

*From The  
Sick Sleuth Sonnets*

a song cycle based on the  
poetry of Samuel Greenberg (1893-1917)

for  
voice and piano

by  
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HARVEY MUSIC EDITIONS

## Forward

I had never heard of Samuel Greenberg. I had been deeply involved with the works of Hart Crane, had set a number of his poems, and was even inspired to write purely instrumental compositions based on some of his fantastic imagery. It was through Crane that I stumbled upon Greenberg through his documented praise. I found myself remarkably engrossed with these terse works - their pure surrealist tone (which antedates the more famous movement begun after World War I) are imbued with an expressiveness that immediately penetrated my mind. My response was the composition of a set of songs for soprano, alto, and piano (*Loose Pages*), which were written in the Fall of 2000, followed by two cantatas and still more songs. They were endowed with a musical character to help convey more than simply the sentiments (if that is indeed possible!) of the texts of the Poet. His works are "orgies of supersensibility" (Louis Untermeyer, 1940) wherein "words... poured ...forth with a wild, chaotic passion" (James Laughlin, 1939) and therefore a narrative structure would not have been a favorable choice of settings. Instead, I try to take a distinct, non-narrative musical point of view with them.

The only image of Greenberg I know is that of him at the time of his Bar Mitzvah; the dusty, dark synagogues of early 20<sup>th</sup> century New York instantaneously came to mind. The unison rhythmic, declamatory intonations of Jewish chant, the cascade of words as if a supplication, the propulsive nature of the poems themselves, the sinuous, fleeting emotions that characterize Greenberg's words, the intimate yet universal essence of his utterances, the quality of the voice of youth turned adult only to be cut down in premature death, the *speed* with which the texts were written - all of these factors contributed to my choice of sounds that surround my settings of his works.

I find myself returning again and again to Greenberg, choosing poems from his large collection of sonnets, always refreshing, always inspiring new musical ideas and sentiments.

Note: Some misspellings from the original texts have been preserved, but others have been altered in the musical settings for ease of reading.

# From the Sick Sleuth Sonnets

poems by Samuel Greenberg

music by Justin Henry Rubin

## I Purity

*Andantamente con rubato*

*Rit. poco*

The first system of the musical score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in 2/4 time and contains six measures of whole rests. The piano accompaniment is in 2/4 time and begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second measure of the piano part includes the instruction *ad lib.* below the bass line. The third measure of the piano part is marked *echo* and *p* (piano). The system concludes with a *Rit. poco* (ritardando) instruction.

*a tempo*

The second system of the musical score continues the piano accompaniment from the first system. It begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and consists of eight measures. The piano part features a consistent melodic and harmonic structure. The system concludes with a *a tempo* instruction.

*Rit.*

*a tempo*

The third system of the musical score continues the piano accompaniment. It begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and consists of eight measures. The piano part features a consistent melodic and harmonic structure. The system concludes with a *a tempo* instruction. The lyrics "On to" are written below the vocal line in the final two measures of the system.

15 *Rit. poco*

si - lence, where rest Be - warms

20 *a tempo*

Sea - ted, ce - lest, though much Be - guiles The faur of Hu - man mo - tion

24 *Rit.* *a tempo*

The Lus - tre of lifes stir - ring com - bines...

28 *Rit. poco*

33 *a tempo*

Not to wave the se - crets pass of

3/4 <sup>3rd</sup> *sim.*

38 *Rit.* *a tempo* *Rit.* *a tempo* *Rit. molto*

lure Un - pall'd By fan - cy ges - tures foot - ing veer...

*8vb-1*

43 *a tempo*

What

*8vb-1*

48 *Rit.* *a tempo* *Rit.*

traits of keep - ing track a - safe From such loud li - ving ban - ning waif

*8vb-1*

53 *a tempo* *Rit. molto* *a tempo*

8vb - -

8vb - -

8vb - -

58 *Rit. molto*

Yet re - calls of plea - sures in - ert be - hold

8vb - -

63 *a tempo*

From paint - ing, From scul - ptures or for - eign mold

8vb - -

67

The case of sound - ing wind... The case of sound - ing

8vb - -

71 *Rit.*

wind... The case of sound - ing wind.

77

By tight - ly shores

3/4 *And.* *sim.*

82 *Rit.* *a tempo* *Rit.* *a tempo*

That treats a just minds low - ly moors

87 *Rit.* *a tempo*

What a

8vb-1

92

mad - ness can ap - ply in such wing - éd Prize as to Be

97

*Rit. molto*

but the hem skin i - deal - - ize.

*Sva*

101

*a tempo*

*a tempo*

107

107



*Rit. al fine*

112

Musical score for measures 112-115. The upper staff is empty. The lower staff contains a piano accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands. Measure 112 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The music concludes with a double bar line.

116

Musical score for measures 116-120. The upper staff is empty. The lower staff contains a piano accompaniment. Measure 116 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Measure 117 features a triplet of eighth notes in the bass line. Measures 118-120 show a series of chords in the bass line, with the final measure ending with a double bar line.

