

Matthew Tommasini

THREE SPANISH SONGS

for soprano and harp

(2004)

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Program Note

This cycle is based on contrasting poems by Latin-American poets Leopoldo Lugones, Rubén Darío, and José Martí. It was the use of vivid imagery that drew me to all three poems and why I chose to write for soprano and harp. Throughout the cycle, I use evocative harp techniques to depict these dramatic images. Together with the soprano, the contrasting personalities of the duet portray the overall themes of the poems. *Olas Grises*, a poem that meditates on the nature of life and death, is set as a lyrical, quasi-strophic song. *Nocturno* is a frantic soliloquy set as a surreal recitative and aria. *Sueño Despierto* is a short poem about a waking dream. The song is a set of variations on a motive from the popular Latin-American lullaby *Nanita nana*.

Premiered by Jennifer Goltz, soprano and Amy Ley, harp, on October 29, 2004 at Kerrytown Concerthouse, Ann Arbor.

Texts and Translations*

1. Olas grises

Llueve en el mar con un murmullo lento.
La brisa gime tanto que da pena.
El día es largo y triste. El elemento
Duerme el sueño pesado de la arena.

Llueve. La lluvia lánguida trasciende
su olor de flor helada y desabrida.
El día es largo y triste. Uno comprende
que la muerte es así..., que así es la vida.

Sigue lloviendo. El día es triste y largo.
En el remoto gris se abisma el ser.
Llueve...Y uno quisiera, sin embargo,
que no acabara nunca de llover.

- Leopoldo Lugones

2. Nocturno

Silencio de la noche, doloroso silencio
nocturno... ¿Por qué el alma tiembla de tal
manera?
Oigo el zumbido de mi sangre,
dentro mi cráneo pasa una suave tormenta.
¡Insomnio! No poder dormir, y, sin
embargo,
soñar. Ser la auto-pieza
de disección espiritual, ¡el auto-Hamlet!
Diluir mi tristeza
en un vino de noche,
en el maravilloso cristal de las tinieblas...
Y me digo: ¿a qué hora vendrá el alba?
Se ha cerrado una puerta...
Ha pasado un transeúnte...
Ha dado el reloj tres horas... ¡Si será Ella!...

- Rubén Darío

3. Sueño despierto

Yo sueño con los ojos
Abiertos, y de día
Y noche siempre sueño.
Y sobre las espumas
Del ancho mar revuelto,
Y por entre las crepas
Arenas del desierto,
Y del león pujante,
Monarca de mi pecho,
Montado alegremente
Sobre el sumiso cuello, —
¡Un niño que me llama
Flotando siempre veo!

- José Martí

1. Gray Waves

It rains on the sea with a gentle murmur.
The wind moans so, it fills one with sorrow.
The day is long and sad. The rain
sleeps deeply like the sand.

It rains. The languid droplets transcend
their scent of cold, bleak flowers.
The day is long and sad. One understands
that such is death..., that such is life.

The rain continues. The day is sad and long.
In the gray distance one is lost.
It rains...And yet, one hopes
the rain will never stop.

- trans. Lucette Tommasini

2. Nocturne

Silence of the night, a sad nocturnal
silence... Why does my soul
tremble so?
I hear the whirring of my blood,
A soft storm passes through my head.
Insomnia! Unable to sleep and yet able
to dream. I am the auto-specimen of
spiritual dissection, the auto-Hamlet!
To dilute my sadness
in the night's wine,
in the marvelous crystal of the dark...
And say to myself: when will the
day break?
A door has closed...
A stranger has walked past...
The clock strikes three...If only it were She!...

- trans. Lucette Tommasini

3. I Dream Awake

I dream with open eyes
Both night and day;
I always dream.
And on the ocean spray
Of the wide tempestuous sea,
And between the swirling
Desert sands,
And joyously astride
The humbled neck
Of a mighty lion,
Monarch of my heart, —
I always see a floating child
Calling to me!

