

Score

Connor Simpson

Solo Baritone Voice and Piano

Mad Song

4'30"

2020

Mere Fly Press

Mad Song
Solo Baritone Voice and Piano
2022
4'30"
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Program Notes

Mad Song uses various extended techniques of the human voice piano and bass drum to create a sonic landscape for William Blake's *Mad Song*. The sounds of the piece are used to represent Blake's extensive use of imagery as he contrasts the day from the night.

Mad Song

by William Blake,

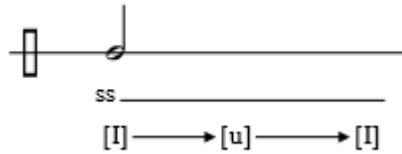
The wild winds weep,
And the night is a-cold;
Come hither, Sleep,
And my griefs infold:
But lo! the morning peeps
Over the eastern steeps,
And the rustling birds of dawn
The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault
Of paved heaven,
With sorrow fraught
My notes are driven:
They strike the ear of night,
Make weep the eyes of day;
They make mad the roaring winds,
And with tempests play.

Like a fiend in a cloud
With howling woe,
After night I do croud,
And with night will go;
I turn my back to the east,
From whence comforts have increas'd;
For light doth seize my brain
With frantic pain.

Performance Notes

Voice:



= Transform vowel shape without regard to meter while sustaining hiss. Imitate wind.

Pianist:

A bass drum is to be placed to the left side of the pianist so that they may play the bass drum without standing from their bench.

fingernails across black keys



= Drag a single fingernail back and forth across the black keys of the keyboard. Imitate crackling sounds of a forest.

rub bass drum



= Rub bass drum in a circular motion at rapidly varying speeds for given duration. Imitate low roar of wind.

quickly scratch low strings



= Briefly and abruptly scratch low strings of piano with fingernails.

hit bass drum



= Strike bass drum with bass drum mallet without muffling.

forearm slam



= Play chromatic cluster with both forearms in the middle register of the piano.

Mad Song

Score

Connor Simpson
Text by William Blake

Adagio (♩=70)

Baritone

Piano

B.

Pno.

fingernails across black keys

rub bass drum

p *mf*

The wild

n. *p* *ff*

quickly scratch low strings

p *mf*

winds - ss [l] → [u] → [l] weep,

fingernails across black keys

rub bass drum

n. *n.*

mf *f* *p* *n.*

and the night is - ss [l] → [u] → [l]

fingernails across black keys

rub bass drum

f *n.* *n.*

Ped.

11 *p* *mf* *p* *ff*

B. *a* - cold; Come

Pno. *p* *f* *ff*

Ped. *senza Ped.* *Ped.*

15 *mp* *n.* *p*

B. *hi* - *ther,* *ss* - *sleep,*

[i] → [u] → [i]

Pno. *n.*

(Ped.) *fingernails across black keys* *rub bass drum*

18 *mf* *f* *p* *n.* *p* *Allegro* (♩ = 135)

B. *And my greifs* - *ss* *in* - *fold:*

[i] → [u] → [i]

Pno. *n.* *pp* *f*

(Ped.)

Mad Song

22 *f* *sub. p*

B.

But lo! the mor - ning peeps

Pno.

(Ped.)

26 *f* *sub. p* *f* *meno mosso* ($\text{♩} = 85$), *molto rubato* *mf*

B.

O-ver ea - stern steeps, And the rus-tling birds of dawn

Pno.

(Ped.) Ped.

30 *ff* *Allegro* ($\text{♩} = 135$) *mf* *sub. p* *ff*

B.

The earth do scorn. Lo! to the vault

Pno.

(Ped.) Ped.

Mad Song

meno mosso (♩ = 85), *molto rubato*

34 **f**

B. Of pav'd hea - ven With sor - row fraught

Pno. (Ped.)

Adagio (♩ = 70)

38 **f**

B. My notes are dri-ven: _ They ss - strike
[l] → [u]

Pno. fingernails across black keys
n.
rub bass drum

(Ped.) senza Ped.

42 **mf** **f** whisper **ff** **f** **mf**

B. the ear of night, Make weep the eyes _ of _

Pno. fingernails across black keys
hit bass drum **f**
n.
rub bass drum

Mad Song

B. 47 *p* *p* *ff* *mp* *mf*
 day; They make mad the roar - ing

Pno. 47 *n.* *ff* *n.*
 forearm slam fingernails across black keys
 rub bass drum

B. 51 *p* *n.* *f*
 winds - ss [l] → [u] → [l] and with tem -

Pno. 51

B. 54 *p* *mp* *p* *f* *p*
 pests - ss [l] → [u] play. — Like a fiend in a cloud

Pno. 54 *n.* *f* *mf* *p*

senza Ped.

58 *mf* *p* *f* *p*

B. With howl - ing woe, Af - ter night I do croud,

Pno. *mf* *p* *f* *mf* *p*

62 *mf* *f* *p*

B. And the night will go;

Pno. *f*

66 *ff* *p*

B. I turn my back to the eas -

Pno. *ff*

fingernails across black keys
n.
rub bass drum

Mad Song

70

B. *f* *ff*

From whence com - forts - ss

ss [l] → [u] → [l] [l] → [u]

Pno. *n.* *f* *n.*

fingernails across black keys
rub bass drum

74

B. *mf* *p* *ff*

hav in - creas - ss'd For light doth seize

[l] → [u] → [l]

Pno.

77

B. *p* *f* *ff* *mp* *pp*

my brain With fran - tic pain.

Pno. *n.*