

Libby Larsen

DE TODA LA ETERNIDAD

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*for Soprano and Piano*

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*on the poetry of Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz*

Libby Larsen  
**DE TODA LA ETERNIDAD**  
*for Soprano and Piano*

Commissioned by Bonnie Pomfret, soprano

Premiered at The Donna and Marvin Schwartz Center for Performing Arts,  
Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia on February 6, 2003.  
Bonnie Pomfret, soprano; Laura Gordy, piano

Duration: 15 minutes

**PROGRAM NOTE**

This is a cycle sung by a lover caught in an agonizing suspension of time—a time in which the lover perceives everything from beginning to end, even before the relationship begins. It's in this moment, a moment suspended in eternity, where de la Cruz tells us we feel emotional urgency precisely because there is no progression of time. In her genius, Sor Juana de la Cruz presents us with an oxymoron—the moment suspended in eternity. The entire cycle takes place entirely in that moment and solely in the mind of the lover.

The original voice/piano version of *De Toda la Eternidad* was commissioned by Pomfret and premiered February 6, 2003 as part of the opening gala for the Donna and Marvin Schwartz Center for Performing Arts at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia (Bonnie Pomfret, soprano; Laura Gordy, piano). The chamber winds setting was commissioned by Scott Stewart and the Emory University Wind Ensemble.

-Libby Larsen

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Libby Larsen

# DE TODA LA ETERNIDAD

*for Soprano and Piano*

## I. Un instante me escuchan

¡Un instante me escuchan,  
que cantar quiero  
un instante que estuvo  
fuera del tiempo!

Escúchenme mientras canto,  
que poco habrá que sufrir,  
pues lo que quiero decir  
es solamente un instante.

Un instante es, de verdad,  
pero tan privilegiado  
que fue un instante cuidado  
de toda la eternidad.

## II. ¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!

¡Afuera, afuera, afuera,  
aparta, aparta, aparta,  
que trinan los clarines,  
que suenan las dulzainas!

Estrellas se despeñan,  
Auroras se levantan.

Bajen las luces,  
suban fragancias,  
cuadrillas de jazmines,  
claveles y retamas,  
que corren,  
que vuelan,  
que tiran,  
que alcanzan,  
con flores,  
con brillos,  
con rosas,  
con llamas.

## Listen to me this moment

Listen to me this moment—  
as I sing  
of a moment perceived  
outside of time!

Meanwhile, listen to me singing—  
you will only suffer a little,  
then what wants to be said  
will only be a moment.

A moment of being, really,  
yet highly prized,  
that exists as a careful moment  
in all of eternity.

## Come out, come out, come out!

Come out, come out, come out,  
stand aside, stand aside, stand aside,  
the bugles are blowing,  
the flageolets are piping!

Stars are falling,  
dawn is arising.

Lower the lights,  
fragrances rise,  
troops of jasmine,  
spice-pinks, and broom,  
running,  
flying,  
throwing,  
catching,  
with flowers,  
with brilliance,  
with roses,  
with flame.

### III. Tersa frente, oro el cabello

Tersa frente, oro el cabello  
cejas arcos, zafir ojos,  
bruñida tez, labios rojos,  
naríz rectra, ebúrneo cuello;  
talle airoso, cuerpo bello,  
cándidas manos en que  
el cetro de amor se ve,  
tiene Fili; en oro engasta  
pie tan breve, que no gasta  
ni un pie.

### IV. Esta tarde

Esta tarde, mi bien, cuando te hablaba,  
como en tu rostro y tus acciones  
vía que con palabras no te persuadía,  
que el corazón me vieses deseaba;

y Amor, que mis intentos ayudaba,  
venció lo que imposible parecía:  
pues entre el llanto, que dolor vertía,  
el corazón deshecho destilaba.

Baste ya de rigores, mi bien, baste,  
No te atormenten mas celos tiranos  
ni el vil recelo tu quietud contraste

con sombras necias,  
con indicios vanos, pues ya en líquido  
humor viste y tocaste  
mi corazón deshecho entre tus manos.

