

*Wendy Cope*  
*From The Audience*

*Poems commissioned by the Endellion String Quartet*

*The Radical*

I've little patience with this kind of thing –  
This trite, post-modern, easy-listening.  
I hoped for something far more challenging.  
This isn't avant-garde enough.  
It really isn't hard enough.  
It isn't avant-garde enough for me.

The point is not to please the bourgeois ear.  
The good composer is a pioneer  
Whose music very few will want to hear.  
This isn't cutting edge enough.  
It isn't off-the-ledge enough.  
It isn't cutting edge enough for me.

Art should disturb. It's not to make us glad.  
It isn't to console us when we're sad.  
It's to remind us that the world is bad.  
This isn't agonised enough.  
You're not antagonised enough.  
It isn't agonised enough for me.

*Repeat ad lib:* It really isn't hard enough  
It isn't avant-garde enough *etc.*

## *The Traditionalist*

I like a good tune with a regular beat  
From the days before music went wrong –  
An old-fashioned melody, catchy and sweet.  
I like a good tune with a regular beat.  
These modern composers, they can't write a song.  
They don't get you tapping your feet.  
I like a good tune with a regular beat  
From the days before music went wrong.

## *The Cougher*

There's a tickle in your throat  
And you've hardly heard a note  
And you're wishing you were in some other place.  
In this silent, listening crowd  
You're the one who'll cough out loud,  
And you know you're facing imminent disgrace.

Yes, right now you're in a pickle.  
The unmanageable tickle  
Is a torment, and it's threatening your poise.  
Can you hold out any longer  
As the urge to cough grows stronger?  
Any moment you'll emit a mighty noise.

If this bloody piece were shorter,  
If you had a glass of water,  
It would help. But there is nothing you can do.  
Oh, if only you could be  
Safe at home with a CD,  
In an armchair, free to cough the whole way through.

Do you hear a rallentando?  
Does this mean the end's at hand? Oh,  
What a mercy. Yes, they're really signing off.  
They perform the closing bars  
And you thank your lucky stars  
And it's over. You have made it. You may cough.

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