

GALEN H. BROWN

DARKNESS

Song Cycle for Soprano And Piano
Poem by Lord Byron

For Nina Berman

DARKNESS

George Gordon, Lord Byron

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Morn came and went—and came, and brought no day,
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:
And they did live by watchfires—and the thrones,
The palaces of crowned kings—the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consum'd,
And men were gather'd round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire—but hour by hour
They fell and faded—and the crackling trunks
Extinguish'd with a crash—and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smil'd;
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past world; and then again
With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twin'd themselves among the multitude,
Hissing, but stingless—they were slain for food.
And War, which for a moment was no more,
Did glut himself again: a meal was bought
With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;

All earth was but one thought—and that was death
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails—men
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,
Even dogs assai'd their masters, all save one,
And he was faithful to a corse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
Lur'd their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answer'd not with a caress—he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they rak'd up,
And shivering scrap'd with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects—saw, and shriek'd, and died—
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless—
A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths;
Ships sailless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge—
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The moon, their mistress, had expir'd before;
The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them—She was the Universe.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

³ Tempo and dynamic markings are approximate.

³ In the piano part, moving lines, especially in the left hand, are generally the most important. The specifics of interpretation are left to the discretion of the pianist, but as a general rule, in thicker textures the left hand should be brought out more.

³ In the sections marked "ped. ad libitum," pedaling should be liberal—a wash of sound is the desired effect.

³ The final movement should begin with no pause whatsoever. The final note of movement V should be treated as the first note of movement VI.

For Nina Berman
DARKNESS
Song Cycle For Soprano And Piano

Poem By
GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

I. Introduction

Music by
GALEN H. BROWN

$\text{♩} = 55$

Piano

The musical score consists of eight staves of piano music. Staff 1 starts with a dynamic ff, followed by pp and ped. ad libitum. Staff 2 features a rhythmic pattern with a dynamic poco a poco cresc. Staff 3 shows a transition with a dynamic f. Staff 4 contains a dynamic h. Staff 5 includes a dynamic f. Staff 6 has a dynamic f. Staff 7 contains a dynamic f. Staff 8 ends with a dynamic f.

3

15

7 8 7 8 4

16

4 4

fff

17

4 4

18

4 4

19

6 8 6 8

21

2 4 2 4

24

27

3

3

29

7

7

32

6

6

33

6

6

34

4

4

II. "I had a dream, which was not all a dream"

5

$\text{♩} = 60$

Soprano

Piano

I had a dream, which was not all a dream. The bright sun was ex -
ped. ad libitum very lush

40

ting - guish'd, and the stars did wan - der dark - ling through the e -

43

ter - nal space,

46

Ray less, and path-less and the

subito pp

49

i - cy earth Swung blind and black-en ing in the

mf

51

moon - less air;

52

Morn came

5

53

and went, and came, and

5

54

brought no day.

55

And men for got their pas - sions in the

57

dread of this their de - so la - tion;

59

ff

61

63

65

and all hearts Were chill'd in -

pp

68

to a self - ish prayer for light And they did live by

71

watch - fires and the thrones, The pal - aces of crown ed kings the

74 3

huts, The hab - i - ta-tions of all things which dwell, were

76

burnt for

77

bea-cons ci-ties were con-sum'd And

80

men were ga - ther'd round their bla - zing homes

mf

82

to look once more in -

84

-to each oth - er's face;

86

Hap - py were those who lived with-in the eye -

11 88

of the vol - ca - nos

90

and their moun - tain torch: A fear - ful hope was

92

all the world con - tain'd

93

For - - - ests were

94

set on fire but hour by

96

hour They fell and fa ded and the

98

crack ing trunks Ex - ting - -

99

guished with a crash and all was black.

III. "The brows of men by the despairing light"

♩=110

Soprano

Soprano

The
Piano
mp lightly, but not too *détaché*
no pedal

104

brows of men by the de -

107

spair - ing light Wore an

110

un - earth - ly as - pect, as. by

113

fits The flash - es fell up - on them;

A musical score for piano, page 116. The top staff uses a treble clef and has a key signature of four flats. The tempo is indicated as quarter note = 116. The bottom staff uses a bass clef and has a key signature of one flat. Both staves show two measures of eighth-note patterns. The first measure on the top staff has a single eighth note. The second measure on the top staff has a single eighth note. The first measure on the bottom staff has a single eighth note. The second measure on the bottom staff has a single eighth note.

119

some lay down And hid their eyes

122

and wept; and some _____ did

125

rest Their chins up on their

128

clench - ed hands, and smil'd

131

- - And o - - thers

134

hur - ried to and fro, and

137

Musical score for system 137. The vocal line starts with a quarter note followed by a dotted half note. The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note chords. The lyrics are: fed Their fu - ne - ³ral piles with fuel, and

140

Musical score for system 140. The vocal line starts with a quarter note followed by a dotted half note. The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note chords. The lyrics are: look'd up With mad dis - qui - - e -

143

Musical score for system 143. The vocal line starts with a quarter note followed by a dotted half note. The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note chords. The lyrics are: tude on the dull sky,

146

Musical score for system 146. The vocal line consists of three short rests. The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note chords.

