

JUDITH SHATIN

Akhmatova Songs  
Mezzo and Piano



## Program Note

The composition of *Akhmatova Songs* was inspired by Stanley Kunitz's translations of this poetry. However, I decided to set the poetry in the original Russian, with the assistance of my friend and colleague Sharon Leiter, whose own translation of the three poems accompanies the score. The Russian has its own particular rhythm, sonic contour and imagery, and I welcomed the opportunity to explore them. The three poems I have chosen share themes of loss and transcendence, as does much of Akhmatova's poetry. Having lived from 1889-1966, Akhmatova's creative years spanned many of the cataclysms that characterized what she called "the real twentieth century". Her poems *Requiem* and *Poem Without a Hero* are two of her most eloquent responses to these times of terror. The first poem, *The Muse*, concerns the gift of the muse, the tension and meaning of the creative process. The second, *Everything is Plundered*, ponders terrible extremities, puts them in a larger perspective, and reflects on human resilience. The last, *The Souls of All My Dears*, is a poignant tribute to Akhmatova's own past, with her early years spent in Tsarskoye Selo where Pushkin had attended the Lyceum. Here, she sees her own place as a singer of poems. In my musical setting,, I sought to embody elements of the poetry, with a tone of voice that ranges from velvet to violent. The harmonic language likewise reflects a range from consonant and warm, to austere and dissonant. *Akhmatova Songs* was commissioned and premiered by the Sistrum Ensemble at Strathmore Hall in Rockville, MD in 1986. It was recorded by Da Capo Chamber Players on *Dreamtigers*, a portrait album of my chamber music (Innova 613). I am grateful to Professor Laurence R. Richter, expert on Russian phonetics and diction for singers, and Lecturer at Indiana University, for his invaluable help in creating a new transliteration for the 2007 edition of *Akhmatova Songs*. -JS

## Translations by Sharon Leiter

### 1. *The Muse*

When late at night I wait for her arrival,  
My life seems to hang by a thread.  
What are homage, youth or freedom compared to  
My dear guest with the flute in her hand?

And now she's come. She sheds her heavy wrappings  
And looks attentively at me. I guess,  
"Are you the one who dictated to Dante  
The lines of his *Inferno*?" She answers, "Yes."

### 2. *All is Plundered*

All is plundered, betrayed, torn asunder,  
The wing of black death gleams in flight.  
All is gnawed by sorrowing hunger—  
Why then have our hearts filled with light?

By day, wondrous woods near the city  
Send cherries' sweet breath drifting by.  
At night the new galaxies glitter  
From deep in the clear July sky.

And miracles walk near the houses  
Adrift in their dirt and their stones—  
That thing we've forever desired,  
That no one has ever known.

### 3. *The Souls of All My Dear Ones*

The souls of all my dear ones are on high stars.  
How good, there's no one left for me to lose  
And I can weep. The air of Tsarskoye Selo  
Was made for songs to echo through.

Touching the bright September waters  
A silver willow idles by the shore.  
Out of the past, in silence,  
My shadow comes to me once more.

So many lyres hang on these branches,  
And yet. It seems, mine has a place here, too.  
And now this shower, sparse and sunstruck,  
Brings consolation and good news.

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# I. The Muse

Text by Anna Akhmatova

Music by Judith Shatin

Hushed  $\text{♩} = 72$  5

Mezzo

Piano

*f* 10

Kog - da ya no - chyu  
Ког - да я но - чью

*f*

zhdu — ye-yo pri - kho - da,  
жду — е - ё при - хо - да,

*mf* *sub. p*

15

*mf*

Zhizn, ka - zhet - sya, vi - sit na vo - los -  
 Жизнь, ка - жет - ся, ви - сит на во - лос -

*mp* *mf*

20

*p* *ff*

ke. \_\_\_\_\_ Chto po - Ches - ti, chto yu - nost,  
 ке. \_\_\_\_\_ Что по - чес - ти, что ю - ность,

*p* *ff* *f*

25

*mp*

chto svo - bo - da \_\_\_\_\_ Pred mi - loy gost - yey \_\_\_\_\_  
 что сво - бо - да \_\_\_\_\_ Пред ми - лой гость - ей \_\_\_\_\_

*mf* *p*

30

musical score for measures 30-34. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a whole rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a half note (C5). The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a half note in the left hand. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4.

*s* du - doch - koy \_\_\_\_\_ v ru - ke.  
Ô ду - доч - кой \_\_\_\_\_ в ру - ке.

35

musical score for measures 35-39. It features a piano accompaniment. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a half note (C5). The left hand has a half note (C4) and a half note (G3). The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4 and back to 2/4.

40

musical score for measures 40-44. It features a piano accompaniment. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a half note (C5). The left hand has a half note (C4) and a half note (G3). The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4. The dynamic marking is *mp* and *cresc. sempre*.

45

*ff* *mf*

I vot vosh - la.  
И вот вош - ла.

