From the Sonnets of Apology

a cantata on the poetry of Samuel Greenberg (1893-1917)
for
SATB choir
-with-
2 flutes, 2 clarinets,
double string quartet,
and one percussionist

by
Justin Henry Rubin

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. 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 20th 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 have returned to Greenberg with this cantata, choosing poems from his large collection of Sonnets of Apology.

The text used in this work is based on transcriptions made from Samuel Greenberg's original manuscripts by Michael Smith and are used with permission. Those transcriptions are available online at: http://logopoeia.com/greenberg/
Percussion instruments needed for the piece:
I: Glockenspiel and Orchestral Chimes
II: Orchestral Chimes and Xylophone
III: Two Suspended Cymbals (High and Low)

Note: All misspellings from the original text have been preserved in their re-print (below), but some have been altered in the musical settings for ease of reading.

essentials
The ill sat to be with the calm
Spacious breeze, the thirsty man
Sought the fountain, the seasons
Cloaked the roveing form, the
Scholar lit his lamp to see,
The guide showed, the unknown
Path, consolation soothed the
gentle soul and lent his
Strengthening mind relief, The poor
Mother cared for the ofsprings want
Rain poured o’er the fertile soil
The torch found the miners haunt
The bathers fought the ocean’s hurl

Sensation
The depth of the seas surface wrinkled motion
Hath its Horizon, o’er its tarnished width
Between Heaven and earth, these causes meet
Where its phenomena dries atmosphere damp
And sweep the dew ’pon our golden shores
Suspires wholesome wreathes in mists of silver
Thus blends, the crystal air, through hoverment.
But man's verbal chide - hath not power lore!
And 'pon the seat of thought, doth wonder its Heart
Where, Indurance that can wholly save such treat
And quench this streaming strain, through veins doth quiver
O my plaintives affections, thou hast foreswore
As In legend myths of garden mint of flowers
Ah quite free - thy gift - hath bussied - rest - Slumber - nigh Dreamy towers

Life
O pure ebbing strain - of shadows fermament
Must vanquish in its tide - of lust through times content
To earth there seal, through heavens charm is sent.
The mornings soulful cloak, the evenings lowly fear
A forlorn gust of ocean wind as messenger sent Here,
O man - thou art nigh alone with life!
And cleave the unfold’s perfect rite
Ah yea vain slaves, art thou not covered sheep
through vent ilusions, O what sense o’er this Deep
E'er it pour from thy self - I meek seek
thus alone, thy clear vein, dretched with love,
Past! O sadly soothed, as a vanished lily grove,
O thou art at spirits rest, and my clay uphold
Seek not I - as sand the earth - which sieves its mold.
From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)
ill sat to be with the calm Spacious breeze, the

ill sat to be with the calm Spacious breeze, the
calm Spacious breeze Spacious breeze,

calm Spacious breeze Spacious breeze,
form, the Scholar lit his lamp to see, the
sons lit see

tutti
Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Bb Cl. 1

Bb Cl. 2

Perc.

S

A

T

B

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

-10-
Da tempo

The guide showed the unknown Path.
E

a tempo

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Bb Cl. 1

Bb Cl. 2

Perc.

Orchestral Chimes

pp

S

A

T

B

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

poor Were shelter'd from mercies grief Mother

poor Were shelter'd from mercies grief Mother

poor shelter'd grief

poor shelter'd grief

-16-
cared for the off-springs want Rain poured o'er the fertile soil The torch found the

cared for the off-springs want Rain poured o'er the fertile soil The torch found the

poured o'er the

fer tile soil

torch found the

torch found the

fer tile soil

torch found the

fer tile soil

find the

find the

find the

find the
From the Sonnets of Apology
II: Sensation

The depth of the seas
The depth of the seas

The seas
The seas

The seas
The seas

The seas
The seas

The seas
The seas

The seas
The seas

wrinkled motion
wrinkled motion

wrinkled motion
wrinkled motion

wrinkled motion
wrinkled motion

wrinkled motion
wrinkled motion

The depth of the seas
The depth of the seas

The surface
The surface

The surface
The surface

The surface
The surface

The surface
The surface

The surface
The surface

The surface
The surface
The depth of the seas surface wrinkled

The depth of the seas surface wrinkled motion wrinkled motion
o'er its tar-nish'd width 'tween Hea-ven and earth, these cau-ses meet, these

do'er its tar-nish'd width 'tween Hea-ven and

o'er its tar-nish'd width 'tween Hea-ven and earth, these cau-ses meet, these

o'er its tar-nish'd width 'tween Hea-ven and earth, these cau-ses meet, these

o'er its tar-nish'd width 'tween Hea-ven and earth, these cau-ses meet, these
Where its phenomena dries atmosphere,

Where its phenomena dries atmosphere,
o'er its tarnish'd width 'tween Heaven and earth, 

Where its phenomena dries atmosphere,
o'er its tarnish'd width 'tween Heaven and earth,
sweep the dew 'pon our golden shores, our golden shores

And sweep, sweep the dew, the dew 'pon our golden shores, golden shores,
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Bb Cl. 1
Bb Cl. 2
Perc.
S
A
T
B
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.

pi - res whole - some wreathes in mist of sil - ver Thus blends the cry - stal air, through

shores whole - some wreathes in of sil - ver Thus blends the cry - stal air, through

gol - den shores, Thus blends the cry - stal air, through

gol - den shores, Thus blends the cry - stal air, through

-26-
But man’s verbal chide hath
not power lore!

