

New York Scenes

modern song cycle

for lyric baritone and piano

Justine F. Chen
2006

New York Scenes text and music by Justine F. Chen

| | |
|--|------|
| I. home | 3:00 |
| II. Pardon? | 1:50 |
| III. Platform Anxiety | 5:00 |
| IV. The Internal Monologue Drinking Song | 1:50 |

Total timing: ca. 12:00

Notes:

New York Scenes was written for lyric baritone Giuseppe Spoletini. The word in the title “scene” better describes the spirit of these pieces than the word “song”. When creating the text, I had storytelling in mind. Acting- that is physical movement, facial expressions, varying vocal inflection, emotional variety and gestures – is imperative to successfully and completely perform these scenes. This requirement seems only natural, since these pieces were written for such a talented and intuitive actor as Giuseppe.

For anyone who is familiar with the vocal music of Georges Aperghis will immediately recognized his influence in “Pardon?”, the second of the cycle. I believe that Aperghis’ vocal and theatrical works have been the strongest influences on these songs. For “The Internal Monologue Drinking Song”, I had Schubert’s masterful quadruple-character song *Erkönig* in mind.

These songs were written for Giuseppe’s voice type, and actually it sits quite high for him. This version for bass is transposed down a minor third. I think the gender-neutral everyday character of the narrator make the songs easily transferable from one voice type to another. I strongly encourage tenors, sopranos and mezzo-sopranos to perform these songs.

The second, third, and fourth songs from *New York Scenes* were premiered by Giuseppe Spoletini and pianist Corazon Bisda at Greenville Church in Scarsdale, New York on September 24th, 2006. The song cycle was premiered in its entirety by Giuseppe Spoletini and pianist Eduard Laurel at the Cornelia Street Café in New York on October 9th, 2006. The bass version was premiered at Cornelia Street Café January 14, 2008 by the masterful and remarkable bass Matt Boehler, and my dear friend and collaborative partner, Eduard Laurel.

Special note to the performers:

Singers- The high melismatic passages in “Platform Anxiety” (m. 47) should be sung falsetto.

Pianists- In “Platform Anxiety,” the clusters in measures 20-26 should be performed as such: ‘natural’ (white-key) clusters are performed with the palms of the hands, while the ‘sharp’ (black-key) clusters are played with the fingers. The long clusters on the bottom staff can be performed with the left forearm.

- JFC, NYC
October 2006

I. home

restless

passionate

unrequited

ill-fated

unstoppable

uncertain

unpredictable

uneven

heavin'

unsettled

exorbitant

generous

ambitious

selfless

indulgent

soulful

fluorescent

certain

relentless

hypothetical

actual

inordinate

pulsing

teeming

primordial

II. Pardon?

[or DeNiro Meets Aperghis]

'Skuse me?

'Skuse me? Were you...

Me? 'Skuse me... Were you talking to...

Me? 'Skuse me. 'Skuse me, were you talking to- Wait a minute!

Me? 'Skuse me, were you talking to me? Hold on... Hey! Wait a minute.

Me? 'Skuse me, were you talking to me? Hold on- Me? Oh, Hi. Hey! Wait a minute

Me? 'Skuse me? Were you talking to me? Me? Me? Hold on, Me? Our connection... Oh, hi. Hey, wait a minute...

Me? 'Skuse me, were you talking to me? Hold on, just... Can you... Our connection... Oh, Hi. Hey, wait a minute...

Me? 'Skuse me, 'Skuse me, were you talking to me? Me? Hold on, just a sec'

Good Day! Can you hear... Our connection. Oh, Hi. Hey, wait a minute, Me? 'Skuse me? Were you talking to me? Me?

Hold on... me? Hold on just a sec'.

Hello?

III. Platform Anxiety

There's the train!

Move it, move it!

Too crowded to get on, damn!

...

Where is the train?

Could the platform be more crowded?

(Don't touch me)

It's so hot.

Where is it? Where is the train?

[garbled station announcement]

What? What's?

Did you- did you hear?

Did you?

Did you hear what's going on?

Did you?

Did anyone understand?

...

(III. Platform Anxiety cont'd.)

Oh, wait.

I heard something

I think

Yes! It's here!

Wait-

is it the right train?

Yes! It is!

Yaaaaaay!

Wait-

Why isn't it slowing... oh crap.

Where's the train?

Oh, wait. Here it is!

And it's the right train

Alleluia

And it's slowing down

Alleluia

And I'm strategically positioned near a door

And yes! I'm in, There's a seat... go go go!

Ah, sweet victory.

Oh, wait- this car's not air-conditioned... ew.

At least it can't get any worse.

Why aren't we moving?

IV. The Internal Monologue Drinking Song [or, When G met J]

DRINK

THANK YOU.

(Here I am, sitting by myself. This bar's not bad, thank god it's not packed.)

BARKEEP?

THANK YOU.

{SMILE}

{Sip}

{SMILE... WINK!}

(What was that?)

