

Aurora Sings At Dawn

Joseph Eidson
(2009)

Lyric Soprano

Solo Percussion

Marimba, 2 Wind Gongs (low, high), Splash Cymbal, China Cymbal, Shekere, Doumbek, Glass Wind Chimes, 2 Triangles (small, medium), 2 Crotales (A#, C#)

Duration: approximately 10 minutes 50 seconds

Mvt. 1: 2 minutes 55 seconds

Mvt. 2: 2 minutes 10 seconds

Mvt. 3: 3 minutes 35 seconds

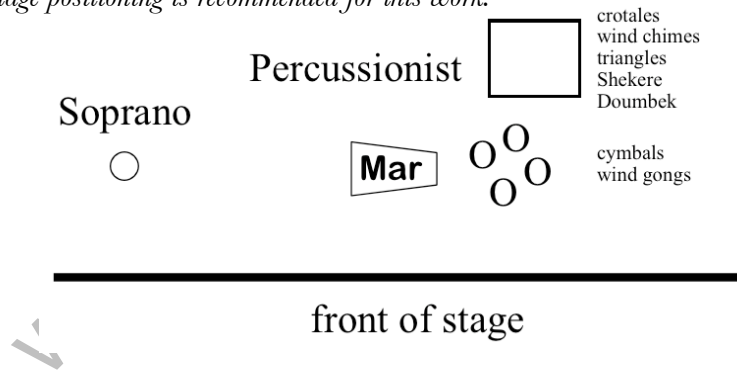
Mvt. 4: 2 minutes 10 seconds

Program Notes

The sonnets of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) are rich with descriptions of musical sounds and powerful expressions of emotion. Four of these sonnets have been fused into a cycle that depicts Aurora, the Roman goddess of the dawn, singing at sunrise. She first sings to the departing evening star Hesperus as the sun appears over the horizon. A lament about Longfellow's dread of middle age provides the text that reflects Aurora's own brief time in the sky and her unfulfilled ambitions in movement two. Three singers are profiled in the third movement, each of a different voice that causes unrest to their audience. The final movement is Aurora's bitter lament at the death of her mortal lover Tithonus, prince of Troy. This movement recalls several musical motives and gestures used throughout the work, and a final tolling note in the percussion ends Aurora's time in the sky.

Performance Notes

- ♦ The following stage positioning is recommended for this work:



- ♦ All quarter tones are written as an accidental with an arrow pointing downward.

Mvt. 2

- ♦ The singer may wish to quietly strike the marimba bars to find their starting pitches for each phrase. These starting pitches are less important than the intervals between the notes that follow – starting near the beginning pitches will produce the desired effect.
- ♦ The percussionist is free to add some ornaments around the notated rhythmic cells, especially in the measures marked “fill” – be creative!

Mvt. 3

- ♦ At measure 35 the singer should cut off after the marimba enters to avoid any break in the sound.

Mvt. 4

- ♦ At measure 1 the second attack of the glass wind chimes should be more than a single downward stroke; either several downward strokes or an up/down combination.

Texts

The Evening Star (page 2)

Lo! in the painted oriel of the West,
Whose panes the sunken sun incarnadines,
Like a fair lady at her casement, shines
The evening star, the star of love and rest!

And then anon she doth herself divest
Of all her radiant garments, and reclines
Behind the sombre screen of yonder pines,
With slumber and soft dreams of love oppressed.

O my beloved, my sweet Hesperus!
My morning and my evening star of love!
My best and gentlest lady! even thus,
As that fair planet in the sky above,
Dost thou retire unto thy rest at night,
And from thy darkened window fades the light.

Mezzo Cammin (page 5)

Half of my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip from me and have not fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth, to build
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.

Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret
Of restless passions that would not be stilled,
But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,
Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;

Though, half way up the hill, I see the Past
Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights, –
A city in the twilight dim and vast,

With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming
lights. –

And hear above me on the autumnal blast
The cataract of Death far thundering from the
heights.



The Singers (page 8)

God set his Singers upon earth,
With songs of sadness and of mirth,
That they might touch the hearts of men, And
bring them back to heaven again.

The first, a youth, with soul of fire,
Held in his hand a golden lyre;
Through groves he wandered, and by streams,
Playing the music of our dreams.

The second, with a bearded face,
Stood singing in the market-place,
And stirred with accents deep and loud
The hearts of all the listening crowd.

A gray old man, the third and last,
Sang in cathedrals dim and vast,
While the majestic organ rolled
Contribution from its mouths of gold.

And those who heard the Singers three
Disputed which the best might be;
For still their music seemed to start
Discordant echoes in each heart,

But the great Master said, "I see
No best in kind, but in degree;
I gave a various gift to each,
To charm, to strengthen, and to teach.

"These are the three great chords of might,
And he whose ear is tuned aright
Will hear no discord in the three,
But the most perfect harmony."