50

*mf*

Ot - ki - nuy po - kry -  
От - ки - нув по - кры -

55

*mp* *mf*

va - lo, Vni - ma - tel - no vzglya - nu - la na me -  
ва - ло, Вни - ма - тель - но взгля - ну - ла на ме -



**60** Searching *mp*

пуа. Уей го-во - рю: "Ты 1  
 ня. Ей го-во - рю: "Ты 1,

**65**

*cresc.* .....  
 Дан-ту дик-то-ва-ла — Стра-ни-цы — А-да?"  
 Дан-ту дик-то-ва-ла — Стра-ни-цы — А-да?"

*f*

**70**

Spoken

Отве - ча - ет: "Я."  
 Отве - ча - ет: "Я."

## II. All is Plundered

Distraught ♩ = 92

Introduction for piano. The piece is in 3/4 time. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, while the left hand plays a similar pattern with a lower register. The dynamics range from *sf* to *ff*. The introduction concludes with a 3/4 time signature change.

5

Vocal entry and piano accompaniment for measures 5-9. The vocal line is in 3/4 time, starting with a *ff* dynamic. The lyrics are: "Vse ras-khi-shche-no, pre-da-no, \_\_\_" and "Всё рас-хи-ще-но, \_\_\_ пре-да-но, \_\_\_". The piano accompaniment continues with the established rhythmic pattern, including triplet markings.

10

Vocal entry and piano accompaniment for measures 10-14. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "про-да-но," and "про-да-но,". The piano accompaniment features a triplet in the right hand and a sixteenth-note pattern in the left hand. The dynamics include *sub. p* and *tr*. The piece concludes with a 3/4 time signature change.

15

♩ = 80

Musical score for measures 15-19. The piece is in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80. The piano accompaniment features sixteenth-note patterns with sixths and a trill.

20

*mf*

*mp*

Cher - noy smer - ti mel - ka - lo kry -  
 Чёр - ной смер - ти \_\_\_\_\_ мель - ка - ло кры -

Musical score for measures 20-24. The piano accompaniment features sixteenth-note patterns with sixths. The dynamics are marked as *mp* and *mf*.

лю,  
 ло,

Musical score for measures 25-29. The piano accompaniment features sixteenth-note patterns with sixths. The key signature changes to one sharp (F#) in measure 29.

25

Vse go - lod - noy tos -  
 Всё го - лод - ной тос -

30

ko - yu                            iz - glo - da - no, —  
 КО - Ю                            ИЗ - ГЛО - да - но, —

35

Poco meno mosso

♩ = 76

40

Musical score for measures 40-44. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features several triplet figures in both hands. The tempo is marked 'Poco meno mosso' with a quarter note equal to 76 beats per minute. Measure 40 is boxed with the number 40.

45

*mp*

50

*mf*

Musical score for measures 45-54. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Ot-che - vo zhe nam sta - lo svt - lo?" and "От-че - го же нам ста - ло свет - ло?". The piano accompaniment continues with triplet figures. The tempo remains 'Poco meno mosso'. Measure 45 is boxed with the number 45, and measure 50 is boxed with the number 50.

*p*

*mp*

55

*p*

*p*

Musical score for measures 55-59. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Dnem dy - khan-ya-mi" and "Днём ды - ханья-ми". The piano accompaniment features a *pp* (pianissimo) section. The tempo remains 'Poco meno mosso'. Measure 55 is boxed with the number 55.

60

shne - vy - mi \_\_\_\_\_  
 ШНЁ-ВЫ - МИ \_\_\_\_\_

65

Ne - by - va - ly pod go - ro - dom les, \_\_\_\_\_  
 Не-бы - ва - лый под го - ро - дом лес, \_\_\_\_\_

70

No - chyu ble - shchet soz - vezdya-mi po - vy -  
 Но - чью бле - щет соз - вездьями но - вы -

75 *mp* *f* *mf*

mi Glub proz - rach - nykh i - yul-skikh ne - bes, \_\_\_\_\_  
 ми Глубь проз - рач - ных и - юльских не - бес, \_\_\_\_\_

*decresmp* *mf* *cresc.* *f*

80 *ff*

I tak bliz - ko pod - kho - dit chu -  
 И так близ - ко под - хо - дит чу -

*sf - f*

*mp*

des - no - ye \_\_\_\_\_  
 дес - но - е \_\_\_\_\_

*sub. mp* *f*

**85**

*f*

К раз - ва - лив - шим - ся      грязным до - мам...  
 К раз - ва - лив - шим - ся      грязным до - мам...

*mf*

**90**

*mp*      *mf*      *mp*

Ни - ко - му, ни - ко - му      не - из - вест - ное,  
 Ни - ко - му, ни - ко - му      не - из - вест - ное.

*mp*      *mf*      *mp*

**95** Poco rit. ..... *p*

*mf*      *p*

Но от ве - ка же - лан - - - - - ное      нам.  
 Но от ве - ка же - лан - - - - - ное      нам.

