SONGS OF LAMENTATION AND REMONSTRATION

for

BARITONE, PIANO AND CLARINET IN Bb

Program notes and texts of the poems

This song cycle of five songs employs texts from four black American poets (Langston Hughes, Robert Hayden, Countee Cullen and Claude McKay). As the title suggests, the poems are an illuminating commentary on some of the social evils and injustices which the poets have experienced. Not only should we be aware of the plight of our fellow citizens, but it is hoped that we ought also to actively participate in the nurture of an understanding society in which harmonious racial attitudes prevail. Only when mankind can accept and appreciate the differences between us all will a climate for fostering tolerance, growth, humility and love occur. The cycle is dedicated with much affection to my baritone friend, Anthony R. Turner. The texts of the five poems chosen for this song cycle are printed below.

Duration: Approximately 12 minutes

Words Like Freedom

There are words like Freedom
Sweet and wonderful to say.
On my heartstrings freedom sings
All day everyday.

There are words like Liberty
That almost make me cry.
If you had known what I know
You would know why.

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1985
Where? When? Which?

Langston Hughes

When the cold comes
With a bitter fragrance
Like a rusty iron and mint,
And the wind blows
Sharp as integration
With an edge like apartheid,
And it is winter,
And the cousins of the too-thin suits
Ride on bitless horses
Tethered by something worse than pride,
Which are away, or bar,
Or station waiting room
Will not say
Horse and horseman, outside!
With old and not too gentle
Apartheid?

From the Dark Tower

Countee Cullen

We shall not always plant while others reap
The golden increment of bursting fruit,
Not always countenance, abject and mute,
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;
Not everlastingly while others sleep
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute
Not always bend to some more subtle brute;
We were not made eternally to weep.

The night whose sable breast relieves the stark
White stars is no less lovely being dark,
And there are buds that cannot bloom at all
In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall
So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,
And wait, and tend our agonizing seeds.
Full Moon

No longer throne of a goddess to whom we pray,
no longer the bubble house of childhood's
rumbling Mother Goose man,

The emphatic moon ascends -
the brilliant challenger of rocket experts,
the white hope of communications men.

Some I love who are dead
were watchers of the moon and knew its lore;
planted seeds, trimmed their hair,

Pierced their ears for gold hoop earrings
as it waxed or waned.
It shines tonight upon their graves.

And burned in the garden of Gethsemane,
its light made holy by the dazzling tears
with which it mingled.

And spread its radiance on the exile's path
of Him who was The Glorious One,
its light made holy by His holiness.

Already a mooted goal and tomorrow perhaps
an arms base, a livid sector,
the full moon dominates the dark.
The Pagan Isms

Around me roar and crash the paganisms
To which most of my life was consecrate,
Betrayed by evil men and torn by schisms
For they were built on nothing more than hate!
I cannot live my life without the faith
Where new sensations like a fawn will leap,
But old enthusiasm like a wraith,
Haunt me awake and haunt me when I sleep.

And so to God I go to make my peace,
Where black nor white can follow to betray.
My pent-up heart to Him I will release
And surely He will show the perfect way
Of Life. For He will lead me and no man
Can violate or circumvent His plan.

Claude McKay
SONGS OF LAMENTATION AND REMONSTRATION

DEDICATED TO: ANTHONY R. TURNER

COMPOSED BY: CHRISTOPHER L. JAMES

WORDS LIKE FREEDOM

ANDANTE PIANGEVOLE (L = c. 92)  LANGSTON HUGHES

N.B. The clarinettist should play as legato as possible
    tugging in a syllable such as 'man.'

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words like Free... bon
Sweet and wonderful to

say.

On my

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Heart strings five - boy sings  

All boy every boy,

Copyright © Christopher Langford James
There are words like liberty that almost make me cry.

If you had known what
I know
You would know why.
You would

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FULL MOON

ROBERT HAYDEN

ADAGIO (d = c.66)

No longer home of a god—bees to

whom we pray, no longer the bubble house of childhood's
Cento— the brilliant challenger of rocket ex... 3 parts, the white hope of comm.

communications men.
Some I love who are dead were watchers of the moon and knew its
love; planted seeds, trimmed their hair, pierced their ear for gold hoop earrings.
as it waxed or waned. It shines to-night upon their graves.

And burned in the

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gar·den of  Ger·mi·na·tion, its light be  made holy by the
bass line, tears with which it ming·led.

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Once on the exile's path of Him who was the
Glorious One,
MENO MOSSO (d = c.66)

sotto voce

its light made holy by His ho-li-ness.

TEMPO PRIMO (d = c.66)

Already a moo-ted goal and to-mor-row pr-

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WHERE? WHEN? WHICH?

LANGSTON HUGHES

ADAGIO LAMENTOSO (d = c.56)

[Music notation page]
A TEMPO

With a bitter fragrance

Like a rusty iron and mist,
Piu Mosso (d = c. 184)

And the cousins of the

too thin suits
ride on bit-less horses Tethered by
way, or bar, or station waiting room

Horse and horsemen, cut—-side!
A TEMPO ($d = 84$)

With ob and not too gentle A-pas-chek?

PED

THE FINAL SOUNDS OF THE PIANO MUST BE SUSTAINED BRIEFLY AND THE PEDAL MUST BE RAISED AS SOON AS THE SOUND REACHES A DYNAMIC LEVEL OF 1 FORTE. IS THE EFFECT OF THE ENDING OUGHT TO BE SUDDEN.
FROM THE DARK TOWER
COUNTEE CULLEN

LARGO CON MOLTO ESPRESSIVO (d = c. 54)

We shall not always

plant while others reap The golden increment of bursting fruit,

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-23-
Not always countenance, object and mute, That less sed
men should hold their brothers cheap; Not e-ver-lastingly while others

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sleep Shall we bespake their hands with mellow flutes

Not always bend to some more subtle brute; We were not made essentially to
And there are buds that cannot bloom at

all in light, but crumble, pitiless, and fall;

So in the dark we
hide the heart that bleeds, and wait, and tend our generating

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THE PAGANISMS

CLAUDE MCKAY

ANDANTE CON MOTO (\(d = c. 84\))

A round me war and crash the pagan-

isms To which most of my life was conse---crate,

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PED ------------------
Betrayed by evil men and torn by schisms

They were built on nothing more than hate!
cannot live my life without the faith

new sensations like a fawn will leap
old enthusiasm

like a wraith, haunt me awake

Molto meno

mosso (d = c.60)

and haunt me when I sleep.
Poco più (\(d = c.72\))

molto espressivo, prayerfully

And so to God,

P una corda

so to God I go to make my peace,

pp una corda

Copyright © Christopher Langford-James
Where black nor white can follow to be.

My pet - up heart to

Copyright © Christopher Langford James
For He will lead me, For He will lead us and no man can violate our...
dedicated to Anthony R. Turner

Christopher L. James

October 1985.