# II *illusive evolution*

*Ondeggiante*

What tra - vel - ing

*mp*

grace halts you to know A - buse from woes

*Rit.* *a tempo*

tur - ning grasp of ween And e - - ver

Na - tures proof... ..pends a whir - ling show... That shades,

13

the lus - tre tree From Kin, the tur - ban claims of prime That

16 *Rit.* *a tempo*

hold the bet - ter'd hope - ful slime

20 *Rit.*

23 *a tempo*

That ne - ver reals, in - to

26  
help - ful glee But kills the co - lor'd win - dy

29  
scent through such mar - vel growths un - bent

32  
By the ri - ches of shape and gloss We hap - py

35 *Rit.* feel a lu - sive love *a tempo* From the state of won - der as -

38

sume Ah yet he who spells rest un -

41 *Rit.*

told Brings thi - ther, the soil of for - eign mold.

# III *Fear*

*Svelto*

*mf*

*mf* There fled the o - pen - ing ditch from sooth What gi - ving pal - pi - tates to

*Rit.* *a tempo*

hold its loath *pp* [loco] 21

*pp*

*Red.*

18 *mf* The Bul-ky mass of real Bar-ren waste Let thee feel a

22 *Rit.* *a tempo*  
tool, for him the last,

27

32 *mp* A - wa - ken self con-sci-ous

36 *mf*

wa - ken - ing pride A - gain sus - pends thee for a

40 *Rit.* *a tempo*

"chick" de - nied Ah calls thi - ther the

44

dream of sick - ly look From whence your

48 *Rit.* *a tempo*

heart builds em - blems to re-buke, tries to



52

share the pri - son spells That clombs be - neath loves ex - pres - sive

56

cells Who leaves an - swers prime of lust de si - red

*Rit.* *pp*

60

*a tempo*

*mf* To show the great

*8va* [loco] 21

62

deeds of won - der lyr'd Then just flit - ters

*Rit.* *a tempo*

66 *Rit.*

apt for clea - ving lay

71 *a tempo*

*ppp*

*pp*

76 *Rit.*

81 *Meno mosso: quasi-recit.*

*mp* Here toil a - mend,

85

*p* share's woe - - - ful way

90

# IV Divine Scent

*Andantemente*

*mf*

There shed

*mf*

*Leo.* *Leo.* *sim.*

slight - ly the up - per stall While

*Rit.* *pp* *pp*

faint ply - ing se - net shade did lead

*a tempo* *Rit. poco* *mp*

*Leo.* *Leo.* *sim.*

What leap'd so hea - vy

*a tempo* *mf*

*Leo.* *Leo.* *sim.*

19 un - der this all un - der this all

23 *Molto rit. e dim.* un - der this all *mp a tempo* Lets thee em - pty, not of

27 *Rit. poco* cause to heed the wan - der - ing soul *a tempo* *mf*

31 *mf* The wan - der - ing soul claims the king - doms tear *mf*

*Molto rit. e dim.*

35

The wise soul bind this a - ged weir

*a tempo*

39

*mp*

*Subito*

44

*mp* And the Blind in - e - bri - at

*pp* *mp*

*ff*

49

spi - rit mere - ly feels, mere - ly feels Wish - es that

*f*

53 *p*

all would rot and peace Bey - ond reels...

57 *Quasi-recitative*

*mp* Yet pain speaks for pain While each fi - bre tra - vels pow - er - ful - ly in

*a tempo*

62 *f* *mp*

vein Not know - ing what Be - falls the charm he's seen through

67 *cresc.*

grind - ing tolls that list of sprouts All hon - or

71 *ff*

bare its stamp, un - til it shouts, it shouts, it

*f* *dim.*

*Rit.* *p* *a tempo*

shouts, it shouts...

*p* *mf*

80 *mf*

Thou fiegñ of glide - ing,

*Rit.* *p*

tide - ing, hus - ling ween

*p*

*sva.*

*Reo.*



# V the undertone

Grave

*ppp* *pp* *sim.*  
Ped. (very resonant, allow sonorities to overlap)

4 The cel - lar of the priest, the un - bur - den'd crave He  
*sim.*

7 could sing the song of the wild knave That  
*Rit.* *a tempo*

9 throws the Beam - ing sand up - on the Clime of the sun's un - brea - stead  
*ppp*

11  
gloom

14  
What was this joy fet-ter'd dry flame-ing zone

17  
And re-mem-ber the gaze was not for now, the gaze was not for now

*Rit.*

19 *a tempo*  
It seem'd to tell the lore of blos-soms vow

21 *Rit.*

And loose won - der strains be - neath,

(clear all sound)

23 *Libero: quasi-recit.*

that, no let - ter can place the wreath or seek re - fuge,

*sotto voce*

26 *ord.*

of cre - a - tion's crawl by your meek ten - don to bare it, in

29 *Tempo I*

thrall There seems to stay a glass col - or'd will, a glass col - or'd will The

32

3

on - ly taste is this sen - su - al fi - re still That

34

3 *Molto rit.* *Meno mosso*

sor - row's glow, love, and the pound - ing thrill

(pauses of increasing duration)

38