### Smooth brow and golden hair

Smooth brow, golden hair  
arched eyebrows, sapphire eyes,  
glowing skin, red lips,  
ivory throat, straight nose,  
lyric figure, beautiful countenance;  
innocent hands, in which the  
scepter of love rests:  
slipped in gold, small feet  
barely visible.

### Speaking to you

Speaking to you, beloved, this afternoon,  
I could see in your face and by your gestures  
that words could not convince you,  
and I longed to show you my heart.

Then Love, reading my mind,  
attended my impossible state:  
he distilled my broken heart until it  
swelled with the stream of tears wept over you.

Cease this harshness, beloved, cease;  
Jealousy will cease if you command,  
and doubts will not disturb your peace of mind

with needless gloom,  
with petty shams, since in that flood  
of tears, you saw and held  
my broken heart in your hands.

## V. Diuturna enfermedad de la esperanza

Diuturna enfermedad de la esperanza,  
que así entretienes mis cansados años  
y en el fiel de los bienes y los daños  
tienes en equilibria la balanza

que siempre suspendida, en la tardanza  
de inclinarse, no déjan tus engaños  
que lleguen a excederse en los tamaños  
la desesperación o confianza:

¿Quién te ha quitado el nombre de homicide?  
Pues lo eres más severa, si se advierte  
que suspendes el alma entretenida;

y entre la infausta o la felice suerte,  
no la haces tu por conservar la vida  
sino par dar más dilatada muerte.

## Oh, malady of Hope

Oh, malady of hope, your faith  
sustains the passing of my weary years  
while measuring my wishes and my fears  
your balance remains;

deceitfully, and with indolence  
the pans begin to tip, but as change  
nears your parity counterpoises  
despair by confidence

Still, murderess is your name,  
For murderess you are, when it is owned  
between a fate of happiness or strife

my soul has hung suspended far too long;  
you do not act thus to prolong my life  
but, rather, that in life death be prolonged.

by Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz (1651–1695)

Translation by Libby Larsen

# DE TODA LA ETERNIDAD

SOR JUANA INÉZ DE LA CRUZ

LIBBY LARSEN  
revised 2007

## I. UN INSTANTE ME ESCUCHEN

♩ = 54, as if suspended in time

*mf*

¡Un in - stan - te me es - cu - chen, que can -

*molto legato*  
*p*  
*bell-like*  
*semp. sim.*

*sost. ped.* *ped.* *sost. ped.* *ped.*

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of the piece. The vocal line begins with a half rest followed by a quarter note G4, then a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The piano accompaniment starts with a half rest, followed by a quarter note G4, then a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The piano part includes a 'bell-like' dynamic marking and a 'semp. sim.' (sempre sempre) marking. Pedal markings include 'sost. ped.' and 'ped.'.

3

tar — un in - stan - te que can - tar — quie - ro un in - stan - te que es - tu - vo

*mf*

*sost. ped.* *ped.* *ped.* *sost. ped.* *ped.* *sim. al fine* *1/2 ped. ad lib.*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 3 through 6. Measure 3 starts with a triplet of eighth notes: G4, F4, E4. The piano accompaniment continues with a half note G4, then a half note F4, and a half note E4. The piano part includes a 'mf' dynamic marking. Pedal markings include 'sost. ped.', 'ped.', 'sim. al fine', and '1/2 ped. ad lib.'.

push ahead slightly to m. 12

6

fue - ra del — tiem - po! Es - cú - chen - me mien - tras

*mp*

*1/2 ped. ad lib.* *1/2 ped. ad lib.* *1/2 ped. ad lib.*

9

can - to, que po - co ha - brá que su - frir, que su - frir, — pues lo que

*f*

*1/2 ped. ad lib.* *ped.*

12 relax

quie - ro de - cir es so - la - men - te un in - stan - te, Un in - stan - te es, de ver -

*mf* *mp*

*ped.*

## II. ¡AFEURA, AFUERA, AFUERA!

♩ = 72, fiercely

*Sva* ----- *loco*

*f*

The piano introduction consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The right hand features a rapid sixteenth-note melody with a dynamic marking of *f*. The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f*. A hairpin crescendo is indicated by a dashed line above the right hand staff, labeled *Sva* at the beginning and *loco* at the end.

