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Tres Rimas Humanas

for SATB chorus *a cappella*

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Jonathan Santore

Program Note

When the New Hampshire Master Chorale commissioned me to write a new work for a concert about Spain and Latin America, I knew that I wanted to use it as an opportunity to do something I'd never done before – set poetry in a language other than English. I began looking through works in Spanish, and soon happened upon the poetry of Félix Lope de Vega (1562-1635), a contemporary of Shakespeare and one of the greatest dramatists of the Spanish Baroque.

Toward the end of a life filled with adventure and intrigue (including stints fighting with the Spanish Armada, entry into the priesthood, and countless love affairs), Lope de Vega published what many consider his poetic masterpiece, the *Poems Human and Divine*. For this book, he created an alter ego, the poor scholar Tomé de Burguillos, whose ostensible authorship of the book's poems allowed Lope de Vega to observe the world around him with considerable freedom (the first poem in my settings, "The Flea", bears the subtitle "Falsely attributed to Lope").

I was strongly drawn to the brash (some would say rude), fearless honesty of these poems, and set to work on them immediately. My colleague Barbara Lopez-Mayhew, of the Plymouth State University Department of Languages and Linguistics (and coincidentally an expert in Spanish Baroque literature), was kind enough to allow me to record her reading of the poems in Castilian Spanish, and I spent a great deal of time with these recordings ensuring that my understanding of the cadence and flow of the poems was correct. Barbara also generously checked my translations of the texts, and I'm glad for this opportunity to offer her my deepest thanks for her help throughout the composition of this work.

Translations

I. The flea, falsely attributed to Lope

A living atom boldly bit
the white breasts of beautiful Leonore,
garnet on pearls, plowman in pink,
tiny spot with invisible teeth;

her two points of brilliant ivory
she bathed with sudden concern, complaining,
and, twisting away its boisterous life,
felt avenged twice in a single punishment.

At the flea's death, she said, "Oh sad one,
for so little harm such great pain!"
"Oh flea," I said, "you were lucky;

hold back your soul, and tell Leonore
to let me bite where you were,
and I'll trade my life for your death."

II. That neither time nor death forgets true love

(He writes seriously)

Now turned to dust, but always beautiful,
without letting me live, lives serenely
that light that was my glory and sorrow
and makes war on me, while resting in peace.

So alive is the jasmine, the pure rose,
that, burning softly in lily,
it scorches my soul, fills it with memories:
loving ash of your phoenix.

O cruel memory of my anger!
What honor can my feelings give you,
the remains of that light turned to dust?

Let me be quiet only a moment:
that my eyes no longer have tears
nor my thoughts ideas of love.

III. What really clever people should do when
others gossip about them

An Irish wolfhound of beautiful size,
between bay and black from forehead to rump,
with spiked collar of bronze and buckskin,
passed by the side of the street.

A confused army came out to bark at him,
a mob of small yapping dogs, black, red, and
white,
like a furious village that starts
to chase a wolf over mountain or valley.

And as it is written that the triune Goddess,
globe of silver in a satin sky,
perplexes the dogs of the mountains,

This noble wolfhound, disregarding,
lifted its leg, soaked the corner,
and through the midst of them went on his way,
step by step.

-- Trans. JS

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Felix Lope de Vega (1562-1635)

Jonathan Santore

I. (spoken) La pulga, falsamente atribuida a Lope.

Boldly (♩ = 96) 1)
f marcato

Soprano: Pi - có a - tre - vi, pi - có a - tre - vi, pi - có a - tre - vi, pi - có a - tre - vi,
Alto: A - tre - vi - do, a - tre - vi - do, a - tre - vi - do, a - tre - vi - do un
Tenor: Do, do, a tre - vi - do, a - tre - vi - do,
Bass: A - tre - vi - do,
(for rehearsal only)

Freely, adoringly (♩ = c. 84)
mf

S: á - to - mo vi - vi - en - te los blan - cos pe - chos, los blan - cos pe - he - he - he -
A: á - to - mo vi - vi - en - te los blan - cos pe - chos, los blan - cos pe - he - he - he -
T: a - tre - vi - do, a - tre - vi - do, ah, hey - ey - ey,
B: a - tre - vi - do, a - tre - vi - do, ah, hey - ey - ey,
(for rehearsal only)

1) Performance of this movement should reflect the composer's belief that the text's narrator is drunk, moving sharply, starkly, almost lurchingly from one tempo/dynamic/emotional state to the next unless otherwise indicated.