(What a look! Still, quite cute... and worth another try) {Smi-}

(What did I see? My glasses would help. Curse my vanity!)

DRINK?

THANK YOU.

(Same strange look. I wonder, is he alright? Looks fit, and healthy, quite well-dressed, and well-groomed- AH! A challenge! I can do that.)

BARKEEP?

THANK YOU. {WALK}

{SMILE}

(Incoming. Incoming!) {Squint} (Mayday! Mayday!)

{SMILE}

GREETINGS

I. home

Duration: ca. 3 min.

Text and Music by Justine F. Chen

meditative ♩ = 48

meditative ♩ = 48
sempre legato

p

Rest-less pas-sion-ate

④ un-re-quit - ed ill-fat - ed un-stop - pa-ble un-cer - tain un-pre-dict-a - ble

simile

⑦ un - e - ven heav - in' un - set - tled ex - or - bi-tant gen-er-ous am-bi- tious

10

self - less in - dul - gent soul - ful fluo - res - cent cer - tain re - lent - less

13

hyp - o - thet - i - cal ac - tu al in - or - di - nate puls - ing teem - ing

16

pri - mor - di - al

19

poco a poco rit.

II. Pardon?

[or De Niro Meets Aperghis]

Duration: ca. 1:50

Text and Music by Justine F. Chen

Repetitious/Memento Smurf ♩ = 120-138

3/8 2/4 4/4 3/4

'Skuse me? 'Skuse me? were you... Me?... 'Skuse me... Were you talk-ing to me?...

Repetitious/Memento Smurf ♩ = 120-138

② ③

f

④ 3/4 7/8 3/4 6/8 7/8 3/4 *sub. piu f* 3/4

'Skuse me' Skuse me, were you talk-ing to me? 'Skuse me, 'Skuse me, were you talk-ing to... Wait a min-ute,

⑤

8^{vb}

⑥ 3/4 3/4 6/8 5/4 4/4

me - ? 'Skuse me, were you talk - ing to me? Hold on

mp *mf*

⑦ *happily* 4/4 3 7 5 4 *confused* 8 *chilled* *upset* *interrupting* 4/4

Hey! Wait a min-ute Me? 'Skuse me, were you talk-ing to me? Hold on... Me? Hi... Hey, Wait a min-ute

⑨ *demure* 4/4 3 7 6 4

Me - ? 'Skuse me, were you talk - ing to me? Hold on

⑩ *annoyed* 4/4 *not happy, upset with the situation* *aggressive and hostile* 3 4

Me? Oh - Hi, Hey! Wait a min - ute

⑪ 3/4 6 3 6 13 8

Me!?'Skuse me? Were you talk-ing to me? Me?_ Me?_ Hold on,

⑫ 13 8

Red. *

13 *incensed, outraged* *business-like* *happy, cheerful*

Me!? Our con-nec-tion Oh - Hi Hey -, wait a min-ute

14 *so happy, unbelieving*

Me? 'Skuse me, were you Talk - - - - - ing to

15 *white-note gliss.*

me? Hold on, just... Can you...Our con-nec-tion Oh, Hi Hey..Wait a min-ute Me?

17 *8va*

'Skuse me 'Skuse me? Were you talk-ing to me? Me? Ho - ld on, just a sec' Good

19 $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

day! Can you hear... Our con-nec-tion Oh_ Hi_ Hey, Wait a min-ute, me?_

20 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

pp

21 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{17}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

'Skuse_ me?_ Were you talk-ing to me? Me? Ho - ld on...me? Hold on, Just a sec' Hello?

22 $\frac{17}{8}$

Ped. *

III. Platform Anxiety

Duration: ca. 5 min.

Text and Music by Justine F. Chen

panicked, in a huge rush

There's the train, move it! move it! Too crow-ded to get on, damn!

disappointed, annoyed, waiting, impatiently

relentless, like a ticking second hand

poco a poco decrescendo

p *mp*

mf

③ *Ped.* *

⑥ Where is the tra - in? [- - ay - - ee - - - -]

⑩ Could the plat - form be more crowd - ed?

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a complex rhythmic structure with frequent changes in time signature (8/8, 6/8, 7/8, 5/8, 4/8). The piano accompaniment includes triplets and a 'poco a poco decrescendo' section. The vocal line includes lyrics such as 'There's the train, move it! move it! Too crow-ded to get on, damn!' and 'Where is the tra - in? [- - ay - - ee - - - -]'. Performance markings include dynamics like *p*, *mp*, and *mf*, and articulation like *panicked, in a huge rush* and *relentless, like a ticking second hand*. Measure numbers 3, 6, and 10 are indicated at the start of their respective systems.

15 *shrinks away from crowd in misery and disgust of germs* *quietly, miserably, helplessly, pathetically; inwardly, almost a plea* *With lots of breath*

Don't touch me It's so hot!

