Engar-dug the fool

For vocal trio

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Engar-dug the Fool (2010)

Text: anon

For vocal trio: soprano 1; soprano 2; alto

Premiered by Juice in the York Late Music Festival, 2010.

Duration c. 5 minutes
From a diatribe inscribed in Sumerian cuneiform of a clay tablet, by an unknown author.
Original clay tablet held by the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania

Engar-dug
lu lī-la
lu pē-e-la
ni-su-ub

Engar-dug, ze-za nar-e-ne
silīm dug-dug ur
is-ḥāb
tēš nu-tuku

Engar-dug, gu-du kešē emē
kūn ka-bī-še
kā tar-re-a bal-bal
mu pi-il nar-e-ne
ur gu de ĝīš-za-mi-a nu-ĝal gu-ĝīškīrī de-de

Engar-dug, šīr kug-zu mu-til
nam-maṭ-zu
in-zu
lul-zu pa bi-i-e

Engar-dug, foolish man
disgraced/dirty man
coward

Engar-dug, croaker among the singers
braggart
rogue
shameless

tail stuck in its mouth
boastful and slippery in his advice and counsel
disgraced reputation among the singers
dog not producing sound from the lyre but emitting a battle cry!

Engar-dug, your holy song is finished
your greatness
your insults
your lies are made obvious

Sumerian pronunciation

š  ‘sh’ as in ‘shoe’  [ʃ]
ḥ  ‘ch’ as in ‘loch’  [x]
ĝ  ‘ng’ as in ‘sing’  [ŋ]
r  flicked r  [ɾ]
rr  rolled r  [r]
u  ‘u’ as in ‘put’  [o]
a  ‘ā’ as in French  ‘pâtes’  [a]
i  ‘ee’ as in ‘see’  [ɪ]
Key to Non-standard Notation

- Whispered.

- Half-voiced. Approximate pitch contour is shown by position of note-heads relative to staff line. All half-voiced material is pitched lower than normal speaking voice.

- Spoken. Approximate pitch contour is shown by position of note-heads relative to staff line. Spoken material is pitched lower than normal speaking voice.

- Stamp aggressively. This gesture is always *fortissimo*, regardless of written dynamics.

- Punch left palm threateningly with right fist. Can be either horizontal or vertical (fist slams down onto up-turned palm). This gesture is always *forte*, regardless of written dynamics.

- Smack left hand violently with right hand, either bringing right hand down onto up-turned left palm (as if squishing a beetle!), or smacking back of left hand with right. This gesture is always *forte*, regardless of written dynamics.
Engar-dug the Fool
(for Juice)

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Melodramatic