And 'pon the seat of thought, doth wonder its Heart, its Heart
And 'pon the seat of thought, doth wonder wonder its Heart

Where, its Heart Where, its Heart Where, its Heart

its Heart doth wonder wonder its Heart Where,
Where, In - du - rance that can who - ly save such
O my plain - tives af - fec - tions, thou hast fore - swore thou hast fore - swore
O my plain - tives af - fec - tions,
myth of garden mint of flowers Ah quite
From the Sonnets of Apology

III: Life

\( \text{\textcopyright \textregistered \texttrademark} \)
To earth there seal, through heaven’s charm is sent.

The mornings soulful cloak, the evenings lowly

The mornings soulful cloak, the evenings lowly
And cleave the unfold's perfect rite slaves,

Ah yeu vain slaves, art thou

lone, a lone with life!

Ah yeu vain slaves,

lone with life!

And cleave the unfold's perfect rite slaves,
through venti l l u sions,
not cover'd sheep
O what
sheep
sheep
div.
thy clear vein, drench'd with love, Past!

thy clear vein, drench'd with love, Past!

thus a - lone, O sad - ly soothe'd,

thus a - lone, as a va - nish'd li - ly grove,
Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

B

T

A

S

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Bb Cl. 1

Bb Cl. 2

Perc.

Seek not I, as sand the earth

and my clay up-hold

thou art at spirits rest,

spirits rest,

which sieves its mold.

which sieves its mold.

which sieves its mold.

which sieves its mold.
From the Sonnets of Apology

a cantata on the poetry of Samuel Greenberg (1893-1917)

for

SATB choir

-with-

2 flutes, 2 clarinets,
double string quartet,
and one percussionist

by

Justin Henry Rubin
From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

Flute 1

\[ j = 76 \]

\( \frac{22}{4} \)

\[ \text{mp} \]

A

\[ \frac{28}{4} \]

\[ \text{mp} \]

B

\[ \frac{49}{4} \]

\[ \text{mp} \]

C

\[ \frac{70}{4} \]

\[ f \]

\[ \frac{76}{4} \]

D

\[ \frac{82}{4} \]

\[ \text{mp} \]

E

\[ \frac{88}{4} \]

\[ \text{mp} \]
From the Sonnets of Apology
III: Life

Flute 1

\( \text{\textcopyright} \)
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From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Flute 2

\[ J = 72 \]

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)
From the Sonnets of Apology
II: Sensation
From the Sonnets of Apology

III: Life

Flute 2

\( \text{\textit{Rit.}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Lunga}} \)
From the Sonnets of Apology

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for

SATB choir

-w ith-

2 flutes, 2 clarinets,

double string quartet,

and one percussionist

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From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

Clarinet in Bb 1

II: Sensation
From the Sonnets of Apology

III: Life

\( \frac{j}{\text{legato e molto espressivo}} \)

\( j = 80 \)
From the Sonnets of Apology

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From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Clarinet in Bb 2

\( \frac{3}{8} \) = 72

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)
Rit. poco  a tempo  Rit. C  a tempo

Rit.

D  a tempo
From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

Clarinet in Bb 2
From the Sonnets of Apology

III: Life

\[ j = 80 \]

[balanced with the strings]
From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Violin 1

\( \frac{4}{\text{\textcopyright} 2001 Justin Henry Rubin} \)

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)

Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

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tutti

Rit.  Da tempo

Rit. poco

a tempo  Rit. poco  E a tempo
From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

\[ \text{From the Sonnets of Apology} \]

\[ \text{II: Sensation} \]

\[ j = 76 \]

\[ \text{From the Sonnets of Apology} \]

\[ \text{II: Sensation} \]

\[ j = 76 \]

\[ \text{From the Sonnets of Apology} \]

\[ \text{II: Sensation} \]
From the Sonnets of Apology

Violin 1

III: Life

$\bar{\text{}} = 80$

\begin{align*}
\textit{legato} \\
\textit{pp}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{A} \\
\text{B} \\
\text{div.}
\end{align*}
From the Sonnets of Apology

Violin 2

I: essentials

\( \mathbb{L} = 72 \)

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

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From the Sonnets of Apology

III: Life

Violin 2

\( \text{\textit{Lungo}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Legato}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Rit.}} \)
From the Sonnets of Apology

I: essentials

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

Viola

$J = 72$

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From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

$\begin{align*}
\text{d} &= 76 \\
\text{A} &\text{mf}
\end{align*}$
From the Sonnets of Apology
III: Life

Viola

\[ \textit{\textbf{Rit.}} \textit{\textbf{Lungu}} \]
VIOLONCELLO

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I: essentials

Violoncello

\[ \text{\textit{I}}: \text{essentials} \]

\[ j = 72 \]

\[ \text{\textit{A}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{B}} \text{ a tempo} \]

\[ \text{\textit{C}} \text{ a tempo} \]

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)
From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

\( \text{mf} \)

\( \text{A} \)

\( \text{B} \)
From the Sonnets of Apology

Violoncello

III: Life

\( \text{\textit{\textbackslash d = 80}} \)

\[\text{\textit{\textbackslash pizz.}}\]

8

12

A

16

B

20

24

28
From the Sonnets of Apology
I: essentials

Music: Justin Henry Rubin (2001)
Poem: Samuel Greenberg (1916)

Percussion

\( \frac{3}{4} \) 72

Glock. (sounds 15va)

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From the Sonnets of Apology

II: Sensation

Percussion

\[ \text{Xylophone (sounds 8va)} \]

\[ \text{From the Sonnets of Apology} \]

\[ \text{II: Sensation} \]

\[ \text{Percussion} \]

\[ \text{Xylophone (sounds 8va)} \]
From the Sonnets of Apology

III: Life

\[ \text{Percussion} \]

\[ \text{\( \downarrow = 80 \)} \]

allow to resonate

pp

\[ \text{Suspended Cymbal (High)} \]

\[ \text{Suspended Cymbal (Low)} \]

6

13

20

27

34

41

Rit.

\[ \text{Lunga} \]