

Aster

Six epigrams for voice, violin, viola, violoncello

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Sadie Harrison

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ASTER

*6 Epigrams for
voice, flute, violin, viola, violoncello*

Sadie E. Harrison

(1995)

ASTER for voice, flute, violin, viola, 'cello (1995)

Aster selects its six texts from the Greek Anthology, a collection of over four thousand poems collected by Byzantine scholars approximately one thousand years ago. The set of poems date from 7th century BC through until 6th Century AD and the texts that I have chosen reflect both the cultural and chronological diversity of the Anthology as a whole.

Despite this diversity however, the selected texts are unified by two common themes; the cycle of life, expressed through the interplay between light and dark and the passing from morning to evening, in combination with a characteristically fatalistic approach to the nature of love (this fatalism is seen most vividly in *Love the Conqueror* and *Love the Gambler* with their allusions to Venus and Cupid.) The texts also share the topos of Aster, the star, which takes on various guises throughout the settings. The two *Aster* texts, thought by Keats to be the most perfect of all the Greek Epigrams, concisely focus this conceptual unity and the sentiment of the selected texts.

Though the musical settings vary considerably in mood and texture, there is a three note motif (rising 7th, falling minor 3rd) which symbolizes the star of the text, providing a recurrent leitmotiv throughout the piece. Heard in its basic form at the very opening of the work and again at the end, where it articulates the increasingly melancholic sighs of the lover, the motif is transformed into a triple-time dance in *Echo*, a multi-layered counterpoint in *Love the Conqueror*, and, harmonised with 4ths and 5ths it becomes the simple colouristic background in *Secret* and sections of *Love the Gambler*.

The piece is prefaced by a quotation from Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Lost* - 'When love speaks, the Gods in their heavens are made drowsy with the harmony' (Act IV Scene III), which whilst written some thousand years after the last Epigrams, draws together all of the emotional, circumstantial and thematic elements of the piece.

The work is dedicated privately with much love and gratitude.

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Aster I * (Plato, c. 429-347 BC)

My star, star-gazing? - If only I could be
The sky, with all those eyes to stare at you!

Secret (Meleager, c. 140-70 BC)

Farewell Morning Star, herald of Dawn, and come quickly as the
Evening Star bringing again in secret, he whom thou takest away.

Love the Gambler (Meleager)

Still in his mother's starry lap, a child playing with his dice
In the Morning, Love played my life away.

Echo (Satyrus c.911 - 959 AD)

Dear Pan, abide here, drawing the pipes over thy lips, for though wilt find
Echo on these sunny greens... Tongueless Echo, along these pastoral slopes
Makes answering music to the stars with repeating voice.

Love the Conqueror (Meleager)

I am downtread with thy foot upon my neck cruel divinity.
I know thee by the stars, as I know thee too by thy firey arrows.
But hurling thy brands at my soul will no longer kindle it, for it is all ashes.

Aster II (Plato)

You were the Morning star among the living:
But now in death your evening lights the dead.

(*Aster, meaning 'star', was the boy lover of Plato)

for Tony

*“And when Love speaks, the voice of all the
Gods make heaven drowsy with the harmony”*

(Love’s Labours Lost Act IV, Scene III, Shakespeare)

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Aster I (Plato)

*My star, star-gazing?- If only I could be
The sky, with all those eyes to stare at you!*

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Slow ♩ = 52-56 (flexible and expressive)

poco rit

p *poco cresc* *p* *poco p* *Sf* *p* *mp*

My star, star

poco rit AT^o (moving on a little)

AT^o *poco p* *Sf* *p* *mf* [bright] *(cresc)* *f* [like a sigh] *mf*

My star, star ga-zing? Ah

poco a poco dim + rit

AT^o (♩ = 52/56)

mf *poco port* *pp* [Simply] *p*

ah If on-ly

mf

poco rit

♩ = 48

poco a poco morendo

mf *poco p* [legato] *(mp)* *mp*

I could be the sky with all those eyes to stare at you!

Secret (Meleager)

*Farewell Morning Star, herald of Dawn, and come quickly as the
Evening Star bringing again in secret, he whom thou takest away.*

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Secret

(TEXT: - Meleager)

♩ = 66-69

5.

Voice

vln (no mute)

vla (con sord.)

cllo (con sord.) (* like bells)

10.

