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

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Sonnet 29
For The Gettysburg College Choir

William Shakespeare
Freely, Guided by the text
j=42

SOPRANO
I all a lone be weep

ALTO
When, in dis-grace with for-tune and men's eyes, I a lone be weep

TENOR
When, in dis-grace with for-tune and men's eyes, I alone be weep

BASS
When, in dis-grace with for-tune and men's eyes, I a lone be weep

my out-cast state
and trou-ble deaf heav'n with my boot-less cries

my out-cast state
and trou-ble heav'n with my boot-less cries

my out-cast state
and trou-ble heav'n with my boot-less cries

my out-cast state
and trou-ble heav'n with my boot-less cries

my out-cast state
and trou-ble heav'n with my boot-less cries

my out-cast state
and trou-ble heav'n with my boot-less cries
look upon myself and curse my fate, wishing me like to one more rich in

hope, featured like him, like him with friends poss'd, de-

siring this man's art and that man's scope, 
molto rit.

this man's art and that man's scope, with what I most enjoy contented least;

this man's art and that man's scope, what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet, Yet, Yet, Yet, Yet, Yet, Yet in these thoughts my self -a-l-

Moving Ahead

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

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

*Gradually open to ah vowel
earth sings hymns at heaven's gate;

Much slower

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

mm-o-o-o-h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h

mm-o-o-o-h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h a h