

Vespertine Songs

for mezzo-soprano & piano

Karim Al-Zand
(2023)

Vespertine Songs

TEXTS

Of an Evening

The water of the fountain ran,
the swift river ran,
the day ran into evening,
so much life in the city ran into death according to rule;
time and tide waited for no man,
the rats were sleeping close together in their dark holes again,
the fancy ball was lighted up at supper,
all things ran their course.
The clouds were drifting over the moon at their giddiest speed;
an evening wind uprose:
withering leaves no longer quiet,
hurried to and fro in search of shelter.

Charles Dickens (1812–1870)
[from *Martin Chuzzlewit*]

Insomnia

One more brightened window
Where no one sleeps tonight:
Maybe they're drinking wine,
Or maybe just sitting.
Perhaps two lover's hands
Cling, hesitant to part.
In every house, my friend,
There's a window like that
Keeping darkness at bay
From restive, sleepless eyes.
Bright nighttime window, you
Frame greetings and farewells!
Maybe the lights fluoresce
Or maybe a lamp glows.
But this is how it starts...
My mind wants peace, my friend.
Gaze on my sleepless house—
my window gleams tonight.

Marina Tsvetaeva (1892–1941)
[trans. K. Al-Zand]

Points and Lines

Instants in the quiet, small sharp stars,
Pierce my spirit with a thrust whose speed
Baffles even the grasp of time.
Oh that I might reflect them
As swiftly, as keenly as they shine.
But I am a pool of waters, summer-still,
And the stars are mirrored across me;
Those stabbing points of the sky
Turned to a thread of shaken silver,
A long fine thread.

Aldous Huxley (1894–1963)

Nocturne

Sounds, pure sounds—
Nothing—
Vibrancies of the air
And yet—

This summer night
There are crickets shrilling
Beyond the deep bassoon of frogs.
They cease for a moment
As the rattling clangor
Of the trolley
Bumps by.
I hear footsteps
Hollow on the pavement
Now deserted
And blank of sound.
They die.
The crickets now are sleeping;
Even the leaves grow still.

And slowly
Out of the blankness, out of the silence,
Emerges on soundless wings
The long sweet-sloping
Rise and fall of far viol notes,—
The mad Nirvana,
The faint and spectral
Dream-music
Of my heart's desire.

Anne Knish (1883–1945)

[Opus 150 by Arthur Davison Ficke]

Vespertine Songs

for mezzo-soprano & piano

Text: Charles Dickens
(1812–1870)

Of an Evening

Music: Karim Al-Zand
(2023)

Swiftly; flowing $\text{♩} = 56$

running along smoothly, delicately

p molto legato sempre

5

8^a

(sim.)

8

p

The wa - ter of the foun-tain ran, —

cresc. poco a poco

11

mp *mf*

the swift riv - er ran, — the day ran in - to eve - 'ning,

8^a

15

cresc. *poco f*

so much life in the ci - ty ran in-to death

8^a *poco f*

18

ac-cord-ing to rule, time and tide wait-ed for

22

no man, the rats were slep-ing close to-geth-er

25

in their dark holes a - gain, the

29

fan - cy ball was light-ed up at sup-per, all things ran their

33

course. The clouds were drift-ing ov-er the moon at their gid-di-est

37 *sub. p*

speed; an ev - 'ning wind up - rose, with - er - ing

40 *cresc.*

leaves no long - er qui - et, hur - ried to and fro in search of

43 *poco f* *molto rit.* - - - - *a tempo* *p*

shel - ter. all things,

47

all things, all things ran their course,

50 *rit.* *pp*

all things, all things, all things.

Insomnia

Text: Marina Tsvetaeva
[trans. K. Al-Zand]
(1892–1941)

Music: Karim Al-Zand
(2023)

Moderately; unsettled, drifting restlessly ♩ = 80

The first system of the musical score is in 4/4 time. The vocal line begins with a half rest, followed by a quarter rest, and then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic, featuring a series of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics "lights illuminating in the darkness" are written below the first vocal note. The system concludes with the vocal line playing a half note G4 and the piano accompaniment playing a half note G4.

