

Judith Shatin

Akhmatova Songs

Soprano & Instrumental Quintet



Instrumentation

Soprano
(or Mezzo, depending on vocal character)
Flute
Bb Clarinet
Violin
Cello
Piano

Program Note

Russian poet Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966) lived through multiple cataclysms during what she called "the real twentieth century." She responded in poetry, such as her magnificent *Requiem*, composed in resistance to the Stalinist terror. She also wrote poems that speak to her personal artistic vision. I chose to set several of these. The composition of *Akhmatova Songs* was inspired by my encounter with Akhmatova's poetry in Stanley Kunitz's translations. However, I decided to set the poetry in the original Russian, with the help of my colleague and friend, poet Sharon Leiter, who penned a transliteration, and whose own translation of the three poems accompanies the score. The Russian has its own rhythm, timbre, and imagery, and I wanted to honor them. I set three poems: *The Muse*, *Everything is Plundered* and *The Souls of All My Dears*. All share themes of loss and transcendence, as does much of her poetry.

The first poem is about the gift of the muse, the tension and meaning of the creative process. The second ponders terrible extremities that she experienced, situates them in a larger context and reflects on human resilience. The last 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. I sought to embody elements of the poetry in my music, with a tone of voice that ranges from velvet to violent. The harmonic language likewise reflects a range from consonant, though not traditionally tonal, 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 soprano Lucy Shelton and Da Capo Chamber Players on *Dreamtigers*, an album of Shatin's chamber music (Innova 613). In addition to the chamber setting for Pierrot Ensemble, there is a version for mezzo (or soprano, depending on vocal character) and piano. I am grateful to Professor Laurence R. Richter, expert on Russian phonetics and diction for singers 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.

*Translations used by permission of the author

I

Transposed Score

"The Muse"

Duration: 13:30

text: Anna Akhmatova
music: Judith Shatin

Hushed ♩ = 76

Mezzo/Sop.

Flute

Clarinet in B \flat

Violin

Cello

Piano

f

10

Kog - da ja no - chju
Kog - da ya no - chju

mf

p

mf

p

sf - f

mf

p

pizz.
f

f zhdu — je - jo pri - kho - da,
жду — е - ё при - хо - да,

The first system of the score features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, with the right hand playing a complex rhythmic pattern and the left hand providing harmonic support. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*. The time signature is 2/4.

20

mf Zhizn', ka - zhet - sja, vi sit
Жизнь, ка - жет - ся, ви сит

na vo - los - ke. na vo - los - ke.

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal line starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a triplet. The piano accompaniment features a variety of dynamics, including *mp*, *f*, and *pp*. The time signature remains 2/4. A box containing the number '20' is positioned above the second measure of the vocal line.

ff

Chto po - ches - ti, chto ju - nost', chto svo - bo - da
Что по - чес - ти, что ю - ность, что сво - бо - да

mp

Pred mi - loj gost - jej s du - doch - koy
Пред ми - лой гость - ей О ду - доч - кой

30

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics in Russian and English, and three staves of piano accompaniment. The second system also includes a vocal line with lyrics and three staves of piano accompaniment. The score contains various musical notations including triplets, dynamic markings, and a page number 30. A large watermark 'PERUSAL SCORE, NOT FOR PERFORMANCE' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

v ru - ke.
В ру - ке.

mf *mp* *p* *mp*

mf *mp* *p* *mp*

mp *p* *mp*

p *mp*

40

I vot vosh - la.
И вот вош - ла.

cresc. sempre *f* *ff*

cresc. sempre *f* *ff*

cresc. sempre *f* *ff*

cresc. sempre *f* *ff*

mf

Ot - ki - nuv po - kry - va - lo,
От - ки - нув по - кры - ва - ло,

p *f* *mp*

p *f* *mp*

p *f* *mp*

mp *mf*

Vni - ma - tel' - no vzglj - nu - la na me - nja. Jej - go - vo -
Вни - ма - тель - но взгля - ну - ла на ме - ня. Ей го - во -

p *mp*

p *mp*

p *mp*

60 Searching

Музыкальный фрагмент, охватывающий такты 60-66. Он включает вокальную партию с русскими и английскими текстами, а также партитуры для фортепиано и контрабаса. Динамика начинается на *mp* и постепенно усиливается до *f*. Темп и метр меняются: 3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 2/4. Встречаются триоллы и педаль.

