

Edward Nesbit

In the Desert

IN THE DESERT

EDWARD NESBIT

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INSTRUMENTATION

flute (= piccolo + alto flute)
clarinet in B \flat (= contrabass clarinet in B \flat)

piano

soprano

violin
violoncello

Score in C

Duration c. 7' 30"

PROGRAMME NOTE

In the Desert is a set of five short songs on the poetry of the late nineteenth-century American poet Stephen Crane. The poems are diverse in mood and subject matter, but all share a directness and a vividness of imagery which attracted me greatly. It is this directness - and indeed simplicity - that I attempted to capture in music.

TEXTS

I

Places among the stars,
Soft gardens near the sun,
Keep your distant beauty;
Shed no beams upon my weak heart.
Since she is here
In a place of blackness,
Not your golden days
Nor your silver nights
Can call me to you.
Since she is here
In a place of blackness,
Here I stay and wait.

II

In the desert
I saw a creature, naked, bestial,
Who, squatting upon the ground,
Held his heart in his hands,
And ate of it.
I said, "Is it good, friend?"
"It is bitter - bitter," he answered;
"But I like it
Because it is bitter,
And because it is my heart."

III

Should the wide world roll away,
Leaving black terror,
Limitless night,
Nor God, nor man, nor place to stand
Would be to me essential,
If thou and thy white arms were there,
And the fall to doom a long way.

IV

Mystic shadow, bending near me,
Who art thou?
Whence come ye?
And - tell me - is it fair
Or is the truth bitter as eaten fire?
Tell me!
Fear not that I should quaver.
For I dare, I dare.
Then, tell me!

V

There was, before me,
Mile upon mile
Of snow, ice, burning sand.
And yet I could look beyond all this,
To a place of infinite beauty;
And I could see the loveliness of her
Who walked in the shade of the trees.
When I gazed,
All was lost
But this place of beauty and her.
When I gazed,
And in my gazing, desired,
Then came again
Mile upon mile
Of snow, ice, burning sand.

from *The Black Riders and Other Lines*,
Stephen Crane (1871-1900)

In the Desert I

STEPHEN CRANE

EDWARD NESBIT

Soprano *Dolcissimo* $\text{♩} = 52$ *p espress.*

Pla- ces a- mong the stars, soft gar- dens near the sun, keep your dis - tant beau- ty; shed no beams

Violin *Dolcissimo* $\text{♩} = 52$ muted *p* *p* *p* *sempre sim.* *mp* *p* *sempre sim.*

Violoncello *Dolcissimo* $\text{♩} = 52$ muted *p* *p* *p* *sempre sim.* *mp* *p* *sempre sim.*

Fl. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Cb. Cl. *p*

Pno. *p* Ped.

S. up-on my weak heart. Since she is here in a place of black - ness, not your gol- den days nor your sil - ver nights can

Vln. *p* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Vc. *p*

Fl. *mp* *p*

Cb. Cl. *pp* *mp* *p* take Clarinet in B \flat

Pno. *mp*

S. call me to you. Since she is here in a place of black- ness, here I stay and wait.

p *mp leggiero* *p espress.* *pp*

Vln. *p* *sempre sim.* *mp* *p* *p* *sempre sim.*

Vc. *p* *sempre sim.* *mp* *p* *p* *sempre sim.*

II

Scherzando ♩ = 126

Flute

Clarinet in B♭

Piano

Violin

Violoncello

5

Fl.

Cl.

Pno.

S.

Vln.

Vc.

mp scherz.

In the de-sert I saw a crea-ture, na - - - - - ked, bes - - -

f *flirico*

11

Fl. *f* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *mf*

Cl. *f* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *mf*

Pno. *f* *sfz f* *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

S. *f pesante*
 - ti - al, who, squat - - - ting up - on the ground,

Vln. *f* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *mf*

Vc. *f* *sfz f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *mf*

15

Fl. *sfz p* *f* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Cl. *sfz p* *f* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Pno. *sfz* *p* *sfz f* *mf* *f*

S. *mp scherz.* *f pesante*
 held his heart in his hands, and ate of it.

Vln. *pizz.* *sfz* *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

Vc. *pizz.* *sfz* *arco* *sfz f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

19

Fl. *f f mf sfz f sfz f*

Cl. *f f mf f sfz f sfz f*

Pno. *f mf sfz f sfz f*

S. *f lirico*
I said, "Is it good, friend?"

Vln. *f f mf f sfz sfz f* pizz.

Vc. *f f mf f sfz f sfz f* pizz.

