

LAMENT

~ SONG FOR BARITONE VOICE & PIANO ~

MUSIC BY:

JORDAN ALEXANDER KEY

TEXT BY:

JASON E. JOHNSON

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Dedicated to my loving husband

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An Atheist's Prayer

In my heart remains no place
Softened by the steps of grace,
To whatever gods may be,
I lift my voice and make my plea.

"I pray to be forgiven.
I know I go unheard."

Lament for Johanna

So I've been writing you this poem
almost since the day I met you
and I can't be certain what to say
except, "I won't forget you".

You were beautiful.
I see you still arrayed
in lilacs and in grey:
your eyes are darkly blue-
perhaps its truest hue.
You were elegant, charming,
witty and disarming.

You were strong.
We ran a thousand midnight miles,
danced beneath the stars,
swam the coursing oceans,
gathered up our cracks and scars.

You were wise.
You made mistakes grandly
to teach us to love better
and to bind us all as family.
And in each passing day
you found a better you.
You nurtured all the cracks of life
so the light could more clearly shine through.

This day makes my heart ache, and ache, and ache and bless
its other half no longer beating in your chest.

Performance Notes:

Piano technique:

- **Harmonics:** Play the harmonics of the indicated string by stopping the string with the right hand and playing the key for the string with the left hand. A variety of mostly indeterminate harmonics will be played by running the finger of the right hand along the string starting one inch above the dampers and smoothly moving to approximately 12 inches above the dampers. This should produce the 5th partial (P8+P8+M3) at 1 inch and the 9th partial (P8+P8+P8+M3) at 12 inches. The indicated rhythms should be played approximately while the finger of the right hand moves smoothly and constantly between nodes.
- **Magnetic Tape:**
 1. The tape technique first involves the pianist acquiring two to three feet of magnetic tape (like that found in cassette or VHS tapes – the composer recommends the thicker tape of a VHS, but either will suffice).
 2. This tape will then be secured to the indicated string by gently tying the tape around the string. While the tape can be tied anywhere to the string's resonating length, the primary nodes are recommended (1st, 2nd, or 3rd partials).
 - a. You will need to attach tapes to the lowest C#, F#, and G# strings
 - b. as well as middle-C should one follow the alternative route to the E-bow (see below)
 3. The loose end of the tape can either be tied (or taped - recommended) to the upper end of the piano's lid support peg (creating approximately a 45-degree angle against the piano's horizontal plane). The tape should be quite taught. Alternatively, the tape may be held with the right hand (the left hand will be used to "play" the tape); however, this can become cumbersome with multiple tapes, as called for in this piece.
 4. While depressing the sustain pedal, the pianist will run their fingers across the tape from the low end (near the strings) to the upper end. This should be a relatively slow and continuous motion with medium to heavy pressure on the tape (taking care not to unduly stretch or break the tape). The performer is encouraged to find their best grip, but the composer offers these suggestions
 - a. One side of the tape is often more frictional. It is to this side that the most pressure should be applied.
 - b. The effectiveness of the technique is sometimes determined by the oil consistency on the hands. Often the technique is more difficult to execute after one washes their hands.
 - c. It might be helpful to apply counter torsion pressure by pushing down on the tape with the index and/or middle finger while also applying upward pressure with the thumb, but slightly offset from the index/middle fingers.
 - d. More pressure will produce a fuller sound, but too much pressure will slowly stretch the tape, making it more difficult to work with. The tape works best when taught. Should the tape be affixed to the peg and become loose in a performance due to stretching, one can use the free right hand (assuming it is free) to reign in the slack of the tape.
 - e. The tape can also be stroked from top-to-bottom as well as from bottom-to-top. Starting at the top will produce a more whiney timbre at the outset of the sound and move towards a broader low-pitched resonant sound, whereas the reverse is true should the tape be stroked bottom-to-top. One can execute the technique with a continuous motion from bottom-top-bottom, but this may take some practice to satisfactorily execute. The more continuous the sound is over the sound's required duration, the better. However, if one needs to start and stop, following a bottom-top + bottom-top motion, this is fine.
 - f. Have fun and experiment with the technique to find the sound that you like most within the sound world of this magnetic tape and the piano.
 5. This should sound somewhat like a sitar with extra whininess.
- **E-bow:** The e-bow is a device typically used with an electric guitar. It rests on the strings and magnetically oscillates the string based on the strings sympathetic vibrating frequency, which the device can find without human assistance. When used on piano strings, the device rests on the desired strings (one for one pitch) and will resonate that pitch's strings, sounding the fundamental and lowest partials. The resultant sound is very sinusoidal. If the pianist or vocalist does not have easy access to an E-Bow and does not wish to acquire one, this aspect of this movement may be foregone. Alternatively, the vocalist may perform on their own magnetic tape attached to the C4 strings and stretched across the piano casing to where they stand. The sound will be quite different, but the harmonic world created will be similar and capable of supporting the vocalist.
 1. Turn on the **E-bow** and set to "fundamental" setting.
 2. Place e-bow centered over the indicated string: Middle-C collection (three metal strings). The e-bow will rest on the B3 and C#4 strings to either side of C4.
 3. Depress the sustain pedal to allow the strings to freely resonate (having all dampers raised allows for the sympathetic vibrations of other strings as a consequence of the resonating C4).
 4. Within a few seconds, the device will find the sympathetic vibration of the string below it and resonate the strings without any striking of the strings by the hammers.
 5. When the section using the e-bow is concluded, it is best to turn off the e-bow gently and carefully and remove it from the strings, being sure to not jostle the vibrating strings below the device.
 6. Let the strings continue to resonate and gently dampen with the hands.