Lyrics:
rju "Ty 1 Dan - tu dik - to - va - la — Stra - ni - tsy — A - da?"
рю: "Ty 1, Дан - ту дик - то - ва - ла — Стра - ни - цы — А - да?"

Performance markings: *mp*, *cresc.*, *f*, *fp*, *pizz.*, *arco*.

70

Spoken

Музыкальный фрагмент, охватывающий такты 70-76. Он включает вокальную партию с русскими и английскими текстами, а также партитуры для фортепиано и контрабаса. Динамика варьируется от *mf* до *f*. Темп и метр: 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, 3/4. Встречаются триоллы и педаль.

Lyrics:
Ot - ve - cha - yet: — "Ja."
От - ве - ча - ет: — "Я."

Performance markings: *mf*, *p*, *f*.

II.

"All is Plundered"

Distraught $\text{♩} = 92$

Mezzo *ff* $\overset{\frown}{\text{3}}$
 Vsjo ras - khi - shche - no,
 Всѣ рас - хи - ще - но, _____

Flute *f - ff*

Clarinet in B \flat *f - ff*

Violin *f - ff*

Cello *f - ff*

Piano *f - ff*

pre - da - no, _____ pro - da - no,
 пре - да - но, _____ про - да - но,

10

tr#
 sub. p

♩ = 80

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-4. It includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, and *tr*. The piano part features sixteenth-note patterns with sixths and trills.

20

mp Cher - noj smer - ti mel' ka - lo kry - lo,
Чёр - ной смер - ти мель - ка - ло кры - ло,

mf

Musical score for the second system, measures 5-8. It includes vocal lines with lyrics and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp* and *mf*. The piano part continues with sixteenth-note patterns and sixths.

Musical score for the first system, featuring vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The piano part includes sixteenth-note runs and chords. Dynamics include *sf-mf* and trills.

30

Musical score for the second system, including vocal lines with lyrics and piano accompaniment. The piano part features sixteenth-note runs and chords. Dynamics include *f*.

Vsjo go - lod - noj tos - ko - ju iz - glo - da - no, —
 Всѣ го - лод - ной тос - ко - ю из - глo - да - но, —

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

Meno mosso ♩ = 76 **40**

mp
 Ot-che - vo zhe nam sta - lo
 От-че - го же нам ста - ло

p *p* *sub. p*

50

mf

p mp p

svet - lo? Dnjom du - khan-ja - mi
 свет - ло? Днём ды - хань-я - ми

mp p pp

mp p pp

mp p pp

mp p pp

mp p pp

60

p mf

ve - jet vi - shnjo vy - mi Ne - by -
 ве - ет ви - шнё - вы - ми Не - бы -

mp p mf

mp p mf

mp p mf

mp p mf

mp p mf

f *mf* *mp* *mp*

va - lyj pod go - ro - dom les, No - chju
 ва - лый под го - ро - дом лес, Но - чью

The first system of the musical score features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a dynamic of *f*, then *mf*, and ends with *mp*. The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand part with a *p* dynamic and a left-hand part with a *mf* dynamic. The score is written in 2/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings (e.g., 3, 5).

70 *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

ble - shchet soz - vez - dja - mi no - vy - mi Glub' proz -
 бле - щет соз - вез - дья - ми но - вы - ми Глубь проз -

The second system of the musical score continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a dynamic of *mf* and ends with *mp*. The piano accompaniment features a right-hand part with a *mf* dynamic and a left-hand part with a *mf* dynamic. The score is written in 2/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings (e.g., 3, 5). A box containing the number '70' is placed above the vocal line.

f

rach - nykh i - jul' skikh ne - bes,
 рач - ных и - юль - ских не - бес,

mf

80 *ff*

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

des - no - je
дес - но - е

sub. *mp* *sub.f*

sub. *mp* *sub.f*

sub. *mp* *f*

sub. *mp* *f*

f

К раз - ва - лив - шим - ся гряз - ным до - мам...

