
Sid Richardson

The Sea-Limits

for Tenor and Piano

2019

The Sea-Limits

Instrumentation

Tenor
Piano

Performance Notes

The piano pedalings at times hold over several harmonic changes, with the intent of creating a resonant, blurry effect.

In general, the tempo should be fluid with the singer and pianist pushing and pulling *ad libitum*.

Duration: 3 minutes, 30 seconds

Texts

Consider the sea's listless chime:
Time's self it is, made audible,
The murmur of the earth's own shell.
Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end: our sight may pass
No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's, it hath
The mournfulness of ancient life,
Enduring always at dull strife.
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
Its painful pulse is in the sands.
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Gray and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,
Listen alone among the woods;
Those voices of twin solitudes
Shall have one sound alike to thee:
Hark where the murmurs of thronged men
Surge and sink back and surge again,
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
And listen at its lips: they sigh
The same desire and mystery,
The echo of the whole sea's speech.
And all mankind is thus at heart
Not anything but what thou art:
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

Program Note

Gabriel Dante Rossetti's lyric poem "The Sea-Limits" concludes the Songs section of a larger collection, *The House of Life*. Originally entitled "At Boulogne. Upon the Cliffs: Noon," it dates from 1849, when the poet traveled to France and Belgium. This remarkable, early poem takes as its subject the unity of being, a concept central to Rossetti's belief that the spirit inherent in all creatures is joined. A meditation on nature, it uses clever formal and sonic devices to enhance the poet's commentary. The undulating rhythm of its iambic tetrameter mimics the imagery of waves pounding the cliffs. I was drawn to this poem by its vivid sound world that inspired my setting, which paints Rossetti's imagery in impressionistic colors awash with piano resonance. "The Sea-Limits" was written for tenor Patrick McGill, a dear friend who first introduced me to the poem during our summer together at the Tanglewood Music Center in 2019.

The Sea-Limits

1

for Patrick McGill

Dante Gabriel Rossetti
(1828-1882)

Sid Richardson
(b. 1987)

♩ = 66 Subdued

Tenor

Con-sid-er the sea's list-less chime

Piano

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

8va *8vb*

Red. * *Red.* *

4

T.

Time's self it is made au-di-ble_ The mur-mur of the earth's own_ shell

Pno.

p *pp* *mp* *3* *6* *p*

rubato

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.*

7

T.

Sec-ret con-tin-u-ance sub-lime is thesea's end: our sight may pass no fur-long

Pno.

poco pp *pp* *molto f* *off-handedly mp* *stringendo p sotto voce*

pp *p pesante* *brillante* *mp* *3*

8va *8vb*

* *Red.*

a tempo

10 *f* *ord.* *mf* *p* *mf*

T. fur-ther since time was This sound has told the

Pno. *p* *mf* *pp* *p* *pp* *mf* *p*

* Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

13 *f* *pp delicate*

T. lapse of time No

Pno. *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *pp*

* Ped. 8^{va} 8^{vb} *

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

T. qui-et which is death's it hath the mourn - ful-ness of an - cient life en-dur-ing

Pno. *pp* *p* *mp*

(senza Ped.) Ped.

♩ = 60 Poco meno mosso

19 *f* *mf* *mf* *f* *mf*

T. al-ways at dull strife As the world's heart of rest and wrath Its pain-ful pulse is in the

Pno. *p* *mf* *pp* *f* *p sub.* *mf*

* Ped. * Ped. * (senza Ped.)

p semi-sung

ord. *mp maestoso* 3 *ff*

T. 22 *f* sands Last ut-ter-ly the whole sky____ stands

Pno. *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *ppp*

Red. *f* * (senza *Ped.*) *Red.* *8va* *8vb*

♩ = 66 Tempo primo

pp semi-spoken *p* ord. *mp dolce*

T. 25 Gray and not known a-long its path Lis-ten a -

Pno. *p* *pp*

* (senza *Ped.*) *5*

poco f 3 *mp* *p* *mf*

T. 28 lone be-side the sea Lis-ten a - lone a-mong the woods

Pno. *ppp* *f*

15ma

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

T. 31 Those voi - ces voi____ ces of twin sol-i-tudes Shall have one sound a-like to

Pno. *pp* *p* *sfz* *mf*

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * (senza *Ped.*)