Execution of First Movement:

- 1) This movement begins by placing the E-bow on the A3 string towards its center; this may be done before the performers enter the stage. The e-bow will resonate the string as a drone once turned on. See above for more details.
- 2) Once the e-bow is sounding, the pianist will begin playing the harmonics within the dot of the question mark. Play freely, but with a general rhythmic contour moving between 5th & 9th Partial (stop string c. 1in. inch above dampers and move to c. 12in.). See above for more details.
- 3) The Pianist will continue this pattern while the vocalist sings one iteration of their chant, which should be performed rather freely but solemnly.
 - a) Note: Should the range of the chant be too high for the voice, it does not matter on what pitch the chant's final is located; transposition is allowable, as this was typical chant practice. If the final is changed, the harmonics and e-bow positioning just also need to change accordingly. However, nothing else need change. Transposition of the voice is only allowable for this first movement.
- 4) Once the singer has completed one cycle, the pianist will play the outer circle (E-bow will continue). The vocalist will begin singing their chant again, sometime after the pianist has started the outer circle. The pianist will continue to repeat until the singer has completed the chant for the second time. This should take around two cycles of the circle at least, so the vocalist is encouraged not to rush and be expressive.
- 5) Once the chant is complete for a second time, the pianist will continue until the signo. If the vocalist happened concluded near the signo, the pianist should take one more pass of the circle. Let the piano sustain while the e-bow continues to sound. Gently shut off the e-bow and, if necessary, damped the strings with your hands. There should be no "hard" cut-off of the piano's resonance.

- PRAYER -

JORDAN ALEXANDER KEY
SUMMER 2020

[illegible]

FREELY, CHANT-LIKE

CHANT-LIKE FOLLOWING
TEXT DECLAMATION

$$\begin{array}{c} mp \\ \triangle \\ \hline \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} pp \\ \hline \end{array}$$

FREELY, CHANT-LIKE

mp CHANT-LIKE FOLLOWING
TEXT DECLAMATION

BARITONE


FREELY, CHANT LIKE

P

PIZZ

 $m_f =$

mp

pp 
PED. SEMPRE 8^{VB} -----

5

mp

SLOWLY STROKE STRINGS DOWNWARD IN
MIDDLE RANGE OF PIANO INTERIOR

GLISS

BAR.

YOU.

AND

I CAN

BE C

AIN W

TO SA

CEPT.

WON

R-GET

“YOU”

I WON'T FOR-GET YOU.

PNO.