К раз - ва - лив - шим - ся гряз - ным до - мам...

mp *mp* *mf*

mp *mf* *mp*

Ni - ko - mu, ni - ko - mu ne iz - vest - noje, No ot
Ни - ко - му, ни - ко - му не - из - вест - ное Ho от

mf Poco rit. *p*

ve - ka zhe - lan noje nam.
ве - ка же - лан ное нам.

III. "The Souls"

Gently ♩ = 56

Mezzo

Flute

Clarinet in B \flat

Violin

Cello

Piano

10

20

musical score for measures 20-29, including dynamics such as *f*, *sf-p*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *sub.*, and *f*, and performance instructions like *non vib.* and *vib.*

30

musical score for measures 30-39, including dynamics such as *p*, *mp*, and *f*, and performance instructions like *See...* and *Vse Bce*.

du - shi mi - lykh na vy - so - kix zvez - dakh.
 ду - ши ми - лых на вы - со - ких звез - дах.

mf *mf* *mp*

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

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

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

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

12 3 3 3

Sva.....

40

Subito $\text{♩} = 76$

f *mp*

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

mf *sub. f* *5* *mp* *p* *f* *f* *p*

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

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

sub. mp

50

ne - ko - vo ter - jat' I mozh - no
 не - ко - го те - рять И мож - но

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

f *mp*

p *mf* *f* *sub. p* *sub. mp*

mf *f* *sub. p* *senza vib.* *vib.*

p *mf* *f* *sub. p*

mf *sf* *f*

mf *p* *mf* *mp* *p* (*p*)

mf *p* *mp* *p*

mf *p* *mp* *p*

mf *p* *mp* *p*

60

70

Isar sko - sel' - skij voz - kuch Byl soz - dan,
 Цар - ско - сель - ский воз - дух Был соз - дан,

mf *cresc.* *f* 3 3

chto - by pes - ni, chto - by pes - ni Pes - ni pov - tor - jat'.
 что - бы пес - ни, что - бы пес - ни Пес - ни пов - то - рять.

mf *p* *mf*

mf *arco* *f* 3 *mf*

mf *arco* *mf*

mf

80 *mp* *cresc.* *mf* *mp* 3 3

U be - re - ga se - reb - rja - na - ja i - va Ka - sa - jet - sja
 У бе - ре - га се - реб - ря - на - я и - ва Ка - са - ет - ся

p *mp* *p*

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

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

sub. f 6 *mf* *mp* *p*

mf

sen - tjabr - skikh jar - kix vod.
сен - тябрь - ских яр - ких вод.

mf *mp* *f*

mf *mp* *sub. f* *f*

pizz. *arco*

mf *mp* *sub. f* *f*

mf *mp* *f*

mp *p* *p*

Iz prosh-lo-vo vos - stav - shi, mol - cha - li - vo
Из прош-ло-го вос - став - ши, мол - ча - ли - во

mf *p* *pp*

mf *p* *pp*

sub. p *p* *pp*

p *pp* *pp*

100

mf *f*

Ко мне на - встре - чу _____ тен' мо - ја id - jot.
Ко мне на - встре - чу _____ тень мо - я и - дет.

mf *f* *sub. mp* *mp*

f *sub. mp*

f

110

mf *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *p*

mf

Zdes' stol' - ko lir stol - ko lir po - ve - she - no na vet - ki,
 Здесь столь - ко лир столь - ко лир по - ве - ше - но на вет - ки,

mp *p* *mp* *p*

p *p* *mp* *p*

mp *mp*

Subito ♩ = 56

f **120** Animated *mf*

No i mo - jej kak bud - to mes - to jest'. A e - tot
 Но и мо - ей как буд - то мес - то есть. А э - тот

fp *p* *mf* *mf*

fp *mf* *mf*

f *mf* *mp*

dozh - dik, sol - nech - nyj i red - kij,
 дож - дик, сол - неч - ный и ред - кий,

p *p* *p*

mf *pizz.* *arco*

mp *p* *6*

130

mp *p* *p* *p*

Мне u - te - she - nje
 Мне y - te - she - nje

mp *mf* *p*

mf *cresc.*

і бла - га - ја Вла
и бла - га - ја Бла

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

га ја vest'.
га я весть.