- trans. Lucette Tommasini

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for Jennifer Goltz and Amy Ley
THREE SPANISH SONGS
for soprano and harp
1. Olas grises

Text by LEOPOLDO LUGONES

Music by MATTHEW TOMMASINI
(2004)

Calm ♩ = 96
p

Soprano

Llue - ve - - - - - Llue - ve en el mar - - - - - con un

Harp

f *f* *mf*

5 **Più mosso**

mur - mul - - lo len - - to. - - - - - La bri - sa gi - - me

Bis.

p *sfzp*

9 **rit.**

tan - to, - - - - - que da pe - - - - - na. El

Bis.

sfzp *f* *f*

a tempo

12 *p sub.*

dí - a es lar - go y tris - te... Es lar - go y tris - te... El - e - le men - to

Bis.

string.

♩ = 110

15

Duer - - me el sueñ - o pe - sa - do de la a - re - na...

Bis. Bis.

ff

18

Lue -

f

22

- ve. La llu - vi - a lán - gui - da tras - cien - de Su o - lor de flor he -

25

la - da y de - sa - bri - da. El dí - a es

28

lar - go y tris - te es lar - go y tris - te. U - no com - pren de Que la

31 *f*

muer - te es a - sí... que a - sí es la vi da.

35

Si - gue llo vien - do. Si - gue llo vien - do. El

a tempo

38 *ff molto esp.*

dí - a es tris - te y lar - go Es tris - te y lar - go. En el re mo to

42

gris se a-bis- ma el ser.

p.d.l.t

45

string.

mp *ff*

se a-bis - ma el ser.

p *norm.* *ff*

47

Tempo primo (♩ = 96)

ff

Llue - ve en el mar

ff

Più mosso

51 *mp*

Llue - ve..., — Llue - ve... Y un - o qu - si - era, sin em-

Bis. *sfz* Bis.

55 **poco rall.** *mp* **a tempo**

bar go, que no a - ca - bar - a nun ca de llo - ver. — Llue - - ve —

short *mp* short *mp*

l.v.

59 *p* **rall.** *pp*

Llue - ve — Llue - - ve. —

p *pp*

2. Nocturno

Text by: RUBÉN DARÍO

Music by: MATTHEW TOMMASINI

Agitated ♩ = 96 *f* *accented* *ff* *f*

Si-len- cio_ de la no - che, do-lo - ro-so si-len-cio noc- Bis.

5 *ff* **Quasi rubato** *ff legato e molto esp.* **a tempo**

tur - no... ¿Por qué el al - ma tiem bla de tal ma - ne - ra?

10 *p* *accented* *mf* *p* *mf*

Si-len- cio_ de la no - che do-lo - ro-so si-len cio noc - tur- no...

14 *p* *mp*

Oi - go el zum - bi - do de mi san-gre, den - tro mi crá-ne-o

p sub. *f* *mp*

gliss with fleshy part of fingers

17 *f* *f*

pa - sa u - na sua - ve men - ta. In - som - nio!

f *f*

norm. gliss

Bis. *sfzp*

20 *ff* *rall.* *pp* short

No po - der dor - mir, y, sin em - bar - go, so - ñar.

ff *rall.* *pp* short

sffz *pp* l.v.

(gliss to lowest note possible)

23 Calm ♩ = 68

Musical score for measure 23, titled "Calm" with a tempo marking of ♩ = 68. The score is in treble and bass clefs. The piano part features a *pp* dynamic. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes marked *8va* and a triplet of quarter notes. The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes.

25

Musical score for measure 25. The tempo marking is *p legato*. The score is in treble and bass clefs. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes marked *8va* and a triplet of quarter notes. The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes. The lyrics "Ser la au - to" are written below the staff.

27

Musical score for measure 27. The score is in treble and bass clefs. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes marked *8va* and a triplet of quarter notes. The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes. The lyrics "pie - za de di - sec - sión es - pi - ri - tu -" are written below the staff.

29

al, jel au - to Ham - let! Di -

8va

31 *mf*

mf lür mi tris - te - za en un vi - no de no - che, en el *p*

8va

loco

33 *cresc.*

cresc. ma - ra - vil - lo - so cris - tal de las ti - nie - blas... las ti - nie blas... Y me

p *cresc.*

gliss with fleshy part of fingers

36 *rall.*

Più mosso (♩ = ca. 92) *f*

di- go: _____ ¿a qué ho-ra cen- dra el al ba?

f

norm. gliss

40

string.

