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# What a Beast Art Thou!

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# **What a Beast Art Thou!**

Three Shakespeare Songs

For Bass Voice and Piano

**Eric Malmquist**

Program Notes:

“What a Beast Art Thou! – Three Shakespeare Songs,” for bass voice and piano, explores the depths of the darker side of human nature. Using texts from *Titus Andronicus* Act 5, *Timon of Athens* Act 4, and *Titus Andronicus* Act 5 respectively, the three songs intend to express emotions of hate and anger, while conveying the drama unfolding during each particular scene. “What a Beast Art Thou!” was commissioned by William Roberts III and premiered by him in December 2005. Duration: approximately 10 minutes.

# What a Beast Art Thou!

Three Shakespeare Songs

## I. Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust...

Eric Malmquist (2005)

*♩ = 60* *f*

Bass

Hark, vill-ains, I will grind your bones to

Piano

*mf*

5 *p* *3* *mp*

B

dust, And with your blood and it I'll make a paste, And

Pno.

*p*

8 *f*

B

of the paste a coff-in I will rear, And make two pas-ties

Pno.

*f*

Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust...

2  
12

B

of your shame - ful heads.

*mp*

Pno.

*mp* *f*

8<sup>ub</sup>

16

B

And bid that strum-pet your un - hal - lowed dam,

*p*

Pno.

*p<sub>sub.</sub>*

8<sup>ub</sup>

19

B

Like to the earth, swal - low her own in - - - crease.

*f* *rit.* *mp*

Pno.

*mf*

8<sup>ub</sup>

23

B

Pno.

*ff*

*mp sub.*

*sub-*

28 *mf*

B

This is the feast that I have bid her to, And this the ban -

Pno.

*sub-*

*sub-*

32 *mp*

B

quet she shall sur - feit on: For worse than Phil - o - mel you used my

Pno.

*p*

*sub-*

*sub-*

37

B

daugh - ter, And worse than Prog - ne I will be re - venged.

Pno.

*p*

41 *mp*

B

And now pre - pare your

Pno.

44 *p*

B

throats.

Pno.

*sfz*

## II. A beastly ambition...

♩ = 50

*f*

*spoken*

Bass

Piano

A beast - ly am - bi - tion which the gods grant thee t'att-ain to.

*f*

Detailed description: This system contains the first three measures of the piece. The Bass line is in 6/8 time, starting with a quarter rest followed by eighth notes. The Piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The upper staff has a bass clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), with a dynamic marking of *f*. The lower staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active eighth-note line in the left hand.

B

*mp*

Pno.

If thou wert the li - on, the fox would be - guile thee; if

*mp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 4 through 6. The Bass line continues with eighth notes. The Piano accompaniment has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The right hand of the piano part features a melodic line with a long note in measure 5. The left hand continues with eighth notes.

B

*molto rit.*

*a tempo*

Pno.

thou wert the lamb the fox would eat thee; if thou wert the fox the

*molto rit.* *a tempo*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 7 through 9. The Bass line continues with eighth notes. The Piano accompaniment has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The right hand of the piano part features a melodic line with a long note in measure 7. The left hand continues with eighth notes. The tempo marking changes from *molto rit.* to *a tempo* at the start of measure 8.



6 *mf* A beastly ambition...

B  
li - on would sus - pect thee when per - ad - ven - ture thou wert acc - used by the

Pno.

B  
*mp*  
ass; if thou wert the ass, thy dull - ness would tor - ment thee, and

Pno.

*f* *mp*

*8vb*

B  
*pp*  
still thou livedst but as a break - fast to the wolf; if thou wert the wolf thy

Pno.

*pp*

19 *mf*

B  
 greed - i - ness would aff - lict thee and oft thou shouldst haz - ard thy life for thy din - ner;

Pno. *mf*

22 *mp*

B  
 wert thou the un - i - corn pride and wrath would con - found thee and

Pno. *p*

26 *f*

B  
 make thine own self the con - quest of thy fu - ry;

Pno. *f* *mp* RH

*mp*

29

B

wert thou a bear, thou wouldst be killed by the horse;

Pno.

32

*mf*

B

wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seized by the leo - pard;

Pno.

35

B

wert thou a leo - pard, thou wert ger - man to the li - on, and the

Pno.

37 *p*

B



spots of thy kin - dred were jur - ors on thy life. All thy

37 *p*

Pno.



