

MICHAEL SALVATORE GREBLA

SYMPATHY

FOR MEZZO-SOPRANO & VIOLONCELLO

2019

FULL SCORE

CO-COMMISSIONED BY:

Angela Roberts, John Rodgers, Charles Grant, Peter Wreford & Bill Rigg

The creation and premiere of "Sympathy" for Mezzo-Soprano & Violoncello was made possible by the generous support of the following consortium of patrons:

Angela Roberts

John Rodgers

Charles Grant

Peter Wreford

Bill Rigg

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michaelgrebla.com

SYMPATHY

BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR (1872-1906)

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting—
I know why he beats his wing!

Know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!

Dedicated to Peter Wreford...

DURATION: APPROXIMATELY 5'30"

NOTES FROM THE COMPOSER

"Sympathy" is a setting of the poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar. The poem explores the poet's understanding of how a caged bird feels. He paints very vivid pictures and a pained narrative of the bird, all the while really discussing the effects of deprivation of freedom on the individual – indeed he was the first child of freed Kentucky slaves. When reading this poem I was struck by the power of the text and this work is very much my musical reading of it.

The work maintains the original title and draws heavily on word painting whilst also sounding the undertones of tension, despair and desperation in the poem. The duet of voice and cello behaves as a dialogue between the poet and the bird, where the cello assumes the role of the bird. The cello draws its cue from the text for various gestures of the bird including singing, pulsing/beating of wings (translating to a visual beating of bowing arm) and also the bird's cries of pain, prayers of hope, and others.

**Premiered January 26th, 2019 by Amber Evans & Issei Herr
at St John's in the Village, West Villlage, Manhattan, New York, USA.**

WORDS BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

SYMPATHY

For Mezzo-Soprano & Violoncello

Michael Salvatore Grebla (b.1989)

♩=90 Molto Rubato

Mezzo-Soprano.

Violoncello

con sord.

sul D

mf *fp* *f* *mp* *fp* *pp* *f* *p*

♩=90 Tempo Giusto

9

M.

Vc.

mf *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *f*

I know what the caged bird feels, a - las!___

17

M.

Vc.

p *mp*

When the sun is bright on the

22

M.

Vc.

mf *p* *mf*

up-land slopes; When the wind stirs soft through the spring-ing grass,

pp *p* *pp* *mf* *p*

2

27 *mp* *mf* *f*, *mf*

M. And the riv - er flows like a stream of glass; When the

Vc. *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

sul pont. nat.

32 *mp* *f* *p* *pp*

M. first bird sings and the first bud opes, And the

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

37 *mf*

M. faint per - fume from its cha - lice steals

Vc. *pp* *mf*

42 *mp* *f*

M. I know what the caged bird feels!

Vc. *f* *p* *f*

48

M.

Vc.

mp

p

pp

54

M.

Vc.

mf

f

I know why the caged bird beats its wing till its

Heavier bow pressure scratch tone on low strings to 61

59

M.

Vc.

p

blood is red on the cruel bars

64

M.

Vc.

p

f

mp

for he must fly back to his perch and cling when he

4

69 *f* *mp* *ff*

M. *f* *mp* *ff*

fain would be on the bough a - swing. and a pain still

Vc. *f* *p* *ff*

74 *f*

M. *f*

throbs in the old, old scars and they pulse a - gain

Vc. *f*

78 *p*

M. *p*

with a keen - er sting - I know why he beats his wing!

Vc. *mf* *p*

poco rit. . . . A tempo (♩=90)

83 *mf* *f*

M. *mf* *f*

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,

Vc. *mf* *f*

END OF EXCERPT