¿a qué ho-ra ven- dra el al-ba? ¿a qué ho ra ven dra el al - ba

fp

43 *Agitated* ♩ = 100

ff *fp* *f* *fp* *pp*

49 *pp* *sotto voce* *mf* *pp* *mf*

Si-len - cio de la no - che, do - lo - ro - so si - len - cio noc tur - no

Bis.

Quasi rubato

a tempo

52 *p legato ed esp.* *p* *sotto voce*

¿Por qué el al - ma tiem - bla de tal ma - ne - ra? Se ha cer - ra - do u - na

57 *mf* *p* *f* *p*

puer ta... Ha pa - sa do un tran - se - ún - te... Ha da - do el re - loj três

Bis.

riten.

a piacere
ff, *p sub.*

60

ho - ras... tr3s ho - ras... tr3s ho - ras... ¡Si se - rá

(non arp.)

ff

Calm ♩ = 68

64

El - - - la!

pp

65

(8)

8va

66 **rall.**

(8) loco *ppp*

3. Sueño despierto

Text by JOSÉ MARTÍ

Music by MATTHEW TOMMASINI

$\text{♩} = 120$

(non arp.) *ff* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

rall. **a tempo**
pp *sotto voce*

8 Yo sueñ - o

(non arp.) *pp* *ff*

14

con los o - jos A - bier - tos, A - bier - tos,

p
norm.
f

19

y de dí - a Y no - che

f

23

siem - pre siem - pre siem -

string: *f*

sfz
fp

Bis.

28 $\text{♩} = 104, \text{ with intensity}$
ff

- pre sue - ño.

ff

33

f *p* *fp* *f*

39 *f*

Y sob - re las es - pum - as

p *fp* *f*

45

del an - cho mar

fp

ff

49

(♩ = ♩)

re - vuel - to, l.v.

ff

ff p sub.

53

f

(non arp.)

59 *mp*
Y por

p *f* *mp*
(non arp.)

63
en - tre las cres - pas A -

f *p*

67 *poco riten. a tempo*
re - nas

p *f*

71

f short *p* short

del de - sier - - - to, - - - del de - sier -

p *f* *ff* l.v. short short

77 Solemn ♩ = 60

ppp short

as if from afar (non arp.) to, - - - (non arp.) short sim.

p *mf* *p* short

82

short short

short *mf* *mf* *mf* short

87

short *mp*

Y de lé - on pu -

92

jan - te, *mp*

Mon - ar - ca de mi pech - o,

97

mf *f*

Mon - ta - do Mon - ta-do a - le - gre-men - te.

sim. *p*

molto rit.

Majestic ♩ = ca. 52

101 *ff*

So - bre So-bre el su - mi - so

105 *rit.*

cue - llo, So - bre So-bre el su - mi - so

109 ♩ = 88, with intensity *ff*

cue - llo,

114 *f*

¡Un

dim. poco a poco

119

ñin - - o - - - - - que me lla -

124

ma

short

short

f

8va

129

mf

Flo - tan - - - do

Musical score for measures 129-133. The vocal line starts with a rest, followed by a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. A first ending bracket is shown above the piano part.

poco riten.

a tempo

134

p

short

siem-pre ve - - - - - o!

Musical score for measures 134-138. The vocal line has a melodic phrase with a 'short' marking. The piano accompaniment has a rhythmic pattern with accents and a first ending bracket.

poco riten.

(like an echo)

pp

sotto voce

short

139

siem-pre ve -

Musical score for measures 139-143. The vocal line has a melodic phrase with a 'short' marking. The piano accompaniment has a rhythmic pattern with accents and a first ending bracket.

144 a tempo

Musical score for measures 144-147. The vocal line consists of a single melodic line with a long note and a final note marked 'o!'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and chords in the left hand, marked with *pp* and dynamic hairpins.

148 rit.

Musical score for measures 148-152. The tempo is marked *rit.*. The vocal line has a long note followed by a rest. The piano accompaniment continues with eighth-note patterns and chords, marked with dynamic hairpins and a circled '8' indicating an octave.

153

Musical score for measures 153-156. The vocal line is mostly silent. The piano accompaniment features eighth-note patterns and chords, marked with *ppp* and dynamic hairpins. The circled '8' indicates an octave.