*p*

39

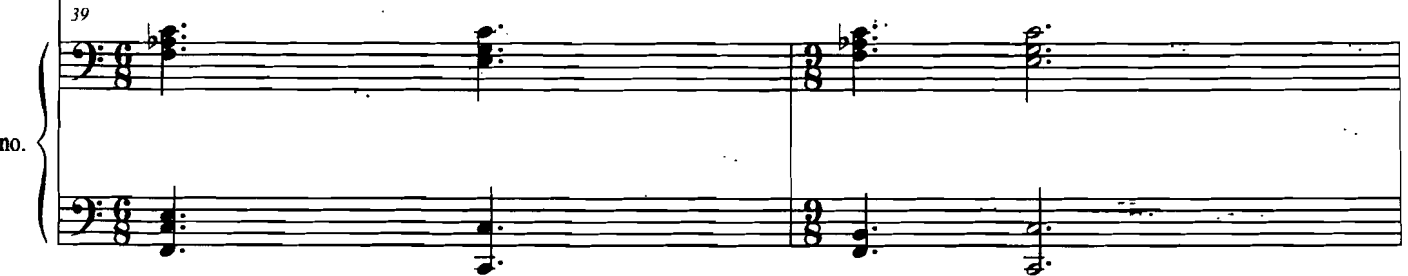
B



safe - ty were re - mo - tion and they de - fence ab - sence. What

39

Pno.



41

B



beast couldst thou be that were not sub - ject to a beast? And

41

Pno.



44

B

what a beast art thou al - read - y, that seest not thy loss in

Pno.

*mp*

48

B

trans - form - ation!

Pno.

*ff*

### III. Even now I curse the day...

♩ = 60

Piano

*p* *mf sub.* *mp*

Pno.

*f sub.* *mp* *sfz sfz* *molto rit.* *p*

8vb 8vb 8vb 8vb 8vb

B

14 *a tempo* *mp* *spoken*

Ev - en now, I curse the day, -and yet, I think few  
come within the compass  
of my curse-

Pno.

B

17 *f*

Where-in I did not some no - tor - i - ous ill, As

Pno.

20

B

kill a man or else de - vise his death, Rav - ish a maid or

Pno.

*sfz* *p* *pp*

*8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>*

23

B

plot the way to do it, Ac - cuse some in - no - cent and for -

Pno.

*f* *mp* *sfz* *pp* *mp* *sfz*

*8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>*

25

B

swear my - self, Set dead - ly en - mit - y be - tween two friends, Make

Pno.

*8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>* *8<sup>vb</sup>*

28

B

poor men's cat-tle break their necks, Set fire on barns and hay-stacks

Pno.

30

B

*mp* *rit.*  
in the night And bid the own-ers quench them with their tears.

Pno.

33

Pno.

*a tempo*

40

B

*a tempo*  
*poco rit.*  
Oft have I digged up dead men from their graves

Pno.



45

B

And set them up - right at their dear friends' door,

Pno.

49

B

Ev - en when their sor - rows al - most was for - got,

Pno.

53 *mf*

B

And on their skins, as on the bark of trees, Have with my knife

Pno.

58

B

carved in Ro-man let-ters, 'Let not your sor-row die though I am

Pno.

64 *ff*

B

64 *dead'* *rit.* *8va*

Pno.

64 *ff* *p*

68 *mp spoken*

B

68 *a tempo* *p* *Tut,* *I have*

Pno.

68 *pp* *8va*

73

B

73 *3* *3* *done* *a thou - sand dread - ful things* *As wil - ling - ly* *as one would kill a fly,*

Pno.

73 *8va*

76

B

And no - thing grieves me heart - il - y in - deed

Pno.

76

76

8vb

Detailed description: This system contains measures 76 through 79. The vocal line (B) begins with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) marked with a '3' and a slur. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) features a steady bass line with chords in the right hand. A dashed line labeled '8vb' is positioned below the piano part.

80

B

But that I can - not do ten thou - sand more.

Pno.

80

80

8vb

*pp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 80 through 85. The vocal line (B) has a long note on 'I' followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) continues with chords. A dynamic marking of *pp* is placed above the vocal line in measure 85. A dashed line labeled '8vb' is positioned below the piano part.

86

Pno.

86

*pp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 86 through 89. It shows the piano accompaniment (Pno.) for the final part of the page. The music consists of chords in both hands. A dynamic marking of *pp* is placed above the first measure. The system ends with a double bar line.