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PROGRAM NOTES

This song cycle is, in part, a meditation on what it means to be a mortal being who exists in time. The first and last movements each present a different take on looking back, and the cycle moves backward in time from evening to mid-day to dawn. Images from each poem are woven into the music; the first movement is full of sewing imagery, so in places the pianist imitates the ebb and flow of a sewing machine's ostinato. The playful second movement depicts icicles melting, opening with their unpredictable drips. In the third movement, clouds bloom.

Three Songs on Poems by Lorri Neilsen Glenn was commissioned by the Canadian Art Song Project for soprano Magali Simard-Galdès, winner of the Jeunesses Musicales Maureen Forrester Tour. She sang the premiere, with pianist Olivier Hébert-Bouchard, in Waterloo, Ontario at the start of the tour in November 2016. This piece won second prize in the 2018 NATS Art Song Composition Competition.

—Tawnie Olson

Tawnie Olson (b. 1974)

For biographical information visit: www.tawnieolson.com

TEXTS

Dusk

Dusk is such a ragged time. The shirred day loosened from the line we strung across the reach of morning, when a bird called out its signature, its signature, and we opened to the hours ahead, settling in to carve again a pure clear shape around each thought and plan, an offering, a duty done, a passage read, or one more step or image caught or lesson learned or heart set right, but sundown pulls along its arc the last descending string of light, leaves us with minutes in our hands, frayed recollections, wild release, the folly of ambitious plans we trade for rest and abject peace.

Hubbards Cove

A melting tune. Sun bebops over the trees, dogs erupt, icicles swoon, the drainpipes jazzed by their trickling scat. I bump the bed covers down the stairs, puffs of cat hair winking in the astonishment of light, haul them over the line, bite their stale winter skins with pins as the wind rips up the driveway, snatches the ends of the covers, and lifts—
like paper off a thundering cliff, gulls' long banking, parachuting nuns, hovering carpets humming, up and up and the top of my bed suspended * between woodshed and pine and the throng of spring glitter, sun and wind lindy-hopping. Lyric I can ride. What else but to slip out of my soggy wool socks, feel bare feet on the cool-slick porch, breathe in, climb aboard?

* The composer added the word "now" at this spot in the music.

Daybreak

Sun on its knees in the field rinsed by dawn, splashed in prayer. I walk alone below the abbey, shoes sussing a way into sage and a psalm of the particular. Shadow climbs a hay bale ahead, feet tripping an exclamation of grasshoppers, the shutter of time. Behind me, a girl chews a stalk of wheat, lays her quivering tongue on the saltlick, ravishes the whiskered ground.

Above, clouds blooming. Dust, like the future, rises around her. Cumulus petals, path of a hawk, flange of foxtail, crusted blood on her knee, the sure and swarming horizon. The prairie teaching her how to pay attention. The heart is a hymnal, she does not know this now, does not hear the susurratation beyond the hill, wind gathering grief, gathering yearning, shuddering nights, the cold eye of the morning star.

—Lorri Neilsen Glenn

Commissioned by the Canadian Art Song Project for Magali Simard-Galdès

Three Songs on Poems by Lorri Neilsen Glenn for Soprano and Piano

I. Dusk

Lorri Neilsen Glenn

Tawnie Olson

ca. ♩ = 69 *accel.* ca. ♩ = 76 *languorous (but still in tempo) p*

Soprano

ca. ♩ = 69 *accel.* ca. ♩ = 76
like a sewing machine

Piano

pp *mf* *pp*

con Led.

3 *cresc. poco a poco*

is

5

such a

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7

rag - ged time.

9

mf

mf like a distant black-capped chickadee

mp

ped. keep sustain pedal depressed until indicated (m. 24)

12

mp

The shirred day

14

loos-ened from the line we strung a -

17

cross the — reach — of morn - ing, when a bird called out — its sig - na - ture, —

(8^{va})

pp — *p* — *pp* *p*

20

its sig - na - ture, — and we

lyrical

(8^{va})

22

o - pened to the hours a - head, —

poco rit.

(8^{va})

pp — *p* — *pp* *poco rit.*

6 6 6

3

25

con Fed.

p *mf* *p*

accel. *mf*

6 6

3

*

II. Hubbards Cove

Lorri Neilsen Glenn

Tawnie Olson

Playful ♩ = ca. 84

Soprano

Playful ♩ = ca. 84
like dripping icicles

Piano

p

senza Ped.

4

7

8^{va}

10 (8^{va})

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13 (8va)

6 3

15 (8va)

6 6

17 *mp poco*

A mel -

(8va)

6 6 6 6 6 6

19

- ting - tune.

(8va)

6 6 6 6 6 6

21 *mf*
Sun be-bops o - ver the trees, — dogs e - rupt, — i - ci - cles —

(8va)
mp
6 6 6 6 6 6

23 *suave, legato* *p*
swoon, —

(8va)
pp
6 6 6 6 6 6

25 *mf*
the drain - pipes jazzed by their trick - l - ing scat.

(8va)
mp
6 6 6 6 6 6

27 *mf*

III. Daybreak

Lorri Neilsen Glenn

Tawnie Olson

Lyrical ♩ = 54

Soprano

Piano

mp like a heartbeat

con Ped.

4 *mf* warm, tender

Sun on its knees in the field rinsed by dawn, splashed in prayer.

9

I walk a lone be-low the

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14

ab - bey, — shoes suss - ing a way in - to sage and a

19

psalm of the par - ti - cu - lar. —

poco cresc.

24

Sha - dow climbs a hay bale a - head, feet

29

trip - ping an ex - cla - ma - tion of grass - hop - pers, — the shut - ter of — time. —

mf

34

Musical score for measures 34-38. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins with a whole note G4, followed by a half rest, and then four measures of whole rests. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a more complex texture in the right hand with chords and moving lines.

39

with longing

Musical score for measures 39-43. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has lyrics: "Be - hind me, a girl chews a stalk of wheat, lays her". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar texture to the previous system, supporting the vocal melody.

44

Musical score for measures 44-48. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line has lyrics: "qui-ver-ing tongue on the salt-lick, rav-ish-es the whis-kered ground." The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a more complex texture in the right hand with chords and moving lines.

49

Musical score for measures 49-53. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins with a whole note G4, followed by a half rest, and then four measures of whole rests. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar texture to the previous system, supporting the vocal melody.