24

Fl. *f 3 mf f sfzpp* breathe inaudibly where necessary

Cl. *f 3 mf f sfzpp* breathe inaudibly where necessary

Pno. *ff brillante f ff sfz*

S. *p grotesco*
"It is bit -

Vln. *f 3 sfzpp* arco, change bow inaudibly where necessary

Vc. *f 3 sfzpp* arco, change bow inaudibly where necessary

30

Fl. *mf* *sfzpp*

Cl. *mf* *sfzpp*

Pno. *f* *sfz*

S. *mp semplice* *f* *p grotesco*
 ter - bit - ter," he an - swered; "But I like it be - cause it

Vln. *mf* *sfzpp* pizz. arco

Vc. *mf* *sfzpp* pizz. arco

36

Fl. *pp sempre* take Alto Flute

Cl. *pp sempre*

Pno. *pp sempre*

S. *p* *mf scherz.* *p grotesco*
 is bit - ter, and be - cause it is my heart."

Vln. *pp sempre* pizz.

Vc. *pp sempre* pizz.

III

Calmato ♩ = 56

Soprano *p* Should the wide world roll a - way, leav - ing black ter - ror, *pp* li - mit - - less night,

S. *p* nor God, *p* nor man, nor place to stand would be to me es - sen - tial, if

11

A. Fl. *p* *pp* take Contrabass Clarinet

Cl. *p* *pp*

S. *mp espress.* *p* *pp* thou and thy white arms were there, and the fall to doom a long way.

IV

Leggiero ♩ = 76

Alto Flute

Contrabass Clarinet in B♭

Soprano

Mys - tic sha - dow, bend - ing near me, Who art thou? Whence come ye? And - tell me - is it

Leggiero ♩ = 76
muted, arco, sul G sempre

Violin

Violoncello

6

A. Fl.

Cb. Cl.

S.

Vln.

Vc.

fair or is the truth bit - ter as eat - en fire?

11

A. Fl.

Cb. Cl.

S.

Vln.

Vc.

Tell me! Fear not that I should qua - ver. For I dare - I dare. Then, tell me!

take Piccolo

take Clarinet in B♭

V

Delicato ♩ = 66
senza vib.

Piccolo
pp cold
p > pp *p > pp*
p > pp *p > pp*

Clarinet in B♭
p > pp *p > pp cold*
p > pp *p > pp*

Piano
p > pp *p > pp*
p > pp *p*

Violin
Delicato ♩ = 66
muted
sempre senza vib.
pp cold
p
pp
p > pp
pizz. (>)
arco
pizz. (>)

Violoncello
p
poco espress.

7

Picc.
p > pp
p > pp

Cl.
pp
p > pp
pp

Pno.
p > pp
p > pp

S.
p
There was, be - fore me, mile up - on mile of snow, ice, burn - ing sand.

Vln.
p > pp
p > pp
p
arco
pizz. (>)

Vc.
p

13

Picc. *pp* *p > pp*

Cl. *p* *p > pp* *pp* *p > pp*

Pno. *p* *p > pp* *p > pp* *p* *p > pp*

S. *p* And yet I could look be-yond all this, to a place of in-fi-nite beau-ty;

Vln. *p* *p > pp* *p > pp* *pp* *p > pp*

Vc. *pp*

18

Picc. *pp* vib. norm.

Cl. *p > pp* *p > pp* vib. norm.

Pno. *p > pp* *p > pp* *mp*

S. *p* and I could see the love - - - li - ness of her who walked in the shade of the trees. *mp* *p* *pp*

Vln. *p > pp* *p > pp* *pizz.* *mp*

Vc. *pizz.* *mp*

22

Picc. *p* *pp* *p*

Cl. *p* *pp* *p*

Pno. *mp* *mp* *mp < sfz* *mp = sfz*

S. *p* *pp* *mp* *mp = sfz*

When I gazed, all was lost but this place of beauty and her.

Vln. *mp* *mp* *mp = sfz* *mp = sfz*

Vc. *mp* *mp* *mp = sfz* *mp = sfz*

26

Picc. *pp* *mp* *pp* *pp cold* senza vib.

Cl. *pp* *mp* *pp*

Pno. *mp*

S. *p* *p possibile* *pp* *p*

When I gazed, and in my gaz - ing, de - sired, then came a - gain

Vln. *mp* *pp cold* arco, senza vib.

Vc. *mp* *p* arco (vib. norm.) poco espress.

31

Picc. *p > pp* *p > pp* *p > pp*

Cl. senza vib. *p > pp* *p > pp cold*

Pno. *p > pp* *p > pp* *p > pp*

S. mile up - on mile of snow, ice, burn - ing sand.

Vln. pizz. (*>*) *p* arco *pp* *p > pp*

Vc.