

concert music

Be Your Tears Wet

for Solo Violin

peter gilbert

Be Your Tears Wet for Violin

for Beverly Shin

Notes to the Performers:

"Be your tears wet?" is a line from Shakespeare's *King Lear* (Act IV, 7). Lear's former kingdom is in ruins as his treasonous daughters war for the throne. Cordelia, his only faithful and loving daughter, returns from exile to his side with the army of France. Since he last saw her, at the moment he turned her out of his house, he has brought upon his own head (and upon others) a dark succession of tragedies. He is touched with madness now. And as he returns to consciousness he can not quite believe it is really her, or that she has returned from his cruel banishment with forgiveness in her heart.

CORDELIA Sir, do you know me?

LEAR You are a spirit, I know. When did you die?
... Where have I been? Where are I? Fair daylight?
I am mightily abused. I should ev'n die with pity
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands. Let's see;
I feel this pinprick. Would I were assured
Of my condition!

CORDELIA O, look upon me sir,
And hold your hand in benediction o'er me.
[He attempts to kneel.]
No, sir, you must not kneel.

LEAR Pray, do not mock me.
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man,

Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is, and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments, nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me,
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

CORDELIA [Weeping] And so I am, I am.

LEAR Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray, weep not.
If you have poison for me I will drink it.
I know you do not love me, for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong.
You have some cause, they have not.

CORDELIA No cause, no cause.
... Will't please Your Highness walk?

LEAR You must bear with me.
Pray you now, forget and forgive.
I am old and foolish.

The music in this work is about the layering of emotions inextricably bound together in what we call bittersweetness, such as Lear's happiness at seeing his daughter, which was simultaneously pained with the memory and knowledge of all that had come before. The music for me hovers between sighs of deep love and sighs of grief. The melody appears over a canvas of twinkling gestures which becomes audible again each time the melody pauses. The spot marked "More Remote" is for me a musical icon for the bittersweetness I associate with the piece's title. This icon also becomes more visible in the fabric of the soloist's singing as the melody repeats.

Lighting Cues: All of the lighting changes must happen very slowly... relatively imperceptibly (if the lighting changes cannot be performed gradually then they should probably be abandoned). A good deal of interpretation is left to the concert-makers.

Program Note:

with bits of dust... and encircling a beam of the moon...

I will see you through what must be tears of joy,
but what light is left in my heart's blessing is dampened by such
deep sorrows. "Be your tears wet?" he asked Cordelia.

Love still after such a cost.

"Pray you now forget and forgive."

Forget and forgive.

(be) with dust...and (tears).. in a beam of the moon...(your) moondust

I will see you through a moon that might be (your) tears,
when my heart's (wet) light is dampened by dusty sorrows.

"Be your tears wet?"

Forget (your tears) of dust. Forget,

as (your) love was bits of (tears),

when my light is by your sad joy

forgive

it's a light of

such cost

As I see you glowing in a beam of the moon with bits of dust encircling

I can only ask you if yours are tears?

Be Your Tears Wet

for Beverly Shin

Peter Gilbert

(2002)

Remote (♩ = 88)

Solo Violin

First system of musical notation for 'Remote'. It features a solo violin line with various dynamics and articulations. The notes are: G4 (pizz., mf), A4 (pizz., p), B4 (pizz., p), C5 (pizz., f), D5 (arco non vib., pp), E5 (arco non vib., p), F5 (arco non vib., ppp), and G5 (arco non vib., ppp). There are triplets over the first three notes and the last three notes. A 'c.l.b. (col legno battuto)' marking is above the F5 note.

[Lights are rather cool but quite present]

Second system of musical notation for 'Remote'. It continues the solo violin line. The notes are: G5 (pizz., f), A5 (pizz., pp), B5 (arco non vib., n), C6 (pizz., f), D6 (vib. norm., mp), E6 (arco espress., p), F6 (arco espress., mf), G6 (pizz.), and A6 (pizz.). There are triplets over the first three notes and the last three notes.

[Lights become gradually warmer]

With Tenderness (bowing freely)

Third system of musical notation for 'With Tenderness'. It features a solo violin line with various dynamics and articulations. The notes are: G4 (arco non vib., pp), A4 (arco non vib., p), B4 (arco non vib., f), C5 (pizz., mf), D5 (arco vib. norm., mf), E5 (arco vib. norm., f), F5 (arco vib. norm., mp), G5 (arco vib. norm., mp), and A5 (arco vib. norm., mp). There are triplets over the first three notes and the last three notes.

Fourth system of musical notation for 'With Tenderness'. It continues the solo violin line. The notes are: G5 (mf), A5 (mf), B5 (mf), C6 (mf), D6 (mf), E6 (mf), F6 (mf), G6 (mf), and A6 (mf). There are triplets over the first three notes and the last three notes. A 'gradually move to... non vib.' marking is above the F6 note.

Fifth system of musical notation for 'With Tenderness'. It continues the solo violin line. The notes are: G6 (poco accel., ff), A6 (poco accel., ff), B6 (poco accel., ff), C7 (poco accel., ff), D7 (poco accel., ff), E7 (poco accel., ff), F7 (poco accel., ff), G7 (poco accel., ff), and A7 (poco accel., ff). There are triplets over the first three notes and the last three notes. A 'poco accel.' marking is above the G6 note. A 'a tempo' marking is above the A6 note. A 'molto vib.' marking is above the F7 note.

Be Your Tears Wet

→ sul
tasto

→ poco sul
pont.

→ ord.

pp *p* *pp sub.* *pp* *f*

[Lights are now openly warm]

ff *mf*

ff *mf* *f* *mp*

rall.

Suddenly More Remote

non vib.

poco sul pont.

ord.

pp sub. *

* unarticulated entrance

[Lights begin long process of narrowing and cooling]

Tempo Primo
pizz.

arco non vib.

p *pp* *f* *pp* *ppp*

poco gliss.

Be Your Tears Wet

With Tenderness

4

pizz.

arco

vib. norm.

pp

f

mf

3

molto vib.

non vib. (arco)

p

p

* Quick tap with left-hand fingertip (not pizz.)

vib. norm.

non vib.

vib. norm.

pizz.

arco

pp

mp

p

pp

p

mf

Gradually lift finger

vib. norm.

mf

ff

3

3

non vib.

vib. norm.

non vib.

p

n

p

pp

3

vib. norm.

f

ff

3

3

Be Your Tears Wet

rall. 8^{va} \rightarrow bowing too lightly for pitch *Very Still*

mf *f* *pp* *n*

a tempo

sul tasto non vib. *Gradually depress finger fully*

mp *p* *pp*

3 4 3 5 beats 3

With Feeling (Use a variety of colors)

espress. *pp*

[Lights down to a single tender, lonely beam]

(pitch bend) 8^{va} *rall.* *non vib.*

p *sfz* *mf* *pp* *pp* *n*

Grandioso (much slower)

\rightarrow molto vib. \rightarrow non vib. \rightarrow vib. norm.

f *ff* *p* *n*

Be Your Tears Wet

With Tenderness

Tempo Primo

pizz. *p* *f* *p* *pp* *p* *mf* *f*

arco pizz. arco vib.norm. 3

espress. becoming ever more still and distant

ff *ppp*

8^{va} lift finger *n*

[Lights slowly out]