

The Lovers of Teruel

*Trio for Soprano Voice, Guitar,
and Piano*



Zoe Gougousidis

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The Lovers of Teruel was composed in 2023, and was premiered on the 14th of November in the East Recital Hall at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

The instrumentation is for soprano voice, classical guitar and piano.

The premiere was performed by Arabella Riepler (Soprano Voice), Don Nguyen (Guitar) and Nicholas Till (Piano). This trio additionally workshopped the piece prior to the premiere.

Duration: c. 7 minutes

The work takes some influence from Spanish musical styles, and utilises a lilting, romantic feel to convey both the love and the tragedy of the story. Both major and minor tonalities are used throughout to create moments of dissonance and clarity, which reflects different emotional moments in the story. The piece should be performed lyrically and passionately, with a sense of emotive romanticism and a deep sorrow.

The vocalist is the storyteller for the work, taking the perspective of Isabel, who is one of the two lovers in the story. The piano and guitar provide the harmonic and stylistic context, as well as the momentum for the work. The first sections of the piece act as a guitar and piano feature before the vocalist begins, which sets the scene and establishes the sense of love and loss that is inherent to the story.

The full story is written out on the following page.

The work is inspired by *The Lovers of Teruel (Los amantes de Teruel)*, a well known love story from Spain said to have taken place in the city of Teruel in 1217. The story is about two young lovers, Isabel and Diego, who met in their youth. They became friends, and gradually fell in love.

When they had reached the age they could marry, Isabel's father forbade it - he was one of the wealthiest men in Teruel, and he deemed the impoverished Diego not worthy to marry his daughter. Diego, determined to be Isabel's husband, made a deal with him - Isabel would be allowed to remain unmarried for five years. In this time, Diego would leave Teruel to make his fortune - if he did so within these five years, her father would give his blessing to the couple, and they could marry.

And so Diego left, and Isabel waited for his return. She and her father did not hear from him as those five years passed. Isabel's father grew impatient, and pestered Isabel to marry someone - but she convinced her father to uphold the agreement. She was determined to wait for Diego's return.

Time continued to pass, and soon the day arrived that marked the end their agreement. As soon as the deadline had passed, Isabel's father forced her to marry another man that he deemed worthy, as they had not seen or heard any word from Diego. Resigned, Isabel agreed to the marriage.

After the wedding ceremony, a commotion was heard at the city gates - Diego had returned, successful in his quest to gain wealth and make himself worthy to marry his love. However, there had been a misunderstanding on that day all those years ago - Diego did not count the day the agreement was made as the beginning of the five year deadline, whereas Isabel's father had, meaning Diego had arrived just a day too late.

Diego soon learned of the marriage, and that night he snuck into Isabel's room and woke her. He begged her for a kiss, as he was going to die without her (*Bésame, que me muero - kiss me, I'm dying*). She refused, as she was now a married woman and could not risk her honour (*No quiera Dios que yo falte a mi marido - God would not wish me to deceive my husband*).

She told him to forget about her and to find another, as their love was never meant to be (*Por la pasión de Jesucristo os suplico que busques a otra, que de mí no hagáis cuenta. Pues si a Dios no ha complacido, tampoco me complace a mí - for the love of Christ, I beg you to find another, and forget about me. If our love could not please God, then neither should it please me*).

He pleaded with her one last time for a kiss, as his dying wish, but she again refused. He could not bear to live apart from her, and he died at her feet.

The next day, a devastated Isabel arrived at Diego's funeral in her wedding dress. She approached him, lifted her veil and gave him the kiss that he had begged for the night before. In doing so, Isabel died, alongside Diego - the man she had loved, but could never have.

Moved by the tragic tale of the young lovers, the townsfolk buried Diego and Isabel side by side so that the lovers could be together in death as they could not be in life.

In 1560, after the fame of the couple and their story had spread through Spain, the bodies of Isabel and Diego were exhumed and placed in the tombs carved by Juan de Ávalos at the San Peter's Church in Tereul.

The marble tombs depict the lovers and their family shields - they are carved lying side by side, each with a hand outstretched, reaching for the other - but, though they lie so close, their hands do not touch.

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for Soprano, Piano and Guitar Trio

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Romantic and Free ♩ = 40

Soprano Solo

Piano

Guitar

Romantic and Free ♩ = 40

p *molto rubato* *p* *mf*

S. Solo

Pno.

Gtr.

8

accel.

A

Lilting ♩. = 40

2

S. Solo

Pno.

ped. ad lib.

Gtr.

accel.

A

Lilting ♩. = 40

S. Solo

Pno.

Gtr.