Suspiria (page 13)

Take them, O Death! and bear away
Whatever thou canst call thine own!

Thine image, stamped upon this clay,
Doth give thee that, but that alone!

Take them, O Grave! and let them lie
Folded upon thy narrow shelves,

As garments by the soul laid by,
And precious only to ourselves!

Take them, O great Eternity!
Our little life is but a gust

That bends the branches of thy tree,
And trails its blossoms in the dust!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
(1807-1882)

Aurora Sings At Dawn

1. The Evening Star

Joseph Eidson (ASCAP)
(2009)

Tranquil, mysterious (♩ = 72)

Soprano

Percussion

with knuckles with fingertips with knuckles with palms / fingertips

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

all metals *l.v. sempre*

5

S.

Perc.

senza misura - freely
dramatic! quarter-tone trill
sfz - p *f*

Lo!

Crotales hard brass mallet (*sempre*)

take wire brushes

p *mf* *f*

ca. 8"

8

S.

Perc.

a tempo
mp lightly, nimble

In the paint-ed o-ri - ole of the West, whose panes the sunk - en

wire brushes

p *port.* *p* *mf*

11

13

S.

Perc.

sun in-car na - dines like a fair la - dy at her win - dow shines

(hard brass mallet) *f*

scrape brush downward (one stroke)

mp *mf* *p*

14 *f* *sffz - p* quarter-tone trill *mf* *port.* *mf*

S. the eve-ning star! The star of love and

Perc. *f* *mp* *mf* *p*

18 *p* *pensive, reserved* *p*

S. rest. And then a-

Perc. *p* *mp* *mf* *pp*

22 *mp*

S. -non she doth her-self di - vest of all her ra-d'ant gar-ments and re -

Perc. *mf* *mp*

25 *mf* *mp* *p* *with growing intensity* *p*

S. clines be-hind the som-bre screen of yon-der pines. With
scrape brush downward (single stroke)

Perc. *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *p*

28 *mp* *mf* *p* *rubato - freely* *with a tinge of sadness* *a tempo* *p* *pp*

S. slum-ber and soft dreams. Soft dreams of love op-pressed.

Perc. (hard brass mallet) *f*
scrape brushes downward (single strokes) *mf* < *f* *p*

33 *with longing - dramatic!* *mp* *mf* *ff* *mf* *slightly more reserved*

S. Oh my be-lov'd, my sweet Hes-per-us! My mor-ning and my

Perc. *mp* *f* random hits (all metals) (d)

37 *steady gliss. - like a sigh* *p* *loving, reverent* *mf* **40**

S. eve-ning star of love! My best and gen-tlest la-dy

Perc. *p* *f* *mp* *p* *mp*
with palms / fingertips
set brushes aside

41 *mp* *mf*

S. e-ven thus, - as that fair plan-et in the sky a-bove, dost

Perc. *p* *mp* *mf*

44 *f* *mf* *dark, mysterious* *mp*

S. thou re-tire un - to thy rest _ at night, and from thy dark - ened win - dow _ fades the

Perc. *f* *mp* *p* *mp*

48 hold until breath runs out _____ *n*

S. — light.

Perc. *p* *mf* *mp* *5* *mf* *p* *n*

2. Mezzo Gammin

Energetic (♩. = 66) *mf* with remorse

Soprano Half of my life is gone _____ and I _ have let _ the

Percussion Shekere *p* *mp*

7 *f* *mf* *mp*

S. years slip _____ from me, and have not ful - filled the as - pi - ra - tions of _ my youth.

Perc. slap bottom of shekere *mf*

14

12 *p* *growing excited* *mp* *f* (.)

S. To build, to build, to build, to build a tow - er of song!

Perc. *f* *mp* *mf*

18 *secretive - breathy* *pp* *mf*

S. A tow - er of song with loft - y par - a - pet.

Perc. *f* *mf* Doumbek (slap) ^ *f*

Tek
Ka
Doum / Slap

23

S. Not in - do - lence, nor

Perc. *mp* *p*

27

28 *mf*

S. pleas - ure nor the fret of rest - less pas - sions that would not be stilled.

Perc. *f* *mf* fill (slap) ^

33

32 *with great sadness* *f* *mf*

S. But sor - row and a care that al - most killed kept me from

Perc. *sim.* *mp* fill

38

36 *fearful* *p*

S. what I may ac-com- plish yet. Though, half - way up the hill I see the

Perc. *mf* to Shekere

40 *mf* *mp*

S. Past ly-ing be-neath me with its sounds and sights.

Perc. Shekere *mp*

47

45 *hazy, dark* *mp* *mf* *mp*

S. A cit - y in the twi- light dim and vast with

Perc. *mf* *mp*

50 *stentorian - bold!* *mf*

S. smok-ing roofs, soft bells and gleam-ing lights. And

Perc. *mf* fill

55

55 *f*

S. hear-a-bove me on the au - tum-nal blast the cat-a-tract of Death far

Perc. *f* *mf*

60 *lunga* **64**

S. thun-der-ing from the heights.

Perc. *f* *mf* *mp* *senza rit.*

65

S.

Perc. *p* *ppp*

3. The Singers

Serene, peaceful (♩ = 60)

Soprano

hard yarn mallets
single strokes

God sent his

rolled

Marimba *mp* *f* *p* *mp*

S. 4

sing-ers up-on earth with songs of sad-ness and of mirth. That they might touch the

Mar. *p*

9

Poco più mosso (♩ = 84)

S. 7 *mp* *poco rubato* *cresc.* *mf* *stoic*

hearts of men and bring them back to heav'n a - gain. The

Mar. *mp* *mf*

S. *f* *mf*

first, a youth with soul of fire, held in his hand a gold-en lyre. Through

Mar:

S. *p* *mysterious*

groves he wan-dered, and by streams. Play-ing the mu-sic of our

Mar:

16 *mp* *reserved* **18** *mp*

dreams. The sec-ond with a beard-ed face stood sing-ing in the

rolled

Mar:

S. *f* *mf*

mar-ket-place, and stirred with ac-cents deep and loud, the

Mar:

23 *f* *mf*

S. hearts of all the lis-ten-ing crowd.

Mar. *f*



26 *expressive mf* 30

S. A gray old man, the third and

Mar. *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*



32 freely - quasi cadenza take your time! *f* *molto rubato*

S. last sang in ca-the-drals dim and vast.

Mar. *p*



35 a tempo smoothly, fluid *mp* *mf*

S. While the ma-jes-tic or-gan rolled con-

Mar. *mf* *mp* *mf*

reserved, suspicious¹¹
p

38

S. *f*
tri-tion from its mouths of gold. —

Mar. *f*

single strokes *mp* *p* *3* rolled

And

42

S. *mp*
those who heard the sing - ers three dis - put - ed which the best might

Mar. *mp* *p* *3* *mp* *p*

44

S. *f* *mp* *mf*
be. For still their mu - sic seemed to start

Mar. *mp* *mf*

6 3

46

S. *mp* *reverent* *mf*
dis - cor - dant echo - es in each heart. But the

Mar. *f* *single strokes*

5 6

boldly **52**
mf

49

S. *mf*
great Mas - ter said, I see no best in

Mar. *mp*



53

S. *f*
kind, but in de-gree; I gave a var-i-ous gift to each, to

Mar. *mf*



57 Tempo I (♩ = 60)

56

S. *mf*
charm, to strength-en, and to teach.

Mar. *f*

rolled rolled rolled



60 *exultant*
mf

S. *mp*
These are the three great chords of might, and he whose ear is tuned a - right will

Mar. *mp* *mf* *mp*

63

S. hear no dif-f'rence in the three. But the most per-fect har-mo-

Mar:

66

S. -ny. single strokes

Mar:

4. Suspiria

senza misura

Mysterious (♩ = 72)

Soprano

RH - soft yarn mallet
LH - triangle beater

Marimba soft yarn mallet

Perc.

Glass Wind Chimes
with triangle beater

Triangles *l.v. sempre*

5

with great anger and remorse

S.

Take them, O Death! and bear a - way what - ev - er thou canst

Perc.

with bitterness and contempt
(harsh whisper)

9

S. *p* *mp* *f*
 call thine own! Thine im - age stamped up-on this clay. Doth

Perc. *mp* *f*
 Glass Wind Chimes with triangle beater

12

S. *mf*
 give thee that, but that a-lone!

Perc. *mf*
 take wire brush (LH) Metals scrape brush downward (single stroke)

splash cymbal
 China cymbal
 wind gong - high
 wind gong - low

16

S. *stoic* *mf* *f* *mf*
 Take them, O Grave! and let them lie fold-ed up -

Perc. *f* *mf* *mp*
 scrape brush downward (single stroke)

19

S. *lunga* *p*
 on thy nar - row shelves. As gar - ments by the

Perc. *mp* *p*

21

S. *mf*
soul laid by, _____ and pre-cious on-ly to our-selves!

Perc. *p* take triangle beater Triangles *p*

25

S. *mf* *angelic, pure* *f*
Take them, O Great E - ter - ni - ty!

Perc. *p* rolled *mf*
take soft yarn mallet

29 *mf* *resigned* *mp*

S. *mf* *resigned* *mp*
Our lit-tle life is but a gust that binds the branch-es of thy tree.

Perc. take wire brush (LH) Metals scrape brush downward (one stroke) take soft yarn mallet
mf < *f* *p*

32 *f* *exhale* *f* *n*

S. *f* *exhale* *f* *n*
And trails its blos-soms in the dust [s] [t].

Perc. take wire brush take soft yarn mallet
mf (scrape) *f*

rallentando al fine
(harsh whisper)
a last breath...