

Sketches

by Vanessa McClintock



for mezzo-soprano with string quartet

Copyright © 2024 by Vanessa McClintock

SKETCHES

for Mezzo-Soprano with String Quartet

Vanessa McClintock

Imagine a 19th century artist with her sketchbook, sauntering in a meadow and the forest fringe beginning at daybreak, sketching her delightful experience in harmony with nature, and concluding as the sun sets.

This work enlists the imagination of the listener, as suggested by “word painting” and references to nature in the lyrics.

The genesis of the music began with a solitary high harmonic “A” by the first violin. Then came the others in succession before the voice.

That was all. Just a gaggle of “A” notes... but then occurred a slight alteration, then some additive harmony. The voice announces and greets the morning sun, and the music begins to take form and direction not unlike the sculptor of clay adding a clump here and thither, molding and adjusting during the process, searching for the concept and bringing it into consciousness.

The message of the work came through a veil of vagueness, though the feeling was clear. As the melody evolved, so did the harmony, and vice versa. It was akin to a binary star system, each revolving around another, spinning out more of the message, and then the beginning of the text.

The music was very nearly completed before the text even began to come to me, and then it was a matter of clearing the haze and seeing the message in word form.

The work is very tonal throughout, but incorporates harmonies built upon fourths and fifths, rather than the traditional thirds. There is some bi-tonality, and some parts are very modal.

Sketches

for Mezzo Soprano
with String Quartet

Vanessa McClintock

Imagine a 19th century artist with her sketchbook, sauntering in a meadow and the forest fringe beginning at daybreak, sketching her delightful experience in harmony with nature, and concluding as the sun sets.

Fondly ♩ = 72

Mezzo

Violin

Violin

Viola

Cello

5

mp

A - rise

thou e - ter - nal

8va

p

p

p

9

sun, and birth the golden day.

pizz. *mf* arco *p*

pizz. *mf* arco *p*

pizz. *mf* arco *p*

mf *p*

13

mp *mf*

mp *mf*

mp *mf*

mp *mf*

17

f *mf* *p* < *mp*

21

The day in - vites me

< *mf* > *mp*

25

in - to the mead - ow, na - ture is call - ing me. _____

mp

mp

mp

mp

29

p *mp* *p*

p *mp* *p*

p *mp* *p*

p *mp* *p*

Gracefully
♩. = 48 ♩ = ♩

32

mf

Ah, _____

mf

pizz.

mf

36

mf

mf

40

Gent - ly waft - ing sum-mer breeze, call - ing me, _____

44

48

whirl - ing swirl - ing, feel - ing it's ten - der

pizz.

pizz.

52

— touch — nest-ling round me, feel - ing its warm em - brace

56

sum-mer haze... peace - ful days.

pizz.

(C b)

arco



60

arco

p *mf*

arco

p *mf*

arco

p *mf*



64

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

68

arco

72

Spar - rows...

76

star - lings... twit-ter-ing__ and grace - f'ly flit - ter - ing...

pizz.

80

leaves — are fall - ing and yet it's sum - - - mer,

84

na - ture is — a trick - ster, a prank - ster.

pizz.

pizz.

Piu mosso
♩. = 60

88

89

90

91

92

Bil-low-y — white clouds are turn-ing to grey...

pizz.

arco

arco

93

94

95

96

In - to the for - est out from the rain, rain... _____

arco

pizz.

100

Seek - ing brief shel - ter from the storm, storm... _____

104

trip-ping, skip-ping, run - ning... there's a path, duck in, to the for - est...

108

fro - lick-ing, de - light - ful - ly, I step out of the rain but still in na - ture,

112

I love thee.

This musical system covers measures 112 to 115. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are 'I love thee.' The piano accompaniment consists of five staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a key signature change to two flats in measure 114. The second staff is a treble clef. The third and fourth staves are grand staves (treble and bass clefs). The fifth staff is a bass clef. The piano part features a complex texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, including a dense chromatic passage in measure 113.

116

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

This musical system covers measures 116 to 119. The vocal line is in treble clef and contains whole rests. The piano accompaniment consists of five staves. The first staff is a treble clef. The second and third staves are grand staves. The fourth staff is a bass clef. The piano part features a complex texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The harpsichord part (third staff) has 'pizz.' markings in measures 116, 117, and 118.

120

flo - ra, fau - na, they all know, — love ly

arco

arco

arco

124

crea - tures they love to — show their beaut - y and grace,

128

it all leaves me breath - less.

132

poco rall.

Winds gush-ing brush-ing, limbs bend-ing sway-ing.

136 $\text{♩} = 56$

Storm's a - bat - ing the worst has gone. Sky is clear - ing re -

140 *rallentando*

turns the sun.

144 $\text{♩} = 48$

All is calm-er and all is bright, Each step one fur-ther

148

in the light. I be - gin now to turn _____ my path _____ back to _____ the sweet

152

— mea - dow, such sweet mem - o - ry.

156

rit. *a tempo*

Ya ha ha ha ha ha la ta ya ah fra la la la la

160

ah. _____

164

As I turn, I sigh, sigh, leav-ing here I cry. _____

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

168

arco

172

Ah, ___

176

Ah. _____ Gent - ly fad-ing I bid fare-well. Day to night know ing

180

all is well. Twi-light paus-es to strike a chord, just a mo-ment while grant - ing me time to

185

thank Thee. Grate-ful for this day ____ of peace, I ____

189

rit. *a tempo*

bid thee A - dieu. ____

pizz. pizz. pizz. pizz.