Voice

vln

vla

cllo

voice 15. *poco p* *mp* *p* *poco a*

2 3 Farewell Morn...ing 2 Star
4 4 4

vln *poco sf* *sim* *sim* *sim* *p* *p*

vla *poco sf* *sim* *sim* *p* *poco* *p* *p*

cllo *poco sf p* *(p)* *p* *poco* *p* *mp*

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poco rit — Slightly slower, ♩ = 56

voice 20. *poco cresc mf* *p* *poco* *mp*

he-rald of Dawn

vln *poco rit* *p* *p* *p* *poco*

vla *p* *poco* *p* *p* *p* *poco*

cllo *mf* *p* *poco* *p* *p* *p* *poco*

poco rit **AT^o**

voice 25. *pp* *mf* *p*

3
4 *poco* *mp* *p* *mf dim* *poco* *mp*

3
4 *p* *poco* *mp* *p* *mf dim* *mp*

3
4 *p* *poco* *mp* *p* *mf dim* *p* (p)

Come quickly as the Evening Star

poco accel

voice 30. *mf* *mf* *p* *mp* *poco* *mf p*

Eve-ning Star bringing a--

2
4 *mf* *poco sf*

3
4 *mf* *poco sf*

2
4 *mf* *p* *mf*

3
4 *mf* *mf*

AT^o

voice *mf p* (sostenuto) *mf poco a poco diminuendo*

gain in secret he whom thou takest away.

vln *poco sf* *p poco sf* *poco sf* *mf* *mf* *p*

vla *poco sf* *p poco sf* *poco sf* *mf* *mf* *p*

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

4

4

4

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Love the Gambler (Meleager)

*Still in his mother's starry lap, a child playing with his dice
In the Morning, Love played my life away.*

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Love the Gambler

(TEXT- Meleager)

$\text{♩} = 63-66$ (quietly relentless!)

FLUTE

VOICE

$\frac{2}{4}$ *pp* *poco pp* *poco pp* $\frac{3}{4}$ *mp* (2) (4)

$\text{♩} = 84-88$

vln (mute off)

vla (mute off)

cln (muted)

$\frac{2}{4}$ *pp* *poco pp* *poco pp* $\frac{3}{4}$ *mp* (2) (4)

$\frac{4}{4}$ *pp* *poco pp* *mp* (2) (4)

pp *poco pp* *mp*

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5.

fl

voice

$\frac{2}{4}$ *mf* $\frac{3}{4}$ *pp* *poco pp* $\frac{2}{4}$ *mf* (3) (4)

vln

vla

cln

$\frac{2}{4}$ *mf* $\frac{3}{4}$ *pp* *poco pp* $\frac{2}{4}$ *mf* *p* *mf pp* (3) (4)

$\frac{4}{4}$ *mf* $\frac{4}{4}$ *pp* *poco pp* *mf* *p* *mf pp*

mf *pp* *poco pp* *mf* *p* *mf pp*

Slightly slower:

$\text{♩} = 58/60$ (*poco rubato*)

fl

voice

vln

vla

cllo

3/4

2/4

3

4

mf

f

sf

mf

f

10.

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Tempo primo $\text{♩} = 63$

fl

voice

vln

vla

cllo

ff

mf

f

3/4

2/4

p

3

2

4

4

4

mp

mp

mp

(less agitated than opening)

(* detached, but *poco sostenuto*)

15.

poco rit.

fl *pp* *mp* *cresc* *f* (3) (4)

voice (Slightly slower) (♩ = 56)

vln *poco mp* *cresc* *f* (3) (4)

vla *poco mp* *cresc* *f* (3) (4)

cello *poco mp* *cresc* *f* (3) (4)

tr *tr*

*20. ← **

Slightly slower ♩ = 56

(molto legato, flexible) *poco rit*

fl *p* *mf* *sf* *p* (2) (4)

voice *mp* Ah

vln (legato) *pp* *poco* *mp* *pp* *sf* (2) (4)

vla (legato) *pp* *poco* *mp* *pp* *sf* (2) (4)

cello (legato) *pp* *poco* *mp* *pp* *sf*

25.

fl

voice

vln

vla

cllo

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

Ah Ah

pp *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *mf*

pp *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *mf*

pp *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *mf*

poco rit 30.

fl

voice

vln

vla

cllo

p *f* *3* *4* *f* *2* *mp*

Ah ah ah

pp *mf* *f* *2*

pp *mf* *f* *4*

pp *mf* *f* *4*

poco rit →

Slightly faster ♩ = 63

fl *mp* *AT^o* *poco rit* *AT^o* *poco rit* *poco* *3 : pp* (legato, poco espressivo) *poco mp* (2/4)

voice *3 : mf* (slightly detached) (2/4)

vln *pp* *(AT^o)* *(poco rit AT^o)* *(poco rit)* *(p=63)* *3 : pp ** *mp* (2/4)

vla *pp* *3 : pp ** *mp* (2/4)

clo *pp* *4 : pp ** *mp* (* *flautando*)

