

Paul Salerni

Something Permanent

(poems by Cynthia Rylant on photographs by Walker Evans)

for

Bass-baritone and Pianoforte

I. Land

II. Mission

III. Minstrels

IV. Boys

V. Apartment

VI. Bed

VII. Rocker

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I. Land

Andante

$\text{♩} = 80$

p

Bass

She thought she could re - mem - ber a time

Piano

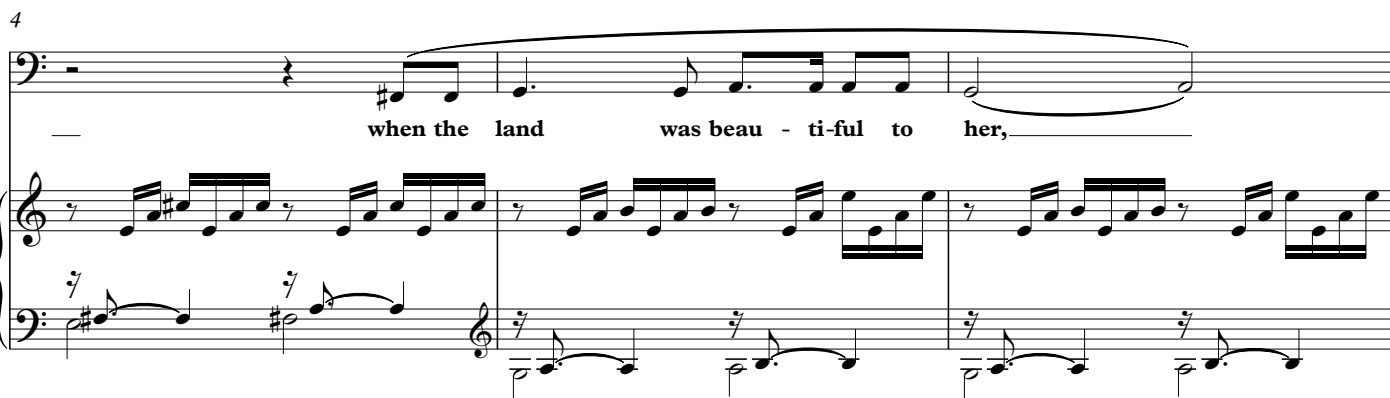
p

simile



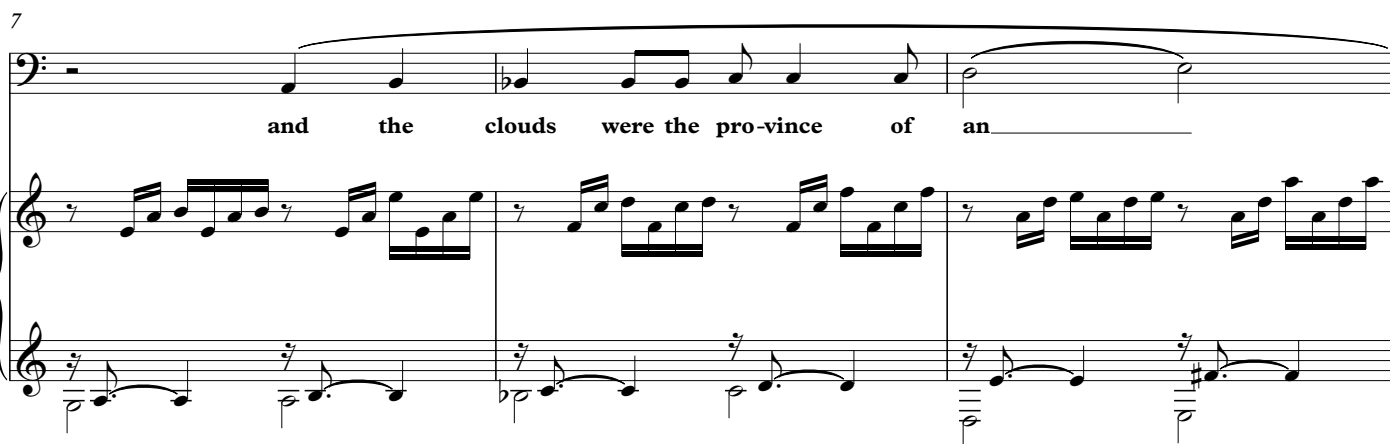
4

when the land was beau - ti - ful to her,



7

and the clouds were the pro - vince of an



10

gels. the trees shel - ter, the



13 *mf*

fields wide o - pen runn ing.

