

Porch Music

for tenor and viola

David Vayo

Text: Robert Bray

Late in 1998 I was approached by my colleague and friend Robert Bray, a multitalented scholar and poet, to compose a piece to honor his daughter on her upcoming high school graduation. Madeleine plays viola and Bob has a fine tenor voice, so we agreed that this would be the most fitting medium. In looking over many of Bob's wonderful poems, I was particularly taken with an untitled one which to me was redolent of sweet Midwestern summer evenings and which made it easy for me to picture a father and daughter sitting quietly on a back porch talking, or perhaps softly playing music together. The premiere took place at Illinois Wesleyan University in the spring of 2000, with Alfred Hannon singing and Vadim Mazo playing viola.

- David Vayo

This April's fool indicts twice-waxing moons.
Tonight is a night of rest, cloudless and calm.
Across the gibbous yin a single-engine
plane drones dopplered west away from dawn.

Two nights from now will be a wind blow hard
enough to set dusk clouds to work to mask
earth's shadow masking first full moon: serrate
clips of ravens' wings obscure adumbrant lips.

Our moon's eclipse is not a fearful thing.
That smile the black birds fly before shines out
from mundane imposition. What was full
before will fill again tonight: that face
of cold-cream light we love because we look
as we may not at its daily other sun.

- Robert Bray

Porch Music

To Madeleine Thomas Bray,
from her father.

David Vayo (1999)
text : Robert Bray (1996)

Tranquillo ♩ = 60

Tenor

Viola con sord. *p*

Vla *pp* *mp*

Vla *mf* *p*

Vla *mf* *p*

Ten. *mp* tranquillo; poco vib.
This A-pril's fool in-dicts twice wax-ing moons.

Vla

23 *p*

Ten. To - night is a night of rest, —

Vla. poco vib. (*p*)

26 *mp*

Ten. cloud - - - less and — calm — A —

Vla. *V* (7)

29

Ten. cross the gib - bous — yin a sin - gle - en - gine plane — drones —

Vla.

31 *accel...*

Ten. dop - plered west — a - way from dawn. —

Vla.

34 *...Più mosso* $\text{♩} = 72$ *f*

Ten. Two — nights from now — will be a

Vla. *f*

* Despite the complex-looking notation, these are three evenly-spaced pitches connecting the preceding B natural with the following G sharp. As long as the performer hears the G sharp coming, the pitches should take care of themselves after a few tries. (For the technical-minded, the three intervening notes are a B natural lowered by 3/8 of a tone, a B natural lowered by 1/4 of a tone, and an A natural lowered by 1/8 of a tone)

37 *mf* (*mf*)

Ten. wind blow hard e - nough to set dusk clouds to work to mask

Vla. *mf*

39

Ten. earth's shad - ow mask - ing first full moon

Vla. *f*

42 *mf* *p*

Ten. ser - rate clips of ra - ven's wings ob - scure a - dum - brant lips.

Vla. *p/mf* *p* *pp*

45

Vla. *f* *p* *p* *mf*

48

Vla. *psub.* *mf*

52

Vla. *pp*

56

Vla

pizz. arco

p

62

Viola

+ pizz. arco sul tasto

pp

arco sul tasto

3

69 **Più Mosso** = 76 spoken; simply *mf*

Ten.

* with thin triangle beater strike low single bell of bell tree

Bell Tree

p

Vla

69 pizz. ord. 3

mp

Vlst's Voice

whisper *mp*

(whisper) *mp*

(dark vowel) Ah (bright vowel) Ä***

73

Ten.

before shines out from mundane imposition.

Bell Tree

Vla

73 arco

3 3

5

mf

Vlst's Voice

mp

Ah

* The placement of x-shaped noteheads on the staff indicates the relative pitches of the individual bells.
 ** Place these bell attacks as they align with the written text
 *** Short "a" sound, as in "hat"

stringendo

A tempo (non stringendo)

77 *mf* *f* *p* // *mf*

Ten. What — was full — be-fore will fill a-gain to — night — that

Vla. *tr.* *espr.* *p* *f* / *psub.*

81 tranquillo

Ten. face of — cold — — cream light we — love — — be — cause we — look as we — may

Vla. *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *pp*

84

Ten. not at its dai - ly oth - er

Vla. *pp* *mp* *pp*

sul tasto

89 4-5 sec. ♩ = 60 * (*p*) hum

Ten. sun. (n)

Vla. 89 4-5 sec. *ord. cantabile* *mp* *p*

93 (*p*) (hum) rit... ca. 8 sec.

Ten. (n)

Vla. 93 (*p*) ca. 8 sec.

Bloomington, IL
Dec. 1998-Feb. 1999

* The hum will change the dynamic naturally; do not sing more quietly