Still in his mother's-starry

fl *poco rit - AT^o* *35.* *3 : pp* (as before) (2/4)

voice *2/4 f* *mf* (as before) (2/4)

lap a child playing with his

vln *2* *3 : pp* (2/4)

vla *4* *4 : pp* (2/4)

clo *poco sf p* *pp*

fl

voice

vln

vla

cllo

2 4

mf mp f f f sfp sfp poco a poco cresc

3 4

tr (±)

5 5

dice with her dice) (ce) in the

Slow ♩ = 56 (sonorous)

fl

voice

vln

vla

cllo

40. poco

ff

2 4

mf

poco

morn---ing Love played my life a---

poco

molto 2 p

molto 4 p

molto p

45.

f

Poco sf

voice

...way.

vln

poco

p

vla

poco

p

cllo

poco

p

poco

p

poco

p

4

4

4

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Echo (Satyrus)

*Dear Pan, abide here, drawing the pipes over thy lips,
For though wilt find Echo on these sunny greens...
Tongueless Echo, along these pastoral slopes
Makes answering music to the stars with repeating voice.*

Echo

(TEXT- Cometas, Satyrus)

SCORE in C

$\text{♩} = 48-52$

ALTO FLUTE

VOICE

Musical score for the first system. The Alto Flute part (top staff) begins with a *p* dynamic, followed by *pp*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*. The Voice part (bottom staff) starts with *mp*, then *mp*, and includes the vocalizations "Mm", "mm", "ah", and "mm". A tempo marking "poco port." is present. A rehearsal mark (3) with a 4-measure repeat sign is at the end.

A. fl.

Voice

Musical score for the second system. The Alto Flute part (top staff) features a *sf* dynamic, a *p* dynamic, and another *sf* dynamic. The Voice part (bottom staff) includes *mp*, *sf*, and *sf p* dynamics, with vocalizations "Ah", "mm", and "ah". A tempo marking "poco" is present. A rehearsal mark (5) with a 4-measure repeat sign is at the end.

A. fl.

Voice

Musical score for the third system. The Alto Flute part (top staff) includes *p*, *mf cresc*, and *f* dynamics. The Voice part (bottom staff) includes *p*, *sf p*, and *f* dynamics, with vocalizations "ah", "ah", and "ah". A tempo marking "tr. man" is present. A rehearsal mark (4) with a 4-measure repeat sign is at the end.

A. fl.

Voice

Musical score for the fourth system. The Alto Flute part (top staff) includes *p* and *mp* dynamics. The Voice part (bottom staff) includes *pp* and *sf p* dynamics, with vocalizations "mm" and "ah". A rehearsal mark (10) is at the beginning.

A.fl. *mp* *poco rit* *slightly slower, ♩ = 42 (expansive)*

Voice *sfp* *sfp* *p* *pp* *ah* *ah* *ah* (3) (4)

A.fl. *mp* *poco* *ah* *ah* *ah*

Voice *poco* *cresc* *mf* *light* *ah* *ah* *ah*

Violin (con sord) *(sul A)* *(poco vib)* *p* *p* *poco* *p*

Viola (con sord) *3* *4* *Pizz* *(vib)* *p* *IV* *2* *4* *3* *Pizz* *4* *p* *IV*

Cello (con sord) *pp* *mf* *pp*

♩ = 60-63 (dance-like)

20.

A. fl. *p* *mf* *p*

Voice *ah* *ah* *ah* *ah* *ah*

vln *p* *mf* *p* *(SUL D)* *(SUL A)*

vla *Pizz* *p* *mf* *Poco* *IV* *IV*

cllo *pp* *pp*

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25.

A. fl. *mf* *poco* *mf* *poco*

Voice *mf* *mf* *Ah* *Ah* *Ah*

vln *mf* *poco* *mf* *Pizz* *(SUL D)* *Arco* *Pizz*

vla *Arco* *Pizz* *mf* *mf* *IV* *IV* *Arco*

cllo *mf* *mf* *(SUL D)* *mf* *Pizz*

A. fl. *f* *fltz.* 3 *f* *sf* *f* *f* *ff* (4) (4)

Voice *mf* *ah* *ah* *ah* *f* *f* *ff* (4) (4)

vln *Arco* *f* *f* *f* *f* *ff* (4) (4)

vla *f* *f* *f* *f* *ff* (4) (4)

cllo *Arco* *f*

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Slightly slower ♩ = 56 35. poco rit -

A. fl. *mf* *mp* *mf* *f* (2) (4)

Voice *mf* *mp* *mf* *f*
 Dear Pan, a-bide here, a---bide here, drawing the pipes o-ver thy lips, -

vln *f* *pp* *pp* *mp* *pp* (2) (4)

vla *pp* *pp* *mp* *pp* (2) (4)

cllo