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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)

Bass

Piano

Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust, And with your blood and it I'll make a paste. And of the paste a coffin I will rear, And make two pasties
Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust...

of your shameful heads.

And bid that strumpet your unhallowed dam,

Like to the earth, swallow her own increase.
Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust...

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

queth she shall surfeit on: For worse than Philome mel you used my

daughter, And worse than Progne I will be revenged.
Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust...

And now prepare your throats.
II. A beastly ambition...

A beastly ambition which the gods grant thee to attain.

If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee; if thou wert the lamb the fox would eat thee; if thou wert the fox the lamb would eat thee.
A beastly ambition...

lion would suspect thee when peradventure thou wert accused by the

ass; if thou wert the ass, thy dullness would torment thee, and

still thou livedst but as a breakfast to the wolf; if thou wert the wolf thy
A beastly ambition...

greediness would afflic thee and oft thou shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner;

wert thou the unicorn pride and wrath would confound thee and

make thine own self the conquest of thy fury;
A beastly ambition...

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

wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seized by the leopard;

wert thou a leopard, thou wert german to the lion, and the
A beastly ambition...

Spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life. All thy

Safety were removal and they defence absence. What

Beast couldst thou be that were not subject to a beast? And
A beastly ambition...

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

trans-formation!
III. Even now I curse the day...

Even now, I curse the day,

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Where-in I did not some notorious ill,

---
Even now I curse the day...

Even now I curse the day...

kill a man or else devise his death, Ravi.sh a maid or

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

swear myself, Set deadly en-mit-y between two friends, Make
Even now I curse the day...

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

in the night And bid the owners quench them with their tears.

Oft have I dug up dead men from their graves.
Even now I curse the day...

And set them upright at their dear friends' door.

Even when their sorrows almost was forgot,

And on their skins, as on the bark of trees, Have with my knife carved in Roman letters, "Let not your sorrow die though I am

Let not your sorrow die though I am
Even now I curse the day...

dead'.

Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things As willingly as one would kill a fly,
Even now I curse the day...

And nothing grieves me heartily indeed

But that I cannot do ten thousand more.