

Libby Larsen

SCOTT JOPLIN

A Nosegay for Bill Bolcom

Baritone and Piano
from Songs from the Intergalactic Nightclub

on the poetry of Bill Holm

KENWOOD EDITIONS

Libby Larsen

SCOTT JOPLIN

*from Songs from the Intergalactic Nightclub
for Baritone and Piano*

Commissioned for SongFest 2018 and celebrating William Bolcom
with support from the Sorel Organization.

Premiered by Ian Walker, baritone and Lucas Wong, piano at the Colburn School
on May 25, 2018.

Duration: 2 and 3/4 minutes

PROGRAM NOTE

Songs from the Intergalactic Nightclub, is an imagined volume of popular songs from the future. Unmoored from the sense of time progressing in a linear fashion, this is a future nostalgic for set clock-time, extinction lore, anchors and defined expectation. Imagine yourself in a nightclub, reminiscent perhaps of Star War's Chalmun's Cantina on the planet Tatooine - outlaw - in between dimensions – suspended in time – improvised. Here are four songs with words by three poets, Bob Kaufman's *Battle Report*, (how jazz took over the city), Bill Holm's *Wolf Song in Los Angeles* (how bones survive) and *Scott Joplin* (how his life drew music through his hands), and Tom McGrath's *Jazz at the Intergalactic Nightclub* (how the end of time is the beginning of time). You here – in this nightclub - you don't think about the future – you don't think about the past. All you have to do is listen and live in the present.

-Libby Larsen

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Libby Larsen

SCOTT JOPLIN
for Baritone and Piano

He never smiled, his friends said,
but looked out at you
from those doleful eyes,
like turned-down gas lamps
set in a coal-black wall.
He did not sing
the song of the happy darkie
to set toes tapping
in St. Louis warehouses.
The darkness within him
was darker and lovelier than
the elegant black curve of his nose –
than the smooth black hands
moving over the ivory keys –
blackbirds flying in a fog.

Once he had a daughter
whose dying split his heart
like a sounding board.
He spent ten years
bringing back to life
a honey-colored baby
deserted under a tree in Arkansas.
On the lines of music paper
spread out before him,
she sang forgiveness
to the crooked and the ignorant,
and taught them all together
to dance the Real Slow Drag.

[...]

Behind the iron piano strings
his leaves and flowers – Maple Leaf,
Fig Leaf, Rose Leaf, Palm Leaf,
Gladiola and Chrysanthemum,
Pineapple and sweet Sugar Cane
bloom over and over again,
a Heliotrope Bouquet grown
in light under the darkness
of the stony Missouri ground
that he worked into music
with those elegant black hands.

-Bill Holm

SCOTT JOPLIN

BILL HOLM

LIBBY LARSEN, 2018

A Nosegay for Bill Bolcom

$\text{♩} = 132$, slow drag

legato RH

mf

LH, stride

3

He nev - er smiled, his friends said, but

sub.mp

5

looked out at you from those dole - ful

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7

eyes ————— like turned - down gas lamps set in a coal - black

p

10

wall.

mf

12

He did not sing ————— the

sub.mp

pp

14

song of the hap - py dark - ie — to set toes tap-pin in St. Lou - is whore-hous-es.

lightly

mf

16

The dark - ness with - in him was dark - er and

legato again

p

LH, stride

18

lov - li - er — than the el - e - gant black curve of his nose. The

mf

20

dark - ness with-in him was dark - er and lov - li - er — than his

3

This system contains measures 20 and 21. It features a vocal line in the bass clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 20 includes a triplet of eighth notes in the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

22

smooth black hands mov-ing o - ver the i - vor - y keys -

3 3

p

This system contains measures 22 and 23. The vocal line continues in the bass clef. The piano accompaniment features a more complex texture with chords and moving lines in both hands. A piano dynamic marking (*p*) is present at the start of measure 22. Triplet markings (3) are placed above the vocal notes in measure 23.

24

black-birds fly - ing in a fog. —

mf

This system contains measures 24 and 25. The vocal line is in the bass clef. The piano accompaniment is more active, with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A mezzo-forte dynamic marking (*mf*) is present at the start of measure 24.

molto rit. ----- ♩ = c. 88 Free, fluid, quasi recitative

27

Once he had a daugh-ter whose dy-ing split his

pp
attacca *ped.*

heart like a sound-ing board. He spent ten years bring-ing back to life a hon-ey-col-ored ba-by de-sert-ed

pp
ped.

un-der a tree in Ar-kan-sas. On the lines of mu-sic pa-per spread out be-fore him, she sang for-

mf
ped.

rit.

tempo primo, c. $\text{♩} = 132$ rit.

31

Musical score for measures 31-32. The vocal line (bass clef) contains the lyrics: "give - ness to the crook - ed and the ig - no - rant, and taught them all to - geth - er to". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 6/4. Dynamics include *mf* and *p*. A large watermark "PERUSSAL" is overlaid on the page.

freely, broadly

accel.

33

Musical score for measures 33-35. The vocal line (bass clef) contains the lyrics: "dance the Real Slow Drag.". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 6/4. Dynamics include *p* and *ghostly*. A large watermark "PERUSSAL" is overlaid on the page.

36

Musical score for measures 36-37. The vocal line (bass clef) is empty. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 6/4. Dynamics include *mf*. A large watermark "PERUSSAL" is overlaid on the page.

38

Be-hind the iron pi - an-o strings his

mp

41

leaves and flow - 'rs, his leaves and flow - 'rs Ma-ple leaf,

mf *sub.p*

44

Fig leaf, Rose leaf, Palm leaf,

f sub.p

47

Gla - di - o - las — and Chry - san - the - mums,

mf *f*

50

Those leaves and flow - 'rs bloom

sub.p *f* *cresc.*

52 *sub.p* *cresc.*

o - ver and o - ver a - gain a,

sub.p *f* *sub.mp*

54

He - li - a - trope bou - quet grown in

56

light ——— un - der dark - ness of the ston - y Mis - sour - i ground that he

ghostly

p

poco

rit.

58

worked in - to mu - sic ——— with those el - e - gant black hands. ———

molto rit.

dim.

ppp