

AND THIS SHALL BE FOR MUSIC

Words by Robert Louis Stevenson

Music and additional words by Victor C. Johnson

SATB with piano

Alfred Choral Designs, 2015 - #43303

Difficulty Level - 3

Background Information

And This Shall Be For Music is Victor C. Johnson's setting of Robert Louis Stevenson's poem. Stevenson, later known for writing *Treasure Island* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, was born into a family of engineers in Edinburgh, Scotland. His parents expected him to continue in the family trade of lighthouse design. Instead, he changed his studies to law, and finally settled upon writing. Despite his poor health, eventually dying at the age of 44 from a stroke, Stevenson was well traveled and drew much inspiration from his journeys across the globe. The original poem reads as follows:

*I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.*

*I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.*

*And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.*

This poem appeared as part of a larger work, *Songs of Travel and Other Verses*, and centers around the idea of "travel" as both a physical movement and an interior pilgrimage. It was written later in his life as he meditated on life, love, mortality and his homeland of Scotland.

Elements of Music

Form

This piece is in ABCB form, where A is verse 1 ("*I will make you brooches...blue days at sea*", mm. 1-21), B is the refrain ("*and this shall be...roadside fire*", mm. 22-37, mm. 48-64), and C is verse 2 ("*I will make my kitchen...dewfall at night*", mm. 39-46).

Rhythm

The rhythmic motif dotted quarter-eighth-quarter-quarter appears frequently in this composition, usually occurring at the beginning of a phrase. Mostly notably it is used for the refrain lyrics "*this shall be*

for” and “*no one else is*”, as well as “*only I re (member)*” and “*only you ad(mire)*”. The dotted quarter keeps the vocal lines moving forward and gives the piece emphasis on important nouns and poetic descriptors.

Melody

The sweetness and depth of the melody comes from Johnson’s use of the descending perfect fifth-minor second followed by the ascending minor sixth interval in his verse writing. In the refrain there is a balance of stepwise motions with smaller skips and the trademark melodic minor sixth, creating a sense of continuity but also allowing for more expressive phrasing in the melody.

Harmony

Though primarily harmonized for 4-part mixed chorus, there are several sections that employ SSA and TTB voicing. The majority of the piece is in D-major, though there are several secondary dominant chords, chromatic movements and temporary modulations to related keys around the D major scale. These moments of tension and release in temporarily established tonal centers further emphasizes the passionate, flowing and driving movement of the piece. For the most part the 4 main parts move at the same rhythm, only separating for non harmonic tones and treble or bass voice solo sections.

Timbre and Texture

The tessitura of the voicing in this piece tends to sit in the middle and lower registers of each voice. This creates a darker, richer sound that provides expressive contrast when one or more voices rise in their ranges for a melodic note. The melody line tends to start in unison between two or more voices, slowly expanding into multiple melody lines, easing the listener into a more complex texture one section at a time until the full lush sound of the piece is reached at each refrain. The piano accompaniment functions perfectly as harmonic support without stealing any limelight from the vocal beauty being performed.

Expression

It’s worth noting that the tempo marking of the piece is “Expressively (96)”, and the expressive qualities of the piece support the full and rich quality of the piece. Dynamically it starts at mezzo piano and ebbs back and forth to mezzo forte for the first verse, finally reaching forte at the peak of the refrain before returning to the mezzo piano/mezzo forte ebbing for the end of the refrain and into verse two. The second verse uses forte and mezzo forte dynamics to display the excellent SSA harmonies as they swell and diminish under the glow of the moonlight. The refrain begins at forte on its second iteration, using mezzo forte to provide contrast before finishing at a sustained and beautifully haunting piano. Along with the shifts in dynamics, tempo changes are used liberally at cadenzas and melodic peaks to emphasize the poetic strength of the piece and create a mood of driving, longing passion.

The HEART

Swelling, romantic passion expressed by one completely immersed in love.

Skill Outcomes

- Students will make phrasing decisions based on musical, text and expressive qualities
- Students will perform their phrasing using appropriate and accurate singing techniques

Skill Outcome #1 Strategies Create a series of 3 strategies to complete the first outcome, then a series of 3 different strategies to complete the second outcome.

