



Spring 2012

Sonnet 29

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Sonnet 29

Abstract

"Sonnet 29" is an a capella choral piece written for the Gettysburg College Choir in the Spring of 2012. Dr. Robert Natter, director of the College choir, asked me if I would like to write a piece with text of Shakespeare, as he was planning to program a concert that consisted entirely of Shakespearean text. I chose this particular sonnet because it has a great metaphor of transformation which lends itself well to being set to music. In the first half of the piece, the speaker is in utter despair, and I bring this out with clustered harmonies, quiet dynamics, and a somber atmosphere. Then, about halfway through the piece, the speaker has a change of heart after thinking of someone that he loves. His utter despair turns to utter joy, which is reflected by a change in texture, harmonic language, and volume. Upon first read of the text, one might assume that the speaker is an entirely different person than he was at the onset of the poem in that his despair has completely vanished. With the ending of my piece, I question if human emotion really works that way. To underscore this dichotomy, I combine the close harmonies of the first half of the piece with the new harmonic language of the second half to create an ending that is not entirely resolved.

Keywords

music, choir, a capella, Shakespeare, sonnet, SATB

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Composition | Music | Music Performance

Comments

Ensemble: Gettysburg College Choir

Performance Date: March 24, 2012

Conductor: Robert Natter

Location: Christ Chapel at Gettysburg College

Sonnet 29

For The Gettysburg College Choir

William Shakespeare

Matt Carlson

Freely, Guided by the text
♩=42

Musical score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts. The score is in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. It begins with a 6/4 time signature change. The lyrics are: "I all a lone be weep" for Soprano; "When, in dis-grace with for-tune and men's eyes, I a lone be weep" for Alto; "When, in dis-grace with for-tune and men's eyes, I, I a lone be weep" for Tenor; and "When, in dis-grace with for-tune and men's eyes, I a lone be weep" for Bass. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it.

Musical score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts. The score is in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. It begins with a 4/4 time signature change and a *poco rit.* marking. The lyrics are: "my out-cast state and trou-ble deaf hea-ven with my boot-less cries And" for Soprano; "my out-cast state and trou-ble heav'n with my boot-less cries" for Alto; "my out-cast state and trou-ble deaf hea-ven with my boot-less cries" for Tenor; and "my out-cast state and trou-ble heav'n with my boot-less cries" for Bass. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano). Triplet markings with a '3' above the notes are present.

7

S. *pp*
look u-pon my- self and curse my fate, Wish-ing me like to one more rich in

A. *p* *pp*
look u-pon my- self and curse my fate, Wish-ing me like to one more rich in

T. *p* *pp*
look u-pon my- self and curse my fate, Wish-ing me like to one more rich in

B. *p* *pp*
look u-pon my- self and curse my fate, Wish-ing me like to one more rich in

10

S. hope, fea-tured like him, like him with friends poss-ess'd, de -

A. hope, fea-tured like him, like him with friends poss-ess'd,

T. hope, fea-tured like him, like him with friends poss ess'd,

B. hope, fea-tured like him, like him with friends poss ess'd.

13

S. sir-ing this man's art and that man's scope, *molto rit.* *ppp*

A. this man's art and that man's scope, With what I most en-joy con-ten-ted least; *ppp*

T. this man's art and that man's scope, what I most en-joy con-ten-ted least; *ppp*

B. this man's art and that man's scope, what I most en-joy con-ten-ted least;

18

S.

A.

T.

B.

Yet, in these thoughts my - self al -

Yet, Yet, Yet in these thoughts my - self al -

20

S.

A.

T.

B.

Hap - ly I think on thee, and then my

most de - spi - sing, Hap - ly I think on thee, and then my

most de - spi - sing, Hap - ly I think on thee, and then my

most de - spi - sing, Hap - ly I think on thee, and then my

23

S.

A.

T.

B.

state, like to the lark at break of day a - ri-sing from sull - en earth,

state oh* - - ah -

state oo* - oh - - ah -

state mm* - oo - - oh - - ah -

*Gradually open to ah vowel

26

S. *ff*
sings hymns at hea - ven's gate;

A. *f* *ff*
earth sing hymns at hea - ven's gate;

T. *f* *ff*
earth sings hymns at hea - ven's gate;

B. *f* *ff*
earth sings hymns at hea - ven's gate;

Much slower

29 *p* *rit.*
S. For thy sweet love re-mem-bered such wealth brings that then I scorn to change my state with kings.

A. *p*
For thy sweet love re-mem-bered such wealth brings then I scorn to change my state with kings.

T. *ppp*
mm-oo - oh - ah - - - brings then I scorn to change my state with kings.

B. *ppp*
mm-oo - oh - ah - - - brings then I scorn to change my state with kings.