2

*f* (with alarm)

A - fue - ra,

*mf*

1/2 ped. *sim.*

The first system shows the vocal line starting at measure 2 with the lyrics "A - fue - ra,". The piano accompaniment features a sixteenth-note pattern in the left hand, marked with a dynamic of *mf*. Pedal markings include "1/2 ped." and "sim." (sustained).

4

a - fue - ra, a - fue - ra

The second system shows the vocal line continuing with the lyrics "a - fue - ra, a - fue - ra". The piano accompaniment continues with the sixteenth-note pattern in the left hand. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.



6 (fanfare) *ff*

10

12 *mf* (pleading)

A - par - ta, \_\_\_\_\_ a - par - ta, \_\_\_\_\_ a - par - ta \_\_\_\_\_

*mp*

14

(fanfare) *ff*

18 *f* (with fanfare)

que tri-nan los clar-i - nes, — que sue-nan las dul - zai - nas! —

*fpp* *sub.f* *fpp*

1/2 ped. 1/2 ped.

22 *mf*

E - stel - las se des -

*f* *very lightly* *pp*

1/2 ped.

24

pe - ñan, Au - ro-ras se le - van - tan.

*mf*

26

E - stel - las se des - pe - ñan, Au -

*sub.mp*

28

ro - ras se le - van - tan. Ba - jen las lu - ces,

*delicately*

30 (*savoring*)

su - ban fra - gan - cias, cua - dril - las de jaz - mi - nes,

38

(with growing fierce passion)

ro - sas, con lla - mas, con

This system contains measures 38 and 39. The vocal line features a melodic phrase starting on a half note 'ro' and a quarter note 'sas', followed by a phrase starting on a half note 'lla' and a quarter note 'mas'. The piano accompaniment consists of a continuous sixteenth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand, with sixteenth-note groupings marked with a '6'.

40

lla - mas, con lla

*tr* *p*

*p* *cresc.*

This system contains measures 40 and 41. The vocal line begins with a trill on the word 'lla', followed by 'mas, con lla'. The piano accompaniment continues with the sixteenth-note pattern, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*) hairpin.

42

freely

mas.

*ff* *fff*

This system contains measures 42 and 43. The vocal line has a single note 'mas.' followed by a rest. The piano accompaniment features a dramatic shift in dynamics, starting with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and moving to a fortississimo (*fff*) dynamic. The piano part includes a five-note chord marked with a '5'.

### III. TERSA FRENTE, ORO EL CABELLO

$\text{♩} = 50$ , quietly, smoothly throughout

*extremely smoothly*

*p*

*gently*

8va

4

(quietly glowing)

3

Ter - sa fren - te, o - ro el ca - bel - lo,

8

*poco animato*

ce - jas ar - cos, za - fir o - jos, bru - ñi - da

*sub. mf*

22

Fi - li; en o - ro en - gas - ta pie — tan bre - ve,

(S<sup>va</sup>)

*pp* *mf* *poco*

25

que no gas - ta ni un pie, — que no gas - ta ni un pie. —

*mf* *mp* *pp* *suspended, floating*

28

Ter - sa fren - te, o - ro el ca - be - llo ce - jas ar - cos,

*rall.*

31

*very gently* *shimmering, gently* za - fir o - jos, za - fir o - jos.