- Distribute sheet music, listen to a recording and be able to at least sing through the piece on a neutral syllable to establish familiarity with the music. Review what phrasing entails with the students by working on an example together.
- Separate the group by voice part. Each section will use what they know about the piece as well as prior knowledge to break down the parts they sing into musical phrases. Each phrase needs supporting evidence (i.e. this is where the sentence ends, this is where the tempo changes)
- Each section will appoint a representative to deliver their decisions to the choir as a whole. When discrepancies arise between phrasing in different voice parts, we will come to a consensus based on supporting evidence and voting. Director has the final say and can veto these results if they are musically inaccurate or inappropriate.

Assessment for Skill Outcome #1

The director can assess students informally by observing them in sections and facilitating the discussion/voting, but the skill evaluation comes from the phrasing determination itself. If the director has to make a lot of executive adjustments to the phrasing for it to make sense, more work may be needed on how to determine phrasing.

Skill Outcome #2 Strategies

- Review the phrasing decisions made previously to ensure all students are working off the same information
- Rehearse the piece working backwards phrase by phrase, addressing issues as needed
- Perform the piece from the top with focus on executing the phrasing.

Assessment for Skill Outcome #2

Students will be asked to evaluate their performance in terms of how well they executed their phrasing via a student led discussion. Instructor will compare class findings to their own to determine if they are listening to the same things, give feedback and make adjustments to the class's observations if needed (i.e. I think that phrase could used even more crescendo than we gave it).

Knowledge (Cognitive) Outcome

- Students will explore the connection between text and dynamics in this piece and describe it aloud and in writing.

Knowledge Outcome Strategies

- After distributing sheet music and listening to the recording at least once (or even better, singing it through as a group), give students a handout (or write on their own piece of paper) with three columns: "Measure", "Word" and "Dynamic".
- Give students the instruction to split into quartets and make a list of the most important words in the poem. For each of those words, they will also identify the measure it occurs in and the dynamic sung on that word.

- Students will lead a discussion on their findings and if there is any correlation between dynamic expression and lyric meaning/importance. As a class, come to a consensus on the most effective uses of this connection and present it to the instructor.

Assessment for Knowledge Outcome

Assessment will occur in the “presentation” of the class determined lyrics that best demonstrate the connection between dynamics and lyrics. Additionally, instructor will collect each quartet’s column worksheet to gain a better understanding of how they arrived at that conclusion.

Affective Outcome

- Students will explore their emotional responses to this song and relate them to their own experiences in life.

Affective Outcome Strategies

- Tell students the name of the piece, instruct them to close their eyes and listen to it without judging. Immediately after the piece ends, instruct them to write a few words, phrases or sentences of what the piece made them think of and/or what they think the song represents
- Split the class into quartets (or as mixed as you are able to be) and have a student-led discussion on their reactions and what they wrote down. Each group will have a chance to share their findings with the class.
- After discussion and giving some information on Stevenson’s poem, have each student write their own poem in their music journals. At least four sentences long, the poem will reflect something they have given or would like to give to a loved one to express their feelings. Emphasis should be given on this NOT needing to be romantic, though it can be, and that as always journal entries are strictly between the teacher and the student, though there will be time to share later if desired.

*Note: make differentiations as required - if aural issues are present, student can have a copy of the music during the first listen. If writing is an issue, student can draw a picture, do a collage, or speak/describe to the teacher directly in lieu of writing.

Assessment for Affective Outcome

Instructor will use a rubric for evaluating journal entries, mainly focused on completion and following directions and less focused on quality or accuracy of the writing. The idea is to get them inspired and writing about music in hopes that it will help develop their ability to describe music and their emotions over time.

Resources

Johnson, Victor C. *And This Shall Be for Music*. 2015. USA: Alfred Music, 2015. Print.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. “Romance by Robert Louis Stevenson.” *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50329/romance-56d22d543dd7d.

“Robert Louis Stevenson.” *Robert Louis Stevenson*, robert-louis-stevenson.org/.

The Music of Victor C. Johnson, www.victorjohnsonmusic.com/.