* always before the downbeat, not aligned with voice until the end

The second system of the musical score begins at measure 8. The vocal line starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, and then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment features a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The lyrics "one more, one more bright-ened win-dow where no one sleeps to - night:" are written below the vocal line. The system concludes with the vocal line playing a half note G4 and the piano accompaniment playing a half note G4.

The third system of the musical score begins at measure 13. The vocal line starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, and then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment features a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The lyrics "May-be they're drink-ing wine, or may-be just sit-ting. Per -" are written below the vocal line. The system concludes with the vocal line playing a half note G4 and the piano accompaniment playing a half note G4.

The fourth system of the musical score begins at measure 18. The vocal line starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, and then a half note G4. The piano accompaniment features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The lyrics "- haps two lov-er's hands cling, hes-i-tant to part. In ev-'ry house my friend" are written below the vocal line. The system concludes with the vocal line playing a half note G4 and the piano accompaniment playing a half note G4.

22

there's a win-dow like that keep-ing dark-ness at bay from res-tive, sleep-less eyes.

26 *poco f*

Bright night-time win-dow, you frame greet-ings and fare-wells!

30 *mp*

One more, — one more, — May-be the lights fluo - resce, —

34 *mf*

or may-be a lamp glows. But this is how it starts...

38 rit. ----- ritenuto
poco f 3 3

My mind wants peace, my friend. Gaze on my sleep-less house—

42 *mp* *p* with piano a tempo

one more, — my win-dow gleams to-night. —

mp *p* let ring

[2'20"]

Points and Lines

Text: Aldous Huxley
(1894–1963)

Music: Karim Al-Zand
(2023)

Very Quickly; pinging delicately ♩ = ca. 152

p

flashing brightly
molto
f

8 *p* *mp*
In - stants in the qui - et small sharp stars, pierce my

(sub.)p *sim.* *f* *mp*

15 *mf*
spir - it with a thrust whose speed _ baf - fles

21 *mf*
e - ven the grasp of time. Oh, that I might re-

2+3 (same tempo) *mf*
mf molto legato

29 *cresc.*

-flect them, Oh that I might re-flect them as swift-ly,

36 *f*

as keen-ly as they shine. But I am a pool of

43 *mf* *mf* *f* *mf*

wa - ters, a pool of wat - ers, sum - mer still, — and the

49 *p* *f*

stars are mir - rored mir-rored a - cross me; Those

55 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

stab - bing points of the sky turned to a thread of shak -

62 *mp*

- en sil - ver, a long

69 *poco rit. - - - - -*
decresc.

fine thread.

decresc. *p*

8^a [1'15"]

Nocturne

Text: Anne Knish
[Arthur Davison Ficke]
(1883–1945)

Music: Karim Al-Zand
(2023)

Slowly; spellbound $\text{♩} = 40$

p

Sounds, pure sounds— noth-ing— vi-bran-cies in the air and yet—

tr^{*} *pp* (b.o.)

* as softly as possible; even if the sound cuts in and out

8 Atmospheric; a colorful haze $\text{♩} = 56$

transfixed mp

2+3 *a dream-scape (tr)*

2+3 *p*

mp

This sum-mer night

11

tr (b.o.)

there are crick-ets shril-ling be-yond the deep bas-soon of frogs.

14 *mf*

mp

mf *very evenly*

Sounds, pure sounds— They cease for a mo-ment as the rat-tling clang-or of the trol-ley bumps by.

17

vib-ran-cies in the air I hear foot-steps

20

hol-low on the pave-ment now de-ser-ted and blank of sound. They die. The

poco rit. ----- ad libitum

23

crick-ets are now sleep-ing: e-ven the leaves grow still. And slow-ly out of the blank-ness, out of the si-lence,

(let ring)

26

e-mer-ges on sound-less wings the long sweet-slop-ing rise and fall of far vi-ol

29

notes,— the mad nir-va-na, — the faint and spec-tral dream — mus-ic, dream-

poco f

32

mus-ic, dream — mus-ic of my heart's de-sire. —

[ad libitum] *riten.*

mf *mp*

mp

[3'00"]