

*Between the Rosewood
and the Underbrush*

for mezzo-soprano and guitar

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

by

Justin Henry Rubin

HARVEY MUSIC EDITIONS

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
This commission was made possible by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

$\text{♩} = 72$

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

Music and text by Justin Henry Rubin (2015)

Mezzo-soprano

Guitar

articulate, precise

mf

5

ff

mp
sub.

f

All Rights Reserved Copyright © 2015 Justin Henry Rubin Printed in U.S.A.
WARNING: No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the publisher. Unauthorized reproduction, in whole or in part, is a violation of the U.S. Copyright Laws.

13

ff

mf sub.

Poco rit.

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of a musical score, measures 13 through 16. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The melody in the treble clef consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bass clef provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The dynamic marking *ff* (fortissimo) is placed under the first measure, and *mf sub.* (mezzo-forte, *subito*) is placed under the fourth measure. The tempo marking *Poco rit.* (Poco ritardando) is centered under the first two measures.

17

mp

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of the musical score, measures 17 through 20. It continues the piano accompaniment from the previous system. The melody in the treble clef shows some rests in measures 17 and 18. The bass clef continues with a steady accompaniment. The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is placed at the end of the system, under measure 20.

2. Singer speaks, "Part two: Arietta - Introduction to Basil.", and then begin.

20

$\text{♩} = 62$

gracefully, gentle

mp

Not too long a - go

Detailed description: This block contains the third system of the musical score, measures 20 through 28. It begins with a tempo marking $\text{♩} = 62$ and a dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano). The tempo and dynamic markings are placed above the first measure. The instruction *gracefully, gentle* is placed above the first measure. The score is in 2/4 time. The piano accompaniment continues with a treble and bass clef. The melody in the treble clef includes the lyrics "Not too long a - go" under measures 24, 25, and 26. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The bass clef provides a steady accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

35
by the rail - road yard there lived in the

41 *Poco rit.* *a tempo*
un - - - der - - - brush Not too

47
long a - go lived a young crick - - - et,

54 *Poco rit.*
Ba - - - sil, Ba - sil the young crick - et.

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

Freely: Quasi-recit.

61 Ba-sil, 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

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

61 66 71

f *mf* *mp* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *p*

3 3 3

8

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for the guitar part of section 3, measures 61-70. It is written in a single system with two staves. The upper staff is the vocal line with lyrics, and the lower staff is the guitar accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is marked 'Freely: Quasi-recit.'. The guitar part features various dynamics including *ff*, *f*, *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. There are several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a group of notes) and slurs. The piece ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

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

71 gracefully, gentle

79 It was on one un - e - vent - ful sum - mer day

71 79

mp *mp*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for the singer part of section 4, measures 71-78. It is written in a single system with two staves. The upper staff is the vocal line with lyrics, and the lower staff is the guitar accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The music is marked 'gracefully, gentle'. The guitar part is marked *mp*. The piece ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

86 *3* that Ba-sil con-tin-ued to play af-ter ev-ery-one else ceased their

92 *Poco rit.* mu-sic ma-king from the deep of night... *a tempo* in-to the

98 *Poco rit.* dawn of the bright sun-lit mor-ning. *Molto rit.*

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

Freely: Quasi-recit.

107 *f* The o-thers looked wear-i-ly at their friend *mf* as his so-lo ven-ture con-tin-ued, but

112

said no-thing at all... no-thing at all.

dim. *p* *pp*

6. Singer speaks, "Part six: Arietta - From night to day.", and then begin.

116 $\text{♩} = 160$

mf *mf*

O - - - ver the next few weeks

quasi-scherzo *mf* stop sound stop sound

124

Ba-sil seemed less in-clined to pick at the six gen-tle strings

132

af-ter night - - - fall... in-stead he be-gan to

140

play for him self fur - ther in - to the day... un - til

148

dusk when he'd put his in - stru - ment a way.

157

Rit.
dim.

165

a tempo
mf
pp
stop sound

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

201 *f*

As well, they no-ticed his mu-sic be-gin to mir - ror the ap-pear - ance of his gui - tar,

206

glow - ing with as - sur - ance, in - spi - red by the ra - di-ance of the sun.

Detailed description: This musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 201-205) features a vocal line with lyrics and a guitar accompaniment. The vocal line includes three triplet markings. The guitar accompaniment is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features complex chordal textures with many accidentals. The second system (measures 206-210) continues the vocal line and guitar accompaniment. The guitar part includes a change in time signature from 4/4 to 3/4 in measure 209. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

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

211 [In this section, notes marked with an 'x' indicate where the mezzo should begin speaking.] ♩ = 72

mf

con poco rubato

"Lyrical vibrations rose from his strings..."

sim.

217

"with a weightlessness never felt before by the little society of crickets by the railroad yard."

Detailed description: This musical score is in 2/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system (measures 211-216) shows a guitar accompaniment starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. A double bar line is followed by a section marked *con poco rubato*. Above the vocal line, an 'x' marks the start of the lyrics "Lyrical vibrations rose from his strings...". The guitar accompaniment continues with a *sim.* (sustained) marking. The second system (measures 217-222) continues the guitar accompaniment. An 'x' marks the start of the lyrics "with a weightlessness never felt before by the little society of crickets by the railroad yard." The piece ends with a double bar line.

223 *Poco rit.* *a tempo*

seconda volta: "Quite unexpectedly, on a Monday, he slept all

229

through the morning and into the afternoon... ..rising only as twilight began to descend onto the warm thicket."

235

"He took out his guitar and rejoined his friends

241

caressing the night with songs of such melancholy character ...that even the most obstinate of hearts would have been affected."

247 *Poco rit.* *a tempo*

253 *Poco rit.* *dim.*

Mezzo concludes: "The beautiful airs and songs that he had been playing for the sun as it rose and fell had vanished..."

261 **9. Guitarist speaks, "Part nine: Arietta - Late summer.", and then begin.** ♩ = 60

p The days past in si - - - lence,

267

eve - nings re - turned to be as they were.

273

It was as dawn be - gan to break, when Ba - - - sil was

279

pla - cing his gui - tar back in - to its case, that a friend

285

no - - - ticed the lus - trous co - lor the gui - tar had once pro - jec - ted had be -

291

gun to drain back drain back in - to the

297

grains of the e - - - ver dar - ken - ing brown wood,

303 *Dim. e rit. poco a poco*

brown wood.

10. Singer speaks, "Part ten and closing: The sun sets over the railroad yard.", and then begin

310

"He stopped and looked deeply into the despondent cricket's eyes, ...recalling the sounds once so new and now nearly forgotten."

312

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

♩ = 72

314 *articulate, precise*

mf

ff *mp sub.*

f

ff *mf sub.*

Non-rit. *Molto rit.* *ff*