5

ON MAGNETIC TAPE
(ATTEMPT IN ONE SLOW STROKE IF POSSIBLE)

PLAY FREELY, BUT WITH A GENERAL RHYTHMIC CONTOUR

PED. PLAY MOVING BETWEEN 5TH & 9TH PARTIAL
(STOP STRING C. 1IN. INCH ABOVE DAMPERS AND MOVE TO C. 12IN.)

LET HARMONICS SUSTAIN

LET RING

12 GENTLE, ROCKING ( = 50)

P CON MOLTO ESPRESS.

YOU WERE BEAU - TI - FUL.

BEAU - TI- FUL.

I SEE YOU STILL AR-RAYED WITH

LIKE A MUSIC BOX
VERY DELICATE AND ETHEREAL

PNO.

PED. SEMPRE

15 *mf* *pp* *mp* *POCO RIT.* *A TEMPO* (♩ = 50) *mp*

LI - LACS AND IN GREY: YOUR EYES ARE DARK - LY BLUE, PER - HAPS ITS TRU - EST HUE. YOU WERE

PNO.

18 *mp* *mf* *MOLTO RIT.* *p* *ATTACCA*

EL - E-GANT, CHAR - MING, WIT - TY AND DIS - ARM - ING. YOU WERE... YOU WERE, YOU WERE...

PNO.

21 *mp* *mf* *mf* *RUNNING, FULL OF ENERGY* (♩ = 60)

YOU WERE STRONG. WE RAN, WE RAN A

PNO.

* PED.

4

25

BAR.

THOU - SAND - MID - NIGHT MILES, DANCED BE - NEATH THE STARS,

mp

3:2

5/4

PNO.

5/4

5/4

28

BAR.

PNO.

8 (8)

8^{vb}

30 *mf*

BAR. 8

SWAM THE COUR - SING O - CEANS, GATH - ER'D UP OUR

PNO.

Cresc.

33 *f* 5

BAR. *f* 3-2 *f* 2
4

CRACKS AND SCARS.

PNO. *f* 2
4
2
4

LET RING

36 (♩ = 50)

BAR. *p* *mp* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

YOU WERE WISE, YOU MADE MIS - TAKES GRAND - LY TO

PNO. *p* *mp* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

8^{va} 8^{va} 8^{va}

TO TAPE ON C#

PED. *mf* *mp*

46 FREELY, VERY EXPRESSIVE FOLLOWING TYPICAL TEXT ACCENTING

BAR. *mf* *f* *mf*

TEACH US TO LOVE, TO LOVE LOVE BET - TER AND TO BIND US ALL AS FA - MI - LY.

PNO. ON TAPE 5 5 LET RING

50

BAR. $\text{AND IN EACH PAS-SING DAY YOU FOUND A BET-TER YOU.}$

PNO. (F# TAPE)

mp f

LET RING

(A BIT LSOWER)

SLOWLY, LIKE HEAVENLY BELLS

p mp p

(CONTINUE SUSTAIN)

YOU

$\text{J} = 50$

54

BAR. $\text{NUR - TURED ALL THE CRACKS OF LIFE SO THAT THE LIGHT, SO THAT THE LIGHT, SO THAT THE LIGHT}$

PNO. FREELY

p pp mp mf f ff

LET RING (CONTINUE SUSTAIN) ON TAPE

AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. FLOURISH

f LET RING

61

BAR. $\text{COULD MORE CLEAR - LY, CLEAR - LY SHINE THROUGH}$

PNO. (A BIT LSOWER)

SLOWLY, LIKE HEAVENLY BELLS

p mp p

ON TAPE

LET RING DAMPEN

(RELEASE PEDAL) PED.

*

- LAMENT -

64 MOLTO GRAVE (♩ = 50)

BAR. *mp* THIS DAY, *p* THIS DAY, *mp* THIS DAY, *mf* THIS DAY,

PNO. VERY DELICATE *p* *mp* *sf* *mp* *p* *mp*

PED. *mp*

72 *p* THIS DAY *mp* MAKES MY HEART *p* ACHES, AND *mf* ACHES, AND *f* ACHES

PNO. *sf* *pp* *mp* *mf*

(PED. AD LIB. BY PHRASE)

78 *p* AND BLESS, AND BLESS, *p* AND BLESS, *p* AND

PNO. *p* *pp* *cresc.*

