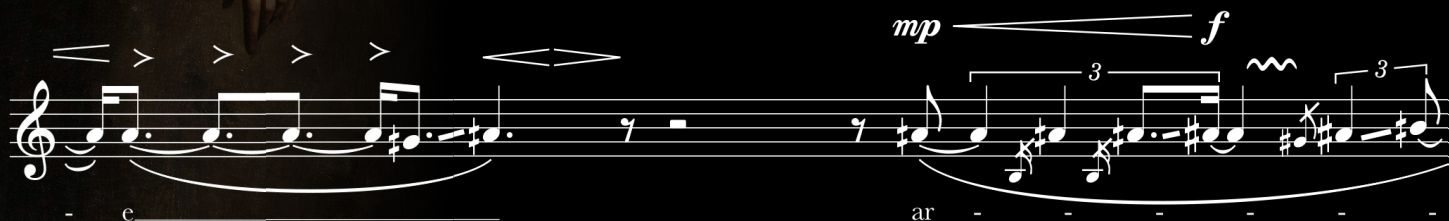
knowledge (understanding) ...

[bashful?] ...

sits ...

are ...

mortal ...



II.

]θε θῦμον

]μι πάντα

]δύναμαι,

]

]ας κεν ἦ μοι

]ς ἀντιλαμπεν

]λον πρόσωπον

]

]γχροῖσθεις

] '[..]ρος

Sappho, fragment from

7th-century parchment

the thýmon

mi pánpa

dýnamai

as ken ê moi

s antilampen

lon próso

ngkhróistheis

ros

...desire

...completely

...(if?) I can

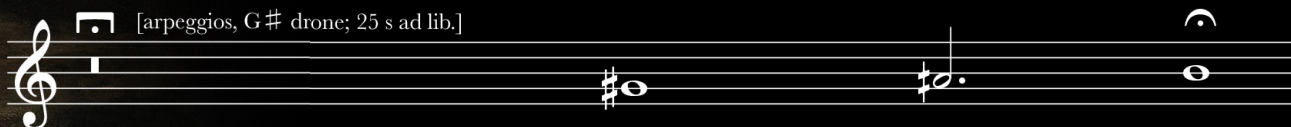
...(as long as?) I have

...to shine back

(beautiful?) face...

caressed/stained

(?)



III.

]ρηον θαλάμω τωδεσ[

]ις εὔποδα νύμφαν ἄβ

Sappho, fragment from

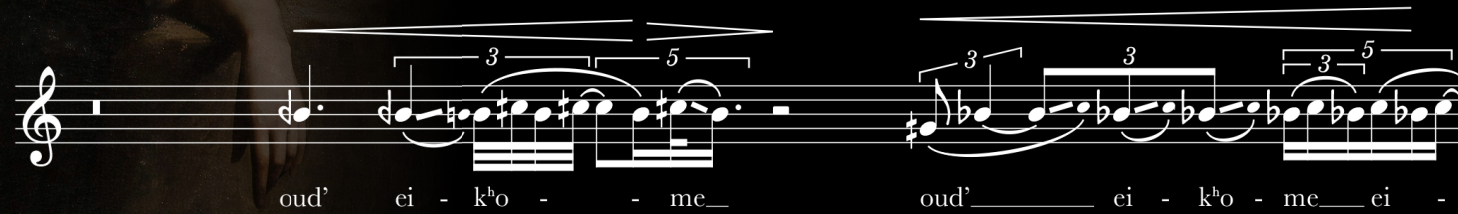
Oxyrhynchus papyrus 2308 (Voigt 103b)

rēon thalámō tōdes

is eúpada nýmphan àb

...(to the?) chamber...

...the bride with her beautiful feet



IV.

ω[

αφημ[

καὶ λειρίσισι...[

περίσφυροι...[

οὐδ' εἶχομε[

αλλημε[

καπνευ[

ηδεν[

εφρον[

πραπ[

κοσμ[

ō

aphem

kai leirísisi

perísphyroi

oud' eikhome

allēme

kapneu

ēden

ephron

prap

kosm

[o]

[absent (?)...]

and lily...

about the ankles...

and we were not able (?)...

but one (of us) (?)

and lifeless [breathless] (?)

the other (?)

(?)

[heart(?)/intellect(?)]

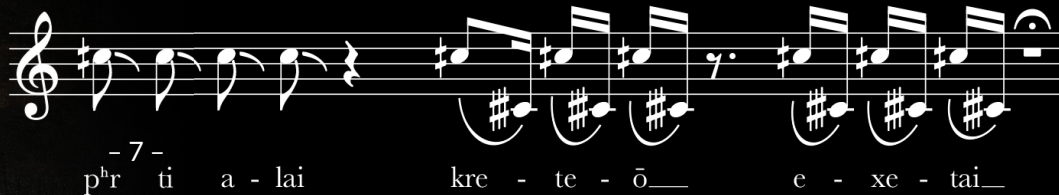
adornments(?)

Anon., On the daughters of Lycambes.

Dublin papyrus (late 3rd c. BC)

(inv. 193a, col. ii) 7th-century parchment

**poco accel.**.....



V.

]ν· πάντα δὲ να[  
] ἀπόλλυται· κ[  
]σικαισταίπο[  
]φρ . [...] . τι[  
]αλαί . [   
]κρετεω[... . [   
]πραίσομαι[  
]ε μέμπτον ὦ[  
] . ἔξεταί δ[  
]ντακακ[  
]ν' ὦ[

...

] . να . λυ . [   
] . [ ' . ] . φθό[  
] . ' ὕμω[

Alcaeus, fragment from  
Oxyrhynchus papyrus

n pánta dè na  
apólllytai k  
sikaistaipo  
phr ti  
alai  
kreteō  
prapeisomai  
e mémpton ō  
éxetai d  
ntakak  
n ō

na ly  
phthó  
ýmō

... all ...  
... perishes ...  
...[cavernous?]...  
... (is burned?) ...  
... (?) ...  
... I prevail ...  
... I shall suffer (?) ...  
... shameful ...  
... [search?] ...  
... (?) ...  
... oh! ...  
...  
... (?) ...  
... [cry/envy/decay] ...  
... (?) ...

poco accel.....

phr ti a - lai kre - te - o e - xe - tai p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup>o



VI.

δέδυκε μὲν ἅ σελάννα  
καὶ Πληΐαδες· μέσαι δὲ  
νύκτες, παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὥρα,  
ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω.

Sappho – Voigt 168B

dédyke mèn a selánna  
καὶ Plēíades ; méσαι δὲ  
nýktes, parà d'érkhet' ōra,  
égō δὲ μόνα kateúđō.

The moon has set  
and the Pleiades; it is  
midnight, and time goes by,  
and I lie alone.

16



17

The moon has set

18



and the Plei - a - - -

Translations by John Croft



Recorded at Church of the Ascension, Plumstead,  
London , UK, 9 August 2018

Engineered and produced by **John Croft**  
24bit, 96kHz hi-resolution recording and mastering

Album image: *Sappho* by **Charles Mengin** (1877)

Artwork by **David Murphy** (FHR)

Booklet notes by **Richard Whitehouse**

FHR thanks Peter Bromley and John Croft

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Also on FHR



JOHN CROFT  
**SEIRĒNES**

La terra lagrimosa...una luce vermiglia  
Intermedio I  
Intermedio III

Richard Craig *flutes*  
Emma Richards *viola*  
Diego Castro Magaš *guitar*  
Alice Purton *cello*  
Séverine Ballon *cello*  
Marij van Gorkom *bass clarinet*