19 *listens intently to the garbled message, truly and earnestly tries to comprehend*

Where is it Where is the train...

suddenly intensely and rigorously rhythmic

sub. ff

22

25

What? What's - Did you, Did you hear?

mp

ff

*The clusters in measures 20-26 should be performed as such: 'natural' (white-key) clusters are performed with the palms of the hands, while the 'sharp' (black-key) clusters are played with the fingers. The long clusters on the bottom staff can be performed with the left forearm.

29

Did you? Did you hear? Did you hear hear - what's go - ing on?

p

31

poco rit.

Did you? Did a-ny-one-un-der stand?

poco rit. *poco a poco al tempo*

35

hears something- is really excited about it almost too happy for words

Oh Oh, wait. I heard some-thing, I think.

39

pp

Some-thing I think I think Yes! It's here! Yes! It's

43

here! - It's here! it' here! Wait, Is it the right train [- ay - ee - - -]

46

Yes! It is! It is! Yes,

47

falsetto freely, take time *ord. a tempo*

Yay - eh-yee-eh- yee - - - Ee - - - Wait

49

Wait a mi-nute, why i-sn't it slow-ing oh - crap. Where's the trai - eh - yee

53 eh - yee - eh - yee - eh-yee - eh - yee - eh - yee - yeh -yee yeh-yee-yeh-yee - yeh - yee - nuh -

55 *intake breath*
nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh

-n(uh)

57

59

61

64

heavily, wearily

gathering speed like a train (not metronomic, more like a graded accelerando)

68

hushed ad libitum

pp

hushed Oh, wait, here it is, here it is - s Ya - y. and it's the right train

70

A - lle - lu - ia and it's slow-ing down, A - lle - lu - ia

74

pp

And I'm stra-te-gi-c'lly po-si-tion'd near a door. Ah - Ah - And yes, I'm in. And look! a

78

seat Go! go! go! Ah - - - Sweet_ vic - to - ry

80

Oh, wait. The car's not air - con - di - tion'd. ee - w

81

At least it can't get a - ny worse... Why are-n't we mov-ing?

IV. The Internal Monologue Drinking Song [or When G Met J]

Duration: ca. 1:50

4
4 Moving from tense to comfortable ♩ = 66

Text and Music by Justine F. Chen

4
4 DRINK. THANK YOU. (Here I am.)

Moving from tense to comfortable ♩ = 66

mp

④ (Sit - ting by my - self.) (This bar's not bad, thank god it's not pack'd.)

⑤ *piu f* ⑥ *sub. p*

⑧ whistles {SMI - LE} {SMILE} {WINK!} BAR - KEEP? THANK YOU {SIP} (What was starts to squint)

⑨ ⑩ ⑪

3
4
12

a bit offended
(What a look!) (Still, quite cute.) (and, worth an-oth - er try) {SMI...} *sub. p*

3
4
13 14 15

that?) (What did- I - back to squinting) *sub. p*

6
8

Ped. *8^{vb}

6
8
16

- see? My glass-es would help. Curse, my va - ni - ty! DRINK? THANK YOU.

exasperated *f* *another face* *resume squinting*

7
8
17

mf *piu f* *gliss.*

(8)..... 8^{vb}

3
4
18

somewhat confused
(Same strange look.) (I won der, is he al right? Looks fit, and health-y,

3
4
19 20

secco *sub. p* *warm*

gliss.

quite well dressed and well - groomed... Ah! A chal-enge! I can do that.) BAR- KEEP? THANK YOU.

Musical notation for measures 21-24. Measure 21 features a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes and a piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 22 shows the piano accompaniment with a fermata. Measure 23 includes a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes and the instruction "detective-mode" above the piano part. Measure 24 continues the piano accompaniment.

{WALK} {SMI - LE}

Musical notation for measures 25-27. Measure 25 has a vocal line with a fermata and the instruction "{SMI -". Measure 26 features a vocal line with the lyrics "(In - com - ing! In - com - ing!){SQUINT!}{May - day! May - day!)" and a piano accompaniment with the instruction "lush". Measure 27 continues the piano accompaniment with a fermata.

LE}

Musical notation for measure 28, showing a vocal line with a fermata and the instruction "Ped." with an asterisk.

[from squinting, to watching someone take a seat beside him. At first, act uncomfortable, friendly?

Musical notation for measures 29-31. Measure 29 has a piano accompaniment with a fermata and the instruction "Ped.". Measure 30 has a piano accompaniment with a fermata and the instruction "* Ped.". Measure 31 has a piano accompaniment with a fermata and the instruction "* Ped.".

Ped.

* Ped.

* Ped.

* Ped.

4

*

Shy, nervous, hesitant...what should I do? Finally, work up the courage for] GREE TINGS

Musical notation for measures 32-36. Measure 32 has a piano accompaniment with a fermata and the instruction "Ped.". Measure 33 has a piano accompaniment with a fermata. Measure 34 has a piano accompaniment with a fermata. Measure 35 has a piano accompaniment with a fermata. Measure 36 has a piano accompaniment with a fermata, the instruction "8va" above the piano part, and the instruction "[BLACK OUT]" to the right.

36

[BLACK OUT]

4