*mf*      *p*



# III. The Souls

Gently ♩ = 56

The musical score is written for piano in 2/4 time, with a tempo of 56 beats per minute. It consists of five systems of music, each with a measure number in a box (5, 10, 15, 20, 25). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The score includes various musical notations such as trills (tr), triplets (3), and dynamic markings (p, mp, mf, f, sub.).

**System 1 (Measures 1-5):** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a trill on the first measure, followed by a wavy line indicating a tremolo. Measure 5 is marked with a box containing the number 5. The left hand has a bass line with a triplet in measure 4.

**System 2 (Measures 6-10):** Measure 10 is marked with a box containing the number 10. The right hand has a trill in measure 6 and a triplet in measure 7. The left hand has a triplet in measure 7. The dynamic marking *mp* appears in measure 9.

**System 3 (Measures 11-15):** Measure 15 is marked with a box containing the number 15. The right hand has a triplet in measure 11 and another in measure 14. The left hand has a triplet in measure 11. The dynamic marking *mp* is present in measure 13, and a *cresc.* marking is in measure 14.

**System 4 (Measures 16-20):** Measure 20 is marked with a box containing the number 20. The right hand has a triplet in measure 16 and a *f* dynamic marking in measure 17. The left hand has a triplet in measure 16. The dynamic marking *mp* is in measure 18, and *mf* is in measure 20.

**System 5 (Measures 21-25):** Measure 25 is marked with a box containing the number 25. The right hand has a triplet in measure 21 and a *p* dynamic marking in measure 22. The left hand has a *sub. f* marking in measure 22 and a *p* dynamic marking in measure 23. The dynamic marking *mp* is in measure 24.

30

*mp* *mf*

35

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

Vse du - shi mi - lykh na - vy - so - kikh  
 Все ду - ши МИ - ЛЫХ НА ВЫ - СО - КИХ

40

zvez - dakh.  
 звезд-дах.

*p* *f* *mf*

Subito  $\text{♩} = 72$

45 *mp*

Kak kho - ro - sho, chto  
 Как хо-ро-шо, ЧТО

*f* *sub.mp*

50

*f*

ne - ko - vo te - ryat  
 не - ко - го те - рять

55

*mp* *mf*

I mozh - no — pla - kat.  
 И мож - но — пла - кать.

60

*mf*

i mozh - no — pla - kat, pla - kat. —  
 и мож - но — пла - кать, пла - кать. —

65

*f* *mf*

*f* *mf*

Tsar - sko - sel - sky voz-dukH Byl  
 Цар - ско - сель - ский воз - дух Был

70

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

soz - dan, \_\_\_\_\_ chto - by pes - ni, chto - by pes - ni Pes \_\_\_\_\_  
 соз - дан, \_\_\_\_\_ что - бы пес - ни, что - бы пес - ни Пес \_\_\_\_\_

75

*mp*

\_\_\_\_\_ ni pov - to - ryat. U  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ни пов - то - рять. У

80 *cresc. .... mf*

be - re - ga se - reb - rya - na - ya i - va  
 бе - ре - га се - реб - ря - на - я и - ва

*sub. f* *mf* *mp*

*mp* *mf* *mp*

Ка - са - yet - sya sen - tyabr - skikh yar - kikh vod.  
 Ка - са - ет - ся сен - тябрь - ских яр - ких вод.

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

90 *mp*

Iz prosh-lo - vo  
 Из прошля - го

*f* *mp* *p*

95

vos - stav - shi, ————— mol - cha - li - vo —————  
 ВОС - СТАВ - ШИ, ————— МОЛ - ЧА - ЛИ - ВО —————

*p*

*pp*

100

Ко мне на - vstre - chu ————— тень мо - я и - дет.  
 Ко мне на-встре - чу ————— тень мо - я и - дет.

*mf* *f* *mf*

105

*mp* *p*

110

*mf*

Zdes stol - ko lir stol - ko  
Здесь столь-ко лир столь-ко

*mp*

115

*Subito* ♩ = 56 *f*

lir po - ve - she - no na vuet - ki, No i mo - uey kak  
лир по - ве - ше - но на вет - ки, Но и мо - ей как

120

*Animated* *mf* *f* *mf*

bud - to mes - to est. A e - tot dozh - dik, sol - nech - ny i  
буд - то мес - то есть. А э - тот дож - дик, солнечный и

125

*mp* *mp*

red - ку, Мне у - те -  
 ред - кий, Мне у - те -

130

*mf* *cresc.*

she - нуе і bla - га - уа Вла \_\_\_\_\_  
 ше - нье и - бла - га - я Бла \_\_\_\_\_

135

*f* Poco rit. *p* *p*

ga \_\_\_\_\_ уа \_\_\_\_\_ вuest. \_\_\_\_\_  
 га \_\_\_\_\_ я \_\_\_\_\_ вестЬ. \_\_\_\_\_