Between the Rosewood and the Underbrush

for mezzo-soprano and guitar

(guitar can be supplemented with piano and/or percussion)

by

Justin Henry Rubin
This is a cantata for solo voice and guitar in which the performers should draw upon their entire spectrum of timbral shades in order to achieve a dramatic arc within the course of the piece. The piece may be performed also with piano and/or percussion (ad lib. marimba, vibraphone, glockenspiel, etc.)

The original text (by the composer, below) concerns a season in which an individual finds a unique expressive force from seemingly nowhere. This novel idea changes the society only briefly as it disappears with the same suddenness with which it arose; the individual as well as the society in which he lives is left with a vacancy only now apparent because of its loss.

*Between the Rosewood and the Underbrush* (2002)

Not too long ago by the railroad yard there lived in the underbrush a young cricket. Basil, unlike the other cricket lads, owned a guitar instead of a violin with which to serenade the night, illuminated by the pale blue halo of the soaring moon. It was on one uneventful summer day that Basil continued to play his guitar after everyone else ceased their music-making, from the deep azure of night into the dawn of the next bright sunlit morning. The others looked wearily at their friend as his solo venture continued, but said nothing at all.

Over the following few weeks, Basil seemed less and less inclined to pick at the six gentle strings after nightfall and began to play for himself further into the day until dusk when he'd put his instrument away. Everyone watched as his guitar began to take on the sun-bleached sheen of a silver–brown quality. As well, they noticed his music began to mirror the appearance of his guitar, glowing with assurance, and a disposition inspired by the radiance of the sun. Lyrical vibrations rose from his strings with a weightlessness never felt before by the little society of crickets by the railroad yard.
Quite unexpectedly, on a Monday, he slept all through the morning and into the afternoon, rising only as twilight began to descend onto the warm thicket. He took out his guitar and rejoined his friends, caressing the night with songs of such melancholy character that even the most obstinate of hearts would have been affected. The beautiful airs and songs that he had been playing for the sun as it rose and fell had vanished.

The days past in silence, and the evenings returned to be as they once were. It was as dawn began to break late in the summer, when Basil was placing his guitar back in its case, that a friend noticed the lustrous color the guitar had once projected had begun to drain back into the grains of the ever-darkening brown wood. He stopped and looked deeply into the despondent cricket’s eyes, recalling the sounds once so new and now nearly forgotten. Together they waited to see the sun peek over the hills past the distant shadow of the railroad yard.
Between the Rosewood and the Underbrush

Commissioned by The Dream Songs Project: Alyssa Anderson, mezzo-soprano and Joseph Spoelstra, guitar

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\( \frac{d}{d} = 72 \)

1. Singer speaks, "Part one: The Overture", and then begin.

Music and text by Justin Henry Rubin (2015)
2. Singer speaks, "Part two: Arietta - Introduction to Basil.", and then begin.
by the railroad yard there lived in the
underbrush Not too
long ago lived a young cricket,

Basil, Basil the young cricket.
3. Guitarist speaks, "Part three: Recitative - Basil is a guitarist!", and then begin.

Freely: Quasi-recit.

Basil, un-like the o-ther cri-cket lads, owned a gui-tar in-stead of a vi-o-lin with which to se-re-nade the

night, il-lu-mi-na-ted by the pale blue ha-lo of the soaring moon.

4. Singer speaks, "Part four: Arietta da Capo - Basil plays and plays...", and then begin. ($=62$)

gracefully, gentle

It was on one un-e-vent-ful sum-mer day
that Basil continued to play after everyone else ceased their music making from the deep of night...

Poco rit.  

Music making from the deep of night...

a tempo

Music making from the deep of night...

Poco rit.

Molto rit.

dawn of the bright sun-lit morning.

Poco rit.

Molto rit.

5. Guitarist speaks, “Part five: Recitative - What did the other crickets do?”, and then begin.

Freely: Quasi-recit.

The others looked wearily at their friend as his solo venture continued, but
6. Singer speaks, "Part six: Arietta - From night to day.", and then begin.

After nightfall...
instead he began to
140
play for himself further into the day...

148
dusk when he'd put his instrument away.

157
Rit.

165
a tempo

stop sound


Ev-ery-one watched as his gui-tar be-gan to take, take on

on the sun-bleached sheen of sil-

ver-brown.
of sil-ver-

brown.

Dim. e rit.

meno mosso

slow arp.
7. Guitarist speaks, "Part seven: Recitative - Music as a mirror.", and then begin.

As well, they noticed his music begin to mirror the appearance of his guitar,

As well, they noticed his music begin to mirror the appearance of his guitar,

8. Guitarist speaks, "Part eight: Changes in disposition.", and then begin.

[In this section, notes marked with an 'x' indicate where the mezzo should begin speaking.]  \( \text{\textcopyright\textregistered¶™} \)

"Lyrical vibrations rose from his strings..."

"with a weightlessness never felt before by the little society of crickets by the railroad yard."
Quite unexpectedly, on a Monday, he slept all seconda volta: through the morning and into the afternoon... rising only as twilight began to descend onto the warm thicket."

"He took out his guitar and rejoined his friends... caressing the night with songs of such melancholy character... that even the most obstinate of hearts would have been affected."
9. Guitarist speaks, "Part nine: Arietta - Late summer.", and then begin. $j = 60$

Mezzo concludes: "The beautiful airs and songs that he had been playing for the sun as it rose and fell had vanished..."
It was as dawn began to break, when Bas-sil was placing his guitar back into its case, that a friend noticed the lustrous color the guitar had once projected had been gun to drain back drain back into the
He stopped and looked deeply into the despondent cricket's eyes, recalling the sounds once so new and now nearly forgotten.

Together they waited to see the sun peek over the hills... past the distant shadow of the railroad yard.
articulate, precise