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Broadly; earnestly ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60$) rall.-----

52 *mf* *ff*

S me de-je pi-car don-de es-tu-vis-te, pi-car, y tro-ca-ré mi vi-da, mi vi-da con tu muer-te.”

A me de-je pi-car don-de es-tu-vis-te, pi-car, y tro-ca-ré mi vi-da, mi vi-da con tu muer-te.”

T me de-je pi-car, y tro-ca-ré mi vi-da, mi vi-da con tu muer-te.”

B me de-je pi-car, y tro-ca-ré mi vi-da, mi vi-da con tu muer-te.”

Dreamily ($\text{♩} = 60$) rall.-----

57 *sub.mp* *pp* *mf*

S Mi vi-da con los pe-chos, blan-cos, blan-cos pe-chos.

A Mi vi-da con los pe-chos, pe-chos, pe-chos, pe-chos.

T Mi vi-da con los pe-chos, pe-chos, pe-chos, ah!

B Mi vi-da con los pe-chos, pe-chos, pe-chos, ah!

26

S

men - to: que ya no ti - e - nen lá - gri - mas mis o - jos, ni con - cep - tos de a - mor mi pen - sa - mi - en - to.

A

men - to: que ya no ti - e - nen lá - gri - mas mis o - jos, ni con - cep - tos de a - mor, a - mor.

T

8

men - to: que ya no ti - e - nen lá - gri - mas mis o - jos, ni con - cep - tos de a - mor, a - mor.

B

men - to: que ya no ti - e - nen lá - gri - mas mis o - jos, ni con - cep - tos de a - mor, a - mor.

mf *mp* *pp* *pp*

molto rall.

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III. (spoken) Lo que han de hacer los ingenios grandes cuando los murmuran.

With a steady, confident swing (♩. = 88)

The musical score is arranged in a system with five staves. The vocal parts are Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), and the piano accompaniment is shown in grand staff notation. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 12/8. The tempo is marked 'With a steady, confident swing (♩. = 88)'. The first system includes lyrics: 'Doot, doo, dup.' for Soprano and Tenor, and 'Doo, dup - a doo, doo, doo, doo, doo-buh-duh-doo-buh-duh, doo, dup - a doo, doo,' for Bass. The second system includes lyrics: 'dup. Doot, doo, dup.' for Soprano and Tenor, and 'Un le - brel Ir-lan-dés de her - mo - so tal - le,' for Alto. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and melodic lines.

4) The approach to extended notes in the melody and countermelody should be very "jazz brass-like," with tight, pushed vibratos, and perhaps even the occasional "shake" (tremolo of a third or more).

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40

S *sub. mp*
 — sin ha - cer ca - so, doot, doo, doot, doo,

A
 ca - so, al - zó la pi - er - na, re - mo - jó la es - qui - na, y por

T
 — dup. Doot, doo, doot, doo,

B
 doo, doo doo - buh - duh - doo - buh - duh, doo, dup - a doo, doo, doo, doo, doo - buh - duh - doo - buh - duh,

43

S *p*
 — doot, doo, dup. Doot, doo,

A *mp*
 me - di - o se fue su pa - so a pa so, y por me - di - o se fue su pa - so a

T *p*
 — doot, doo, dup. Doot, doo,

B *p*
 doo, dup - a doo, doo, doo, doo, doo - buh - dee - doo - buh - dee, doo, dup - a doo, doo,

46

molto rall. -----
pp

S
dup. Doot, doo...

A
pp
pa - so, y por me - di - o se fue su...---

T
pp
dup. Doot, doo...

B
pp
doo, doo, doo - buh - duh - doo - buh - duh, doo, dup - a doo, doo...

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9/27/2012
Plymouth, NH