

LIBBY LARSEN

PHARAOH SONGS

for Baritone and Piano

FULL SCORE

translated from the ancient Egyptian

by John L. Foster

KENWOOD EDITIONS

Libby Larsen
PHARAOH SONGS
for Baritone and Piano

Premiered by Alan Dunbar, baritone, and Mark Bilyeu, piano
August 7, 2017
Source Song Festival
Sundin Hall, Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota

PROGRAM NOTE

In 2003, browsing the shelves of poetry at one of my favorite book stores, I came across a volume of ancient Egyptian love poems, translated into English by John L. Foster. I took the book off the shelf and opened it. As it happens, though not nearly as often as I wish it would, the poems literally sang off the page. Some were sensual, some were quite funny, all of them were as relevant to today as they were to 1300 BC when they were created. I knew that I wanted to work with these poems as much and as often as I could. An opportunity presented itself in a commission from Lotte Lehmann Foundation, for which I set I love you through the daytimes. Ever since then I've been hungry to make a grouping of them. Pharaoh Songs, for bass/baritone and piano, sets five more of the poems. I created a loose, fantasized narrative which exists solely in the mind of the lover. Desire, fantasy, tension, frustration, reunion and fulfillment are projected on the object of the lover's desire.

My thanks to Mark Bilyeu and Clara Osowski for giving me the opportunity to create Pharaoh Songs, and to Alan Dunbar for his willingness to travel back in time (way back) to inhabit the poems and become love-lorn in ancient Egypt.

~Libby Larsen

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My love is one and only, without peer

Translated from
the ancient Egyptian
by John L. Foster

Libby Larsen

freely flowing

delicately My love is one and on-ly, — with-out peer,

p

3

love-ly a-bove all E-gypt's love-ly girls.

mf

5

less vib.

On the ho ri-zon of my see-ing, see her, ri - sing,

dazzling

f

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-2) is in 6/4 time, with the voice part starting with a rest followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment features a delicate, flowing melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 3-4) continues the vocal line with another triplet and ends with a 3/4 time signature change. The piano accompaniment includes a mezzo-forte (mf) section. The third system (measures 5-6) is in 5/4 time, with the voice part marked 'less vib.' and the piano accompaniment marked 'dazzling' and 'f' (forte). The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

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7 *softer*

Musical score for measures 7-8. The vocal line (bass clef) has lyrics: "Glist-en - ing god - dess of the sun - rise star". The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand, both marked with a '3'. A dynamic marking of *f* is present. A large watermark 'PERSO' is visible across the score.

8

Musical score for measures 8-9. The vocal line (bass clef) has lyrics: "bright in the fore-head of a luck-y year.". The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand, both marked with a '3'. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. A large watermark 'PERSO' is visible across the score.

10

Musical score for measures 10-11. The vocal line (bass clef) has lyrics: "So there she stands, e -". The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand, both marked with a '3'. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. A large watermark 'PERSO' is visible across the score.

11

pi - to - me of shin - ing, — shed - ding light,

warmly, lightly

mp

12

He who could hold that bod - y tight would

13

know at last — per -

mf

poco rit.

fect-ion of de-light.

p

If I could just be the washerman

gazing patiently from afar ♩ = 60-63

mf

If

mp

poco

I could just be the wash-er man do-ing her laun - dry for

(mp)

poco

8 *push ahead*

one month on-ly, I would be faith-ful to pick up the bun-dles,

mf *mp*

11 *sub. mp pull back*

stur-dy to beat clean the heav - y lin-ens, But gen - tle to touch those

sub. mp

14

fine spun things ly-ing clos-est to the bod-y I love.

17

mf

20 *push ahead through m. 26*

I would rinse with pure water there - fumes that lin - ger still

22

in her tu-nics And I'd dry my own flesh with the towels she

Subito Tempo I

25

yes - ter - day held to her face.

p

This block contains the musical notation for measures 25 to 27. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. Measure 25 begins with a triplet of eighth notes in the bass clef. The lyrics 'yes - ter - day held to her face.' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass and a more complex melody in the treble. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed above the piano part in measure 27.

28

The touch of her clothes, their

mp

mf

This block contains the musical notation for measures 28 to 31. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'The touch of her clothes, their'. The piano accompaniment features a consistent eighth-note accompaniment in the bass. Dynamic markings include *mp* (mezzo-piano) above the vocal line in measure 29 and *mf* (mezzo-forte) below the piano part in measure 30.

32

tex-tures, her soft-ness in them... Thank god for the

mf

mf

This block contains the musical notation for measures 32 to 34. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics 'tex-tures, her soft-ness in them... Thank god for the'. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) above the vocal line in measure 33 and *mf* below the piano part in measure 34.

35

rit.

bod - y Its youth-ful vig - or!

This system contains the first two measures of the piece. The vocal line is in bass clef, and the piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs. The tempo is marked 'rit.' (ritardando).

Ho, what she's done to me—that girl

exploding with frustration

f

short

ossia

8va

♩=132-138

port.

Ho, what she's done to me—that girl!! And I'm to grin and bear it?

This system contains the third and fourth measures. The tempo is marked 'port.' (poco ritardando). The piano accompaniment includes dynamics *p* (piano), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *f* (forte).

4

rit.

let-ting me stand there huge in her door while she goes cat-foot

This system contains the fifth and sixth measures. The tempo is marked 'rit.' (ritardando). The piano accompaniment includes dynamics *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano).

7 - - - - - a tempo (♩=132-138)

rit.

in side. Not e-ven a word:

11 *sweet, languid slower*

a tempo (♩=132-138)

exploding again

accel.

"Have a quiet walk home!" (dear god give me re-lief)

15 *slower*

Stop - ping her ears the whole damned night and me on-ly whisp-er - ing

quasi whisper

share, share.

pp *f* *mp* 3

I love you through the daytimes

$\text{♩} = 40$ with dark patience

pp *cresc.*

L. H. *sempre pp* to m. 24

mf (with wound intensity)

I love you through the

mf *p* *mf*

9

day times, in the dark, Through all the long di-

p *mf* *p* *cresc.*

13

vi- sions of the night, those hours, spend-thrift, I

mf

17

waste a - way a - lone and lie, and turn, a -

mf *decresc.*

wake till dawn

RH *p*

pp

sub. mf

mf

And with the shape of you I peo - ple

push ahead to m. 37

night, with the shape of you thoughts of hot de

mf

33

sire _____ grow live _____ grow live _____ with - in me.

subito tempo primo

37 *(with quiet burning)*

what ma - gic was in your voice - to bring such sing - ing to my

8va -----

RH *sempre p* to m. 44

mp

41

flesh, to limbs that now lie list-less on my bed with-out

(8) -----

(with growing anguish)

45

mf

you? Thus I be-seech the dark - ness: Where -

49

mp

cresc.

gone, O - love? Why gone from me whose

53

love can pace you, — step by step, to your de- sire?

(with deep emptiness)

57

mf

musical score for measures 57-60. It features a vocal line in bass clef and a piano accompaniment in bass and treble clefs. The vocal line has lyrics: "No lo-ving voice re-piles." The piano accompaniment includes a sub-octave pedal marking "8^{va}." and dynamic markings "sub. mp" and "mf".

61

rit.

rit.

a tempo

musical score for measures 61-64. It features a vocal line in bass clef and a piano accompaniment in bass and treble clefs. The vocal line has lyrics: "And I per-ceive how much I am a-lone." The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings "p" and "rit.".

rit. to end

65

musical score for measures 65-67. It features a piano accompaniment in bass and treble clefs. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings "p" and "rit. to end".

68

dim. al niente

musical score for measures 68-70. It features a piano accompaniment in bass and treble clefs. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings "dim. al niente" and "d||".

My love is back

freely ***f*** $\text{♩} = 112-116$ ***mf*** *exuberant*

My love is back, let me shout out the news! ——— My

arms swing wide to embrace her, and heart ——— pir-ou

ettes, ——— pir-ou-ettes ——— in its dark ——— cham - ber

sim.

3 6 6 6

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-2) features a vocal line starting with a triplet of eighth notes and a piano accompaniment with a 3/4 time signature. The second system (measures 3-6) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a sextuplet of eighth notes in the vocal line, with piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 7-10) features a sextuplet of eighth notes in the vocal line and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *f*, *mf*, and *sim.* (simulacrum). Performance instructions include *freely*, *exuberant*, and a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 112-116$. A large watermark 'PREVIEW' is overlaid on the page.

11

glad as a fish when night shades the pool.

sub. p

delicate

6

15

rall. *a tempo*

You are mine, my mis-tress, mine to e-ter-ni-ty,

mf

20

rit.

mine from the day you first whis pered my name.

f *mp*

25 *a tempo* (♩=116-120)*rit.*

When I hold my love close

♩=76 *still, quiet**placid, peaceful*

When I hold my love close

mp

ped. ad lib.

9

and her arms steal a-round me, I'm like a man

mf *p*

16

trans-lat-ed to punt or likesome-one out in the reed flats when the

23

whole world sud-den-ly bursts in-to flower

30

In this dream-land of South Sea fra-granc-es,

my love, you are the es-sence of ros - es,

This system contains measures 37 through 43. It features a vocal line in the bass clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "my love, you are the es-sence of ros - es,". The piano accompaniment includes a large watermark reading "PRELUSO".

of ros - es.

This system contains measures 44 through 49. It features a vocal line in the bass clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The lyrics are: "of ros - es.". The piano accompaniment includes a large watermark reading "PRELUSO".

n

This system contains measures 50 through 54. It features a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The instruction *diminuendo a niente* is written above the first measure. The system concludes with a fermata over a note in the bass clef and the letter *n* in the right margin. The piano accompaniment includes a large watermark reading "PRELUSO".