*7*

## IV. ESTA TARDE

♩ = 72

*mf*(yearning)

Es - ta

*intensely**p**molto legato**L. H. molto legato throughout*

3

tar - de, mi bien, cuan - do ha - bla - ba, — co - mo en tu ro - stro — y tus ac -

5

cion - es ví - a que con pa - la - bras no te per - sua - dí - a,

*cresc.*

(as if frightened)

7 (pleading) *mp*

no te per-sua-dí - a Es - ta

9

tar - de, mi bien, cuan - do ha - bla - ba, — co - mo en tu ro - stro — y tus ac -

11

cion - es ví - a que con pa - la - bras no te per-sua-dí - a,



slower, freely, recit.

13

(yearning)

no te per-sua-dí - a que el co-ra-zón— me vie-ses de-se-a - ba;

*mf*

tempo primo

15

*mf*

y A-mor— que mis in -

*molto legato*

*p* *mf*

rit.

slower, freely, recit.

17

ten - tos a - yu - da - ba, ven - ci - ó lo — que im - pos - i - ble par - e - cí - a:

*mp*

19 (still freely, slower)  
(quietly)

pu-es en-tre el llan-to, que do-lor — ver-tí-a, — el cor-a-zón — des-he - cho de-sti-la-ba.

*mf*

*rall.*

20

tempo primo

*mf molto legato*

22

Bas - te ya — de ri-go-res, mi bien, bas - te, no te a-tor-men-ten más ce - los ti-ran - os

31 *cresc. to the end*

vis - te y to - cas - te mi cor - a - zón des - he - cho

*cresc.*

33

en - tre tus ma - nos, tus ma - nos, tus

*f*

35

ma - nos.

*sub.p* *ff* *ff*

*ped.* *ped.*

# V. DIUTURNA\* ENFERMEDAD DE LA ESPERANZA

♩ = 50

*suspended in time*

*8va* begin softly, increasing intensity steadily to m. 37

*pp*

*1/2 ped. ad lib throughout*

*\*gently rocking*

5

*p* (with fading hope)

Di - u - tur - na en - fer - me - dad de la es - per - an - za

*sos. ped.*

8

*mf* (and aching)

qui a - sí en - tre - tien - es mis can - sa - dos a - ños

*mf*

*p*

\*'Diuturna', n., a long time, not quite eternal

10 *mp*

y en el fiel de los bien - es y los da - ños

*mp*

*sos. ped.* *sos. ped.*

12

tien - es en e - qui - li - bri - a la ba - lan - za

*very lightly*

*sub.p*

*sos. ped.*

14 *mf*

que siem - pre sus - pen - di - da, en la tar - dan - za

*mf*

*sos. ped.*

16 *poco a poco cresc. to m. 21*

de in - cli - nar - se, — no dé - jan — tus en - ga - ños que

*p poco a poco cresc. to m. 21*

sos. ped.

18 *(as if fighting to keep mental balance)*

lle-guen — a ex-ce-der-se — en los to - ma-ños la des-es-per-a-cion — o con fi -

*cresc.* *f*

sos. ped. sos. ped. sos. ped.

20 *rall. (desperately)*

an - za: — ¿Quien te ha qui - ta - do el nom - bre — de hom - i -

sos. ped.

22 **rall.** — *mf* (less desperate)

ci - de? Pues lo e - res más se - ve - ra, si se ad -

*mf*

sos. ped. sos. ped.

24 **rall.** — *p* (suspended, floating)

vier - te que sus - pen - des el al - ma en - tre - te -

*pp* (suspended, floating)

26 **molto rall.** — *f* (suddenly aching)

ni - da; que sus - pen - des el al - ma en - tre - te -

*f*

sos. ped. sos. ped.

34 *molto rit.* *slowly, completely suspended*  
*p a complete release of tension*

ta - da muer - te sus - pen - des el al - ma

*pp*

*sos. ped.*

36 *rit.* *morendo*

con - ser - var la vi - da más di - la - ta - da muer -

*pp. morendo*

38 *niente*

- te.

*niente*



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