17

149

151

The pall of a past

153

world; and then a - gain

155

With curs - es cast them down up -

157

on the dust,

159

- And gnash'd their

161

teeth and howl'd the

163

wild birds shriek'd

19

165

And, ter - ri fied, did

167

flut - ter on the ground,

169

And flap their use - less

171

wings; the

173

wild - - est brutes Came tame and trem - u - lous;

176

and vi - - - pers crawl'd_____ and

179

twin'd them selves a - mong - - the

182

mul - - ti - tude,

21

185

Hiss -

188

- ing but sting - - - less

191

they _____ were slain

194

for food.

197

200

203

206

209

IV. "And War, which for a moment was no more"

23

$\text{♩} = 60$

Soprano

Piano

mp

And

ped. ad libitum

217

War, which for a moment was no more, Did glut him self a gain: a

221

meal was bought With blood, and each sate sul-len-ly a part Gorg-ing him-self

224

in gloom: no love_____ was left;_____ All earth was

227

but one thought and that was death
Im-med-i-ate and in - glor-i-ous; and the pang of

230

fa mine fed up - on all en - trails men Died, and their bones were as

233

tomb less as their flesh; The mea-gre by the mea-gre were de vor'd E-ven dogs as

236

sail'd their mas-ters, all save one, And he was faith-ful to a course, and kept The

25

239

birds and the beasts and fam-ish'd men at bay Til hun ger clung them,

242

or the drop-ping dead Lur'd their lank jaws; him - self sought

245

out no food,- But with a pi-te-ous and per - pe-tu-al moan,— And a

248

quick, de-so-late cry lick - ing the hand Which

250

Musical score for piano and voice. The vocal line consists of eighth-note patterns. The piano accompaniment features eighth-note chords in the right hand and eighth-note bass lines in the left hand. The vocal part includes lyrics: "an -sw'er'd not with a car - ress" followed by a fermata over "He died." Measure 251 begins with a piano dynamic of ***ff***.

252

Continuation of the musical score. The vocal line is silent. The piano accompaniment continues with eighth-note chords and bass lines. Measure 253 begins with a piano dynamic of ***ff***.

254

Continuation of the musical score. The vocal line consists of eighth-note patterns. The piano accompaniment features eighth-note chords and bass lines. The vocal part includes lyrics: "He died." followed by a fermata over "died." Measure 255 begins with a piano dynamic of ***ff***.

256

Continuation of the musical score. The vocal line is silent. The piano accompaniment continues with eighth-note chords and bass lines. Measure 257 concludes with a piano dynamic of ***p***.

V. "The crowd was famished by degrees"

27

$\text{♩} = 110$

Soprano

A blank musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines. On the far left is a treble clef symbol. To its right is a '7' indicating a septuplet time signature. Two vertical black lines divide the staff into three sections. The first section contains a single short horizontal dash centered on the third line. The second section contains a single short horizontal dash centered on the third line.

Piano

no pedal

262

The

264

crowd

wa

fam-ish'd_

y de - grees;

but two

266

Of an e - nor - mous ci - ty did sur - vive,

268

they were en - e-mies: they met be - si - de The

270

dy - ing em - bers of an al - tar place Where had been heap'd a

272

mass of ho - ly things For un - ho - ly us - age;

274

they rak'd up, And shi - ver-ing scrap'd with their

276

cold skel - e - ton hands_____ The fee - ble ash - es,

and their fee - ble - breath_____ Blew for a lit - tle life,

— and made a flame_____ Which was a mock-e-ry

then they lift - ed up Their eyes as it grew light er, and be held. Each

284

oth-er's as - pects saw, and shriek'd, and died
E - ven of their mu-tu-al

286

hid-e-ous ness they died,
Un - know- ing

288

who he was up - on whose brow

290

Fam - ine had writ - ten Fiend.

ATTACCA

VI. "The world was void"

31

$\text{♩} = 110$

Soprano

Piano

ppp The world was

ppp

ped. ad libitum

302

void, _____ The po-pu - lous _____ and the po-er-ful _____ was a

309

lump, _____ **pp** Sea-son-less, _____ herb - less, _____

cresc.

pp

316

tree - less, man - less, life - less— A lump of death— a cha-os

323

of hard clay.

cresc.

329

mp The ri - vers, lakes and o - cean

334

all stood still, And noth-ing stirr'd with - in their

f

339

$\text{♩} = 70$

si - lent depths;

ff

Ships sail-or-less lay rot-ting on the sea,
And their

masts fell down piece-meal: as they drop'd They slept on the a-bbyss

with-out a surge—The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave, The moon, their mis-tress,

had ex-pir'd be - fore; The winds were wi-ther'd in the

364

stag - nant air, And the clouds pe-ri-sh'd; Dark-ness had no

368

need____ Of aid from them- She was_____ the

373

U ni - - verse.

Ped.

376

*