16 *f* *mp*

But her back had not stopped hurt - ing her for de-cades now but her fin - gers al - ways

21 *mf*

had a sting and eyes red and tired, but she fi - gured

mp

25 *cresc. poco a poco*

she must be mis - ta - ken, must have heard some - thing in

cresc. poco a poco

molto rit.

4 28

f

church a - bout that,

pp

31

Pesante

Allargando

ff

be-cause the earth ne - ver was no-thing but work.

f

ff

Pesante

II. Mission

$\text{♩} = 75$

1

mf

Lord it was no place for a man to end up. He'd walked circ - les a -

mf

6 *mp* *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

round it for days. But when he fi - nal - ly did pass through that door and

11 *f*

feel the prea - cher's hand on his tired, warm

14 *p* *poco rit.*

head, the shame slipped off him like rain

6

Ped.

A tempo *poco rit.* *pp*

17 and he was a child a - gain: hun - gry, still, pure.

mf

1

It did - n't mat - ter if

4

no - bo - dy re - mem - bered them la - ter on...

6

if no-bo-dy re-mem-bered them la-ter on.

10

They'd had a few mo - ments to them selves,

13

on that stage, And no - bo - dy knew

16 *p*

how much they would have paid to

19 *poco ad lib. quasi recitativo senza tempo*

get that time when no white folks could interfere

p

In tempo
pp

24

in their lives. When not a person

pp

28

on this earth could touch or disturb them,

rit.

31

lest be accused of spoiling what some considered

pp

A tempo

34 *mf* *pp* *mp*

a good show. They _____

mf *f* *mf*

38

would have worked for free, for _____ free, like _____ slaves,

40

42 *mf*

They _____ would have worked for _____ free, like _____ slaves,

44

just for those mi nutes of be-ing

This system contains measures 44 through 47. The vocal line begins with a whole rest in measure 44, followed by a melodic phrase starting in measure 45. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. A fermata is placed over the vocal line in measure 47.

48

just for those mi nutes of be-ing no such

f

This system contains measures 48 through 52. The vocal line continues with the phrase "no such" in measure 52. The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) in measure 51. A fermata is placed over the vocal line in measure 52.

53 *mf*

thing.

mf *f* *p* *pp*

This system contains measures 53 through 56. The vocal line has a whole rest in measure 53, with the word "thing." appearing in measure 54. The piano accompaniment features dynamic markings of *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *pp* across the measures. A fermata is placed over the vocal line in measure 56.

Sexy

IV. Boys

10
1 ♩=55

They both loved the same

p 5

3

3

3

p

Detailed description: This system contains measures 10, 11, and 12. The vocal line (bass clef) starts with a whole rest in measure 10, followed by a half note in measure 11, and a half note in measure 12. The piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) features a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with triplet markings. A dynamic marking of *p* is present at the start of the piano part in measure 10. A five-measure slur is shown above the piano part in measure 12.

girl but she would-n't have ei-ther of them

3

3

3

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 14, 15, 16, and 17. The vocal line (bass clef) has a half note in measure 14, a half note in measure 15, and a half note in measure 16. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern and triplet markings. Dynamic markings of *p* are present at the start of the piano part in measures 14 and 16.

be - cause she was mar - ried - - and to the

3

3

3

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 18, 19, 20, and 21. The vocal line (bass clef) has a half note in measure 18, a half note in measure 19, and a half note in measure 20. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern and triplet markings. Dynamic markings of *p* are present at the start of the piano part in measures 18 and 20.

store ow - ner by god, so

mf 3

p 3

mf 3

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 22, 23, 24, and 25. The vocal line (bass clef) has a half note in measure 22, a half note in measure 23, and a half note in measure 24. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern and triplet markings. Dynamic markings of *mf* and *p* are present at the start of the piano part in measures 22 and 24 respectively.

14

it was-n't worth think-ing a-bout. But at

p *mf*

18

night, they each stretched u - pon a bed

mf

20

and had her had her whole and

f *mp*

25

lei - sure - ly. And when they were done, they

f *mp*

29

settl - ed her back in their mind like a soft peach will

32

dis-ap pear_ in-to a young boy's pock- et, warm

38

Au - gust nights. Hmm.

V. Apartment

Motoric

♩=140

mf

1

When her re-la-tives from the south

6

came up for a vis - it, they la - ment - ed her

11

sor - ry state, hav - ing to live in that lit - tle box hav - ing no

16

field nor trees, hav - ing no hills to look toward. She ne - ver told them

21 *mf*

— how she did-n't miss those things, — how — she would —

27 *mf*

— like a-wake at night, — her a - part - ment win dow wide o - pen, —

32 *f* somewhat free, bird-like

— and lis - ten to the ci - ty — like she was list - en - ing

f somewhat free, bird-like

36 *Ad lib. p*

like she was list - en - ing like she was list - en - ing like she was list - en - ing to

In tempo, ma come prima

40

tr

f

birds like she was list - en - ing like she was list - en - ing

p

f

somewhat free, bird-like

Gentle tango

44

Ad lib. *p*

f *rit.* *p*

to hymns, like she was hear - ing a lo - ver.

p

f

p

molto rit. . . . Tempo primo

49

pp

mf

$\text{♩} = 140$

a lo - ver. She ne - ver told them

16⁵⁵

how hard it was _____ to wipe that smile off her face

60

each and e - very time _____

Ad lib. In tempo ma un poco meno mosso

64

— they com - plained.

VI. Bed

Gentle tango

1 ♩=100

17

Of course, it was hard to make love with the child- ren in the room.

p

Measures 1-6: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Treble clef accompaniment. Lyrics: "Of course, it was hard to make love with the child- ren in the room." Dynamics: *p*.

but that did-n't keep them from try- ing, and

Measures 7-11: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Treble clef accompaniment. Lyrics: "but that did-n't keep them from try- ing, and". Dynamics: *p*. Includes a triplet in measure 10.

they were pret - ty suc - cess - ful some would say,

Measures 12-14: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Treble clef accompaniment. Lyrics: "they were pret - ty suc - cess - ful some would say,". Dynamics: *mf*. Includes triplets in measures 12 and 13.

since they had se - ven kids

Measures 15-18: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Treble clef accompaniment. Lyrics: "since they had se - ven kids". Dynamics: *mf*. Includes a *simile* marking in measure 16.

now. He would be - gin it by reach - ing o - ver and soft - ly

Measures 19-22: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Treble clef accompaniment. Lyrics: "now. He would be - gin it by reach - ing o - ver and soft - ly". Dynamics: *pp* and *mp*. Includes a triplet in measure 20.

18²³

pull - ing at a slen - der piece of her long hair, wrapp - ing it in his

26

fin - gers, and then dead ti - red but still in love,

30

they would turn toward each o - ther and ne - stled in the warm

33

breath - ing of their oth - er ba - bies, ease their wea - ry

37

minds with the sex they knew would like - - ly

40 *mf* *poco rit.* *A tempo* *pp* 19

make them poor - er and

46 *mp* *rit.* *pp*

rich - er at the same time.

Gently rocking

VII. Rocker

1 $\text{♩} = 75$ *p*

She want - ed to be sure to hear the

7 *sub p*

o - ther ba - bies if they cried, so she nursed them, one at a

14

time, _____ at the bot - tom of the stairs _____ then car - ried them one at a

sub p

22

time, _____ soft - ly up, soft - ly up, soft - ly up, _____ their small

mp *p* *pp* *p*

pp *p*

34

hearts beat - ing. _____

poco rit. *A tempo